

Heinz Streib · Ralph W. Hood Jr. *Editors*

Semantics and Psychology of Spirituality

A Cross-Cultural Analysis

 Springer

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Dedicated to James W. Fowler (1940–2015)

Preface

There are many people to mention and to thank for making this book and the research on which it is based happen. But first of all, we want to thank all of our research participants who accepted our invitation to take part in the online questionnaire; special thanks should go to those who have shared their thoughts and reflections about their lives and about “spirituality” in personal interviews. Without their participation, this study would have never been possible.

The research that is presented in this book has been carried through by research teams at the University of Bielefeld, Germany, and at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Under the cooperative leadership of the editors of this volume, both teams have cooperated in designing research, collecting data, evaluating them quantitatively and qualitatively, and finally in writing the chapters of this volume.

In Chattanooga, the study consisted of two phases during the research and analysis process. The first phase included quantitative and qualitative data collection from around the USA. Based on quantitative results, participants were recruited to complete faith development interviews with members of the Chattanooga research team. These interviews were conducted by some of the best and brightest students at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The data collection team consisted of Paul Rosenberg as the assistant project manager. Additionally, the team included Heather Durham, Hadia Ghazi, Sara Hall, Lindsey Ogle, Emily Pica, Jeffery Greene, Hillary Warrington, Madelyn Esposito, Katharina Hauck, Hannah Herrod, Michelle Kelley, and Stephanie Wilson. The second phase consisted of students who assisted in the data analysis process. The data analysis and coding team consisted of Thomas J. Coleman III as the assistant project manager with other researchers such as Charlotte (Beene) Wells, Karen (Curry) Colangione, Kristen Mcgeehon, Maria Matty, Erica L. Hicks, Stephanie Pyke, Joshua Lang, Christopher Adam Vance, Rachel Nolen, and Derek Giamundo. All contributed significantly to the analysis phase of the project. Finally, a couple of members of the Chattanooga team worked throughout both phases of the project. Those team members were Christopher F. Silver who served as the project manager of the Chattanooga research team, Michele Wollert who served both as a researcher and as a training consultant for faith development interviewing and analysis, and Matthew Durham who served both as an interviewer and as a member of the data analysis and coding team.

Additionally, we would like to say thank you to Zhuo Job Chen who consulted and advised during the data analysis portion of our study in Chattanooga. Finally, the Chattanooga team would like to thank the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga including the Department of Psychology and the Learning and Leadership Doctoral Program for their kind support of our project.

The Bielefeld team included Barbara Keller, who is also a licensed psychotherapist for psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapy. She has participated in designing the project and preparing the application for the German Research Foundation (DFG). She was responsible for the coordination of research in Germany and the USA. Having also been involved in the previous Deconversion Project, she has continued to contribute to the revision of faith development theory and methodology and has trained interviewers and raters on both sides of the ocean. Anne Swhajor-Bieseemann has contributed on all levels of this cross-cultural and bilingual project, in particular in interviewing, organizing data collection, and data processing, as well as data analysis, including interview evaluation. Daniela Ticu has been responsible for numerous administrative tasks, including literature search and procurement, and has, while working on the project, developed her own scientific interests. Sven Luhmann has taken care of all IT aspects of the project, from the implementation of the online questionnaire to the transfer of different types of data between data bases. Constantin Klein, theologian and psychologist, has supported all phases of this research as consultant for methods and methodology and maintenance of the data basis. In particular, he has set up the IAT experiment for the study of semantics of “spirituality.” Regarding fieldwork in Germany, a team of well-trained interviewers conducted the interviews: Besides Anne Swhajor-Bieseemann and Sven Luhmann, we enjoyed the help of students of psychology—Svenja Albrecht, Cornelia Herzig, Roland Hörmann, Caroline Kroll, and Selma Romanci. Clemens Eisenmann has joined as interviewer and continued to support the project by the content-analytic evaluation of free-text entries (see Chap. 9). He was supported by Uwe Drexelius, Roland Hörmann, Sakin Özisik, and others. Svenja Albrecht, Roland Hörmann and Caroline Kroll, Anne Swhajor-Bieseemann, Barbara Keller, and Heinz Streib were engaged in the evaluation of Faith Development Interviews in Germany. Also, we thank Stefan Altmeyer for contributing his expertise in corpus analysis to our research and conducting the corpus analyses that are reported in Chap. 8.

Special thanks go to Ramona Bullik, who has been with this project from the first constituting meeting to the final proofreading of the chapters and interview transcripts included in this volume and the production of the index.

We also express our thanks to Springer publishing house to include this volume in their collection of psychological works, especially we thank the publishing editors, Esther Otten and Hendrikje Tuerlings, for their kind support.

We also wish to thank Bielefeld University for hosting our research, especially the financial administrator, Ralf Möller, for his help. And last but not least, we are very grateful to the German Research Foundation/Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for funding this cross-cultural research project.

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Introduction

This book presents the findings of Bielefeld-based cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality,” which had research teams at the University of Bielefeld, Germany, and at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Both teams have cooperated in designing research, collecting data, evaluating them quantitatively and qualitatively, and finally in writing the—multi-authored—chapters of this volume.¹

The research presented in this book is a direct result of our previous cooperative project on deconversion in both Germany and the USA (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). In that previous project, we used and introduced, for the first time in Germany, a fourfold distinction based on the binary that was gaining popularity among American researchers: the binary created by contrasting “religious” and “spiritual” self-identifications, which has a history that parallels in many ways Allport’s distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religion and can be used to create a useful typology, which however is more common in sociological than psychological research (Hood, 1978). Psychologists are more likely to avoid typology measures particularly, since typologies and associated statistical analyses may have less significant power. Thus, Allport’s well-known typology has been explored by psychologists primarily as independent dimensions and testing interactive effects (e.g., intrinsic × extrinsic) as the primary research technique (Donahue, 1985). However, criticisms of empirical research with Allport’s typology have not suggested that Allport’s considerable conceptual work be ignored (Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990), even as empirical research continues using various statistical techniques that nevertheless are guided, if only implicitly, by Allport’s original typology (Krauss & Hood, 2013).

Research on “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification has been dominated by the typology created by the fourfold distinction based on the contrasting self-identifications with “religion” and “spirituality.” In this sense, we created a fourfold classification in our Deconversion Project and have invited participants to choose whether they self-identify as “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally spiritual and religious,” or “neither religious nor spiritual” (Streib et al., 2009, pp. 82–87). This was the first time this fourfold typology with the binary options of being “religious”

¹Readers, especially readers who read German, should be informed that H. Streib and B. Keller have published another book in German with results from the Bielefeld-based Crosss-cultural Study on “Spirituality.” This book is focused on the German situation and presents more German case studies (Streib & Keller, 2015).

and/or “spiritual” was used in research in Germany. While our focus in the Deconversion Project was upon identifying various deconversion trajectories in both Germany and the USA, a surprising finding was that among deconverts in both Germany and the USA, the typology of “religious” and “spiritual” self-identification was intriguing in that it has revealed “spirituality” as the most popular self-identification among deconverts in both countries; the self-identification as “more spiritual than religious” has doubled for deconverts compared to the respondent who remained members of their religious group or organization. Thus, in that Deconversion Project, the typology proved useful. Furthermore, in both countries, those who identify as “more spiritual than religious” have deconverted by a process that involves openness to experience and autonomy, and many deconverts leave one or another form of organized religion—which means that they reject both priests and prophets in the religious field. We concluded our Deconversion Project by noting the need for cross-cultural exploration of the semantics of “spirituality” (Streib et al., 2009, p. 240).

This book is the second in a trilogy, because the exploration of the semantics of “spirituality” will be followed by a longitudinal study exploring changes in faith development and religious styles to suggest developmental changes over the life span—changes that are only suggested by our findings in this book and in the Deconversion Project, because they rely upon cross-sectional comparisons and retrospective narratives.

We were keenly aware that despite the considerable usefulness of typologies in psychology of religion (Hood, 1978), scholars were already suggesting to move “beyond” the binary created by the fourfold classification made possible by various ways of self-identification as “religious” and/or “spiritual” (Ammerman, 2013). However, since our study was focused on both etic generalizations rooted in sound measurement and statistical analyses and upon emic data based upon in-depth interviews and various modes of semantic analysis of the meaning of various options of being “religious” or “spiritual,” it is important to note that we did not simply classify participants, but rather that we listened to our participants and perceived how they would define terms and classify themselves. We then could use both sophisticated statistical techniques with valid and reliable scales already established, as well as locating individual participants within various views of the religious field for in-depth analyses of biographical narratives associated with, but not restricted to, faith development. Our use of typologies included not only the fourfold typology common in the field, but extensions to create a more detailed typology of those whose self-identification as “neither religious nor spiritual”; these respondents could be contrasted whether or not they self-identified as “atheists” or “non-theists.” Thus, the use of typologies was guided always by our intent to explore by emic means individuals who were exemplars of various ways of being or not being “religious” and being or not being “spiritual.”

Our decisive emic approach has led us opt for an innovative punctuation: “Spirituality” is used with quotation marks almost everywhere throughout this book. This rigorous and, for some readers perhaps strange looking, innovation reflects one of the most important and far-reaching conceptual decisions on which the results and interpretations in this volume are based: the decisive

option for an emic approach, which means the decisive option for attending to the people on the street and their various meanings they associate with “spirituality.”

Consistent with this aim is the selection of instruments used for empirical investigation of “spirituality”—with a strong focus on self-rating scales, self-identification items, semantic differentials to elicit the respondents’ associations with “spirituality,” space for free-text entries to invite the participants’ own understandings of “spirituality,” and not at least personal interviews that invite the interviewees’ own reflections and narrations about “spirituality” and “spiritual” developments in their lives.

We need not anticipate our findings here, but rather simply note that the use of typologies has proven to be illuminating as we have both objective measurements for exploring and understanding “spirituality” in etic terms, but also deeply nuanced understandings of the semantics of “spirituality” for individuals variously located within the religious field and for whom the reader has a chance to understand not simply in terms of scores on measures and styles of their faith, but by name (that are disguised by pseudonyms, of course) and in terms of their own reflections.

Thus, while we initially anticipated two volumes, one with the etic and one with the emic data, we decided on one volume in which the emic and etic illuminate one another. What is lacking is any firm basis on which to explore changes in religious styles and “religious” and “spiritual” self-identification over the life span, but with kind support from the John Templeton Foundation and the German Research Foundation (DFG), we are extending our data and will focus on spiritual and religious development across the life span in the final volume in our trilogy.

Heinz Streib
Ralph W. Hood Jr.

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Part I
Points of Departure

Understanding “Spirituality”— Conceptual Considerations

1

Heinz Streib and Ralph W. Hood Jr.

Abstract

Since the enormous shift in the everyday semantic from “religion” to “spirituality” has also affected the terminology of the scientific study of religion, it appears necessary to explain the position taken in the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality” to the question: Should ‘spirituality’ be used as scientific concept? Attempts to substitute religion with spirituality are critically discussed in this chapter. To ground and inspire reflection and suggest a conceptual framework for the chapters of this book, we refer to classics in philosophy, psychology and sociology of religion such as Schleiermacher, James, Troeltsch, Tillich and Luckmann. Thus the conclusion of this chapter is twofold: first, we call into question the necessity of establishing ‘spirituality’ as scientific concept (etic term) in contrast to or as substitute for ‘religion’; instead, we argue that the concept of religion is sufficient, because spirituality can be understood as privatized, experience-oriented religion. Second, we strongly suggest taking the self-attribution as “spiritual” very seriously as emic term and thus open the perspective for the chapters to follow, which are committed to the thoroughgoing empirical study of “spirituality” as self-description of the persons who identify themselves by that term, whether in conjunction with religion or not.

No one in the scientific study of religion can ignore the spectacular increase in popularity which the self-identification of “being spiritual” enjoys these days. Of course, a majority of

people in the United States and a considerable number in Europe use “spirituality” in association with “religion.” But an apparently growing number of people contrast “spirituality” and “religion,” self-identifying as “spiritual, but not religious” or as “more spiritual than religious” (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009; Streib, 2008; see also Chap. 3, this volume).

This relatively new shift in the religio-semantic field from “religion” to “spirituality”

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has also affected the terminology in publications—and lead to considerable uncertainty. A growing number of authors use “religion” and “spirituality” side by side or use a slash between these words. Many simply omit “religion” and use “spirituality” instead. Especially in areas such as health, articles are now more likely to refer to “spirituality” rather than “religion” (Miller & Thoresen, 2003).

There is, however, a qualitative difference between the semantic preference for “spirituality” by the “people on the street” who are or may become our research participants, on the one hand, and scientists’/researchers’ exchange of ‘religion’ for ‘spirituality,’ on the other hand: While the former do not—and need not—necessarily engage in reflection and justification of their terminology, the latter are required to reflectively care for their (system of) concepts and define them in respect to the best expertise possible. Viewed from this perspective, one may be surprised about the easiness of filing away the concept of religion—and ignore a centuries-long controversial debate. Thus, we suggest engaging instead in serious reflection about concepts, and here we add our own contribution to the debate.

“Spirituality” as Scientific Concept?

The inclusion of ‘spirituality’ as concept in the scientific study of religion appears to be out of balance across scientific disciplines and countries: While, for example, European-based scholars in *Religionswissenschaft* are reluctant to welcome such inclusion, “spirituality” is especially popular in the discourse in the USA, and there particularly strong in the psychology of religion. Examples are abundant: The number of publications in the psychology of religion with “spirituality” in the title has increased 39-fold between 1970 and 2005 (Oman, 2013); the APA Division 36 “Psychology of Religion” has been renamed in “Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality,” the Division’s journal is *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*; the latest handbooks in the psychology of religion

(Paloutzian & Park, 2013; Pargament, 2013) announce in their titles that they are about both ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality.’ These are only a few examples.

A rather pragmatic-open approach can be observed in the context of health care, where ‘spirituality’ has become something like an umbrella term intended to be most inclusive—which in this context appears a plausible step forward. The World Health Organization (2014) explicitly integrates spirituality into the definition of palliative care, which “integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care”; and the *Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care* (2013) include a domain called “spiritual, religious and existential aspects of care.” Likewise, the *European Association for Palliative Care* has a task force on “Spiritual Care in Palliative Care” (cf. Nolan, Saltmarsh, & Leget, 2011). For a comparable open definition of ‘spirituality’ in the context of medicine and health care, see Koenig (2008).

In contrast to the overwhelming attraction for the new semantic in academic discourse in the USA, the thoughtful conceptualization of ‘spirituality’ appears to be an unfinished project. This can be seen, for example, in the *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, edited by Paloutzian and Park (2013), for which a critical reader (Stausberg, 2014) observes that the thematic focus of the single chapters is not coherent: several chapters are about religion only, while many are (also) about spirituality; and, what appears more problematic, many chapters “fail to provide either conceptual clarity on the distinction between the two concepts or sufficient detail to make conceptual choices comprehensible” (p. 37). And when Paloutzian and Park (2014) explain in their response to the critiques that the inclusion of “spirituality” in the title and the thematic of many chapters may be necessary for a handbook that should as much inclusive as possible for all colleagues in the field, they are not contributing to clarify the question about the conceptual relation between religion and spirituality.

In the early times of discourse about “spirituality,” there was concern about the fuzziness of

the term (Spilka, 1993). While, for the people on the street (“spirituality” as emic term), “spirituality” is not fuzzy, but characterized by a variety of different semantic associations (as will be shown in Chap. 9 in particular), there is still considerable fuzziness in regard to the conceptualization of spirituality (spirituality as etic term). In the early times of the fuzziness discussion, nevertheless, Spilka and others have identified “spirituality” as “New Age religion” (Spilka in: Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996, p. 116) that is mainly a phenomenon of the “baby boomer” generation. Interestingly, both the rather critical (Beit-Hallahmi, 2014, 2015; Granqvist, Fransson, & Hagekull, 2009; Spilka, 1993) and the rather sympathetic observers (Heelas, 2007; Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Tusting, 2005) likewise tend toward associating “spirituality” with “New Age.” This appears as an approach guided by pre-judgment, rather than by conceptual rigor.

A frequently quoted—more sophisticated—approach to conceptualizing “spirituality” is Pargament’s (1992, p. 204, cf. 1999a) and Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) definitions of ‘religion’ as “search for significance in ways related to the sacred” and of ‘spirituality’ as “search for the sacred” (Pargament, 1997; cf. Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). When Pargament immediately adds that spirituality is the “most central function of religion” and the “heart and soul of religion” (1999a, p. 12), we can see that, for Pargament, religion and spirituality are closely related and intertwined. Both religion and spirituality are defined by the relation to the sacred. The sacred, Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) state, is the “substantive core of both religiousness and spirituality” and the specific difference “that distinguishes these phenomena from all others” (p. 34).

The sacred thereby refers not only to God, higher powers and transcendent beings, but to a broad variety of aspects of life: “Virtually any dimension can be perceived as holy, worthy of veneration or reverence” (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005, p. 34). The critical question of Emmons and Crumpler (1999) in their response to Pargament’s (1999a) article, namely the

question, “Can we leave God out?” has stimulated Pargament (1999b) to be more explicit. While the sacred, he explains in his reply, is in certain cases “clearly derived from the divine,” there are however other processes in which “perception of divine-like qualities in objects are not necessarily rooted in beliefs in God” (p. 38). And he goes on to explain that “for atheists and others as well, it might be useful to think of sacred objects as ‘functionally autonomous’ from God. The sacred object is no longer directly associated with the divine, however it continues to be imbued with divine-like qualities” (p. 39).

We agree with such broad conceptualization, but prefer to identify a vertical and a horizontal dimension of transcendence. The vertical dimension may reference God, but the horizontal need not (Hood et al., 2009, pp. 280–287). Horizontal transcendence may be purely secular (Comte-Sponville, 2007; Elkins, 2001; Schnell, 2009). Many in the ecological movements, based upon purely secular scientific assumptions, nevertheless see the self as embedded in a unity larger than itself. “Green spirituality” can be seen as horizontal transcendence (Kalton, 2000).

When it comes to clarifying the difference between religion and spirituality, Pargament argues that religion is the broader construct, a “broadband construct” which “encompasses the search for many objects of significance,” while “spirituality focuses on the search for one particular object of significance—the sacred” (1999a, p. 13; cf. Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005, p. 36). Here, we may find the reason why ‘significance’ is included in the definition of religion, but is left out in the definition of ‘spirituality.’ Religion “addresses a wider range of goals, needs, and values than spirituality” (p. 37). Pargament’s argument goes on saying that the more “objects of significance in life are sanctified,” the more the difference between ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ disappears (1999a, p. 14). In our reading, Pargament has in mind a model which, for religion, regards the definitional characteristic of “relation to the sacred” as less important, while the “search for significance” serves as its key characteristic. Here we must point to a conceptual problem: On the one hand,

the sacred is assumed to be the “substantive core of both religiousness and spirituality”; on the other hand, this characteristic that the sacred is the core appears to apply only for spirituality in the full sense, while religion also includes a wide variety of non-sacred, i.e. secular goals.

What we find remarkable and wish to underscore as potentially helpful insights from Pargament are the following: First, religion and spirituality are closely related; second, it is the sacred which is “central to both religion and spirituality” (1999b, p. 37); third, the sacred thereby is very broadly understood to include sacred objects which need not be associated with God or the divine.

Defining ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ with reference to an established construct in the theory of religion (“the sacred”) highlights the commonalities, rather than the differences—and may finally qualify any attempt of conceptualizing and operationalizing ‘spirituality’ as illusion to reinvent the wheel. Thus the major question we raise is this: Why at all do we need two concepts, when their difference is so marginal? Is it not a waste of time and energy to develop special measures of spirituality, if they, as Pargament (1999a, p. 8) himself notes, “look suspiciously like old measures of religiousness” and add little or no incremental validity to the study of religion? Most measures of spirituality operate empirically as measure of religious experience (Gorsuch & Miller, 1999; Hood, 2003; Hood et al., 2009).

In a multi-author article (Hill et al., 2000), we find further assertions that religion and spirituality are the same. The authors define both spirituality and religion in exactly the same words, namely as “the feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred” (p. 66). Because of the identical wording of both definitions, it is in fact questionable whether spirituality and religion have any features distinct enough to suggest two concepts and justify two sets of measures. When, furthermore, the term sacred is defined as referring to “a divine being, divine object, Ultimate Reality, or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual,” both religion and spirituality are conceptualized

rather in substantive terms, but very open in the variety of individual symbolizations. And in regard to these symbolic characteristics, the authors do not propose any difference between religion and spirituality.

We may take this only one step further and conclude: In the scientific study of religion, we do not need two separate concepts, which almost greatly overlap anyway. There is no need to adopt the polarization or opposition between religion and “spirituality” which—*nota bene*: not a majority, but only part of—our research participants may have in mind. It is our duty in the academy to aim at and care for conceptual precision. And we are able to find such precision by considering lines of thought of 19th century and early 20th century sociology, psychology and theology.

Contributions of the Classics for an Inclusive Conceptualization

When James (1902, p. 72) defines ‘religion’ as “feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine,” this definition of religion embraces and includes “spirituality” already. Certainly, “spirituality,” as it is used today, is not James’ term; he rather speaks of mysticism and other forms of relation to the divine. But certainly for him, “spirituality” does not stand in contrast or opposition to religion. On the contrary, James suggests understanding the “godless or quasi-godless creeds” (p. 77) which he finds in Emerson or in Buddhism *as religion*—and immediately adds that, for an adequate understanding, the ‘divine’ needs to be understood “very broadly.” Consistent with such broad understanding of the divine is a surprisingly broad variety of forms of relation to whatever the individual may consider the divine. The interesting point in the context of our argument is not so much the variety of religious experiences, but the fact that, for James, all of them go by the name *religion*.

The conclusion in face of the variety of forms, which are all embraced and included *in religion*, is James’ (1902, pp. 927–929) suggestion of a common ground of all religious experience. In our reading of this conclusion of James, we find strong arguments for an inclusion of what we today call “spiritual” experiences into the domain of ‘*religion*.’ Or the other way around: to define ‘*religion*’ so broadly to include all so-called “spiritual” experiences.

In Schleiermacher’s (1799) definition of religion as “intuition and feeling” or, more specific, as “sensibility and taste for the infinite,” we derive another suggestion of including the spiritual quest into the concept of religion. Religion, Schleiermacher says, “wishes to intuit the universe, wishes devoutly to overhear the universe’s own manifestations and actions, longs to be grasped and filled by the universe’s immediate influences in childlike passivity” (p. 22). Thus, if we want to find religion in research, we have to attend to feelings and intuitions. Religion is not about grasping something, but about being grasped; religion is not primarily a search for significance and does not include secular aims, as in Pargament’s definition, but, in the first place, a “letting-go,” letting oneself be impressed and intuited by an incomprehensible realm: by the “infinite” or the “universe.”

Consistently, Hood (1995) has emphasized that Schleiermacher’s concept of religious feeling has both mystical and numinous characteristics; it is less a search for than a response to the sacred. In a similar fashion, James (1902, p. 481) refers to a sense of “more” that is integral to religious experience. Much of religion is concerned with articulating what this “more” is. James’ often erroneously seen dismissal of this “more” as mere overbeliefs fails to appreciate that James’s insistence was on an empirically-grounded theology of human experience. In a similar fashion, Schleiermacher’s “sensibility and taste for the infinite” is a form of consciousness identified with the infinity of God consciousness which can be elicited by a variety of finite objects, but is always in need of some theological clarification. Here, again, is more than ample room for the range of experiences

which many would treat as “spiritual,” but which have classically been acknowledged as the proper domain of *religion*.

Turning to sociology, we may consider the famous distinction between church and sect which had some prominence in the sociological discourse of which Weber and Troeltsch were part (cf. Simmel, 1911). The church-sect distinction has become one of the basic tools for understanding religion in sociological terms and for constructing the religious field. Taking a closer look into Weber’s (1921) work, we find a distinction between *three* parties or *three* actors, rather than between two: Not only the *sects* with their prophets compete with the churches and their priests; the third party are the *magicians*. This is made very clear in Bourdieu’s (1971) reconstruction and visualization of Weber’s notion of the religious field.

It has been widely ignored (cf. Daiber, 2002) that also Troeltsch (1911, 1912) talks about *three* types.¹ But Troeltsch called this third type *mysticism*.² Troeltsch, in the second volume of his *Social Teachings of the Christian Church* (Troeltsch, 1912), has dealt extensively with mysticism. Interestingly, Troeltsch’s terms are “mysticism” and “spiritual religion.”

For Troeltsch, mysticism, in “the widest sense of the word,” is “simply the insistence upon a

¹Ironically, Troeltsch was popularized among North American scholars by H.R. Niebuhr, especially in his *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Niebuhr, 1929) which was first published in 1929 and thus antedating the English translation of Troeltsch’s text by 2 years. Niebuhr however dropped Troeltsch’s third type, mysticism, so that subsequent theorizing and empirical research on church-sect theory has largely ignored mysticism. The reasons for this are in dispute, but it is clear that neither Niebuhr nor Troeltsch thought fondly of mysticism and that neither saw it as characteristic of the North American religious landscape (Garrett, 1975; Steeman, 1975). Whatever the reason, as Garrett (1975, p. 205) has noted, mysticism has experienced “whole-hearted neglect” at the hands of sociological investigators.

²Troeltsch’s mystic of course is different from Weber’s magician. The magician is characterized by Weber as practitioner of magic coercion, a “small independent entrepreneur hired by private individuals on an ad hoc basis and exercising his office outside any recognized institution, most often in clandestine manner”, as Bourdieu (1987, p. 134) summarizes Weber’s perspective.

direct inward and present religious experience” (Troeltsch, 1912, p. 730). Mysticism “expresses itself in ecstasy and frenzy, in visions and hallucinations, in subjective religious experience and ‘inwardness,’ in concentration upon the purely interior and emotional side of religious experience” (p. 731). The type of mysticism *inside* organized religion takes the objective characteristics of its tradition for granted, and either supplements them with a profound inwardness or reacts against them as it demands to bring them back “into the living process” (p. 730). Concentrating on the purely interior and emotional side of religious experience, it creates a “spiritual” interpretation of every objective side of religion, so that these kinds of mystics typically stay within their tradition (Katz, 1983).

It is important that Troeltsch also accounts for a type of mysticism *outside* organized religion. This is a mysticism that has become independent in principle from, and is contrasted with, religion. It may claim to be the true inner principle of all religious faith. This type of mysticism breaks away from religion, which it disdains. It accepts no constraint or community other than ones that are self-selected and self-realized.

Thus Troeltsch identifies a mysticism that has become independent in principle from, and is contrasted with, church religion. With its “immediacy of feeling,” mysticism may develop “a certain hostility to popular religion and its average forms of expression” (p. 731). In his own words:

The active energies in mysticism of this kind can become independent in principle, contrasted with concrete religion; they then break away from it and set up a theory of their own which takes the place of the concrete religion and of its *mythos* or doctrine; this may take place either by means of open denial, or through an allegorical change in interpretation. When this takes place, however, mysticism realizes that it is an independent religious principle; it sees itself as the real universal heart of all religion, of which the various myth-forms are merely the outer garment. (Troeltsch, 1912, p. 743)

For this type of mysticism, Troeltsch (1912) maintains that “it feels independent of all institutional religion, and possesses an entire inward certainty, which makes it indifferent towards

every kind of religious fellowship” (p. 734). This is what many today profess to be “spirituality” as opposed to “religion.” It is essentially an unchurched mysticism.

Troeltsch thus indicates a clear difference between the mysticism that dwells and remains inside the Christian tradition, on the one hand, and “unchurched mysticism” (Parsons, 1999), on the other hand. Therefore, a general theory of mysticism in the tradition of Troeltsch should differentiate even more clearly and incorporate two kinds of mysticisms—that within the church and “unchurched mysticism.” According to both Bouyer (1980) and Troeltsch (1912), one form of mysticism is an inherent tendency to seek personal piety and an emotional realization of a faith within the individual; it serves simply to intensify commitment to a tradition. The other kind of mysticism emerges independent from, or as a reaction to, the church or the sect.

To summarize Troeltsch’s legacy: Aside from the ideal types of church religion and sect religion—which both, within their realms, may embrace and nurture a kind of mystical inward orientation—, Troeltsch identifies a type of mysticism as the kind of religion that features religious individualism, develops outside of church and sect, and has no external organization (Daiber, 2002, p. 335). This identification of religious individualism, including mysticism as a third ideal type, was thoughtful and perhaps ahead of his time. We witness today a global spread of just this kind of religious individualism—and many came to label it “spirituality.”

Spirituality as Privatized Experience-Oriented Religion

Streib and Hood (2011) therefore have suggested a definition tree as visualized in Fig. 1.1: ‘Religion’ is the *genus proximum*. One way of defining different ideal types that are included in ‘religion’ is to define the *differentiae specificae* according to the sociological perspectives of Weber and Troeltsch, thus to use adjectives ‘organized/tradition-oriented,’

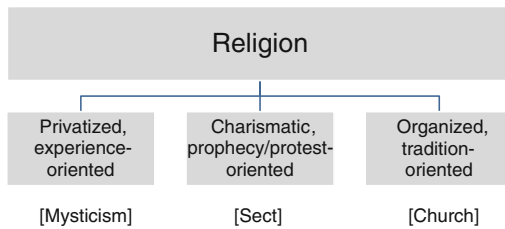


Fig. 1.1 Three Ideal Types of Religion with Reference to Weber and Troeltsch

‘charismatic/prophecy-oriented’ and ‘privatized/experience-oriented’ to indicate the specific differences. Thereby, spirituality is understood as “privatized experience-oriented religion.”

These are, of course, ideal types; and we should not expect that they are mutually exclusive in empirical research. Nevertheless, we may indicate their typical location in the religious field. While, as indicated in Troeltsch’s work, mysticism—and thus spirituality—may flourish also within the churches and sects, spirituality, as understood in mainstream contemporary semantics, however gravitates toward a segment in the religious field where access to the ultimate is not mediated by tradition, institution or clergy (church) nor by charismatic prophets (sect), but characterized by immediacy for the individual. The “spiritual, but not religious” can be expected to assemble rather not in the gravitation fields of churches and sects, but in private practice or in scenes, where the type of “privatized, experience-oriented” religion is nurtured.

Based on the argument expressed in Fig. 1.1, the conclusion for the scientific terminology is this: It does not make sense to invest time and energy in conceptualizing ‘spirituality’ as a separate term. It is a waste of energy to develop parallel concepts, scales and measures. Spirituality is unnecessary for the scientific discourse, ‘religion’ and its specific differences are sufficient—also as constructs for empirical investigation. Furthermore, it is confusing to use the terms ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ in parallel and interchangeably. And finally, it would be a mistake to replace ‘religion’ with ‘spirituality’ because it is not necessary to re-invent the wheel and cut-off a century of conceptual discourse

rooted in philosophical, theological, and social scientific classic works.

This is no plea for stopping research in “spirituality,” however. On the contrary: “Spirituality” as an emic term needs to be taken very seriously, and we need to engage in research that clarifies the semantics of “spirituality,” especially for respondents who identify themselves as either “more spiritual than religious” or as “spiritual, but not religious.” Every possible effort should be made to empirically investigate the “spirituality” of the people on the street. For such empirical assessment of this “privatized experience-oriented religion,” Hood’s (1975) Mysticism Scale may reveal—and has revealed (cf. Chap. 11, this volume)—as effective measure.

Conceptualizing Religion to Account for “Spirituality”

So far we have argued against the separate conceptualization of ‘spirituality’ and have proposed a model of how to understand “spirituality” under the umbrella of ‘religion.’ We did not go into detail yet in regard to the conceptualization of ‘religion.’ The reflection about the concept of ‘religion’ however can, as we expect, further clarify the possibility to account for “spirituality” in the framework of ‘religion.’

As stated also elsewhere (Streib & Gennerich, 2011; Streib & Hood, 2013), for conceptualizing religion and defining its basic elements, we suggest starting with and focusing on the most elementary experiential and structural characteristics, rather than on a variety of substantive or functional characteristics. This does not mean that we disregard or oppose substantive (e.g. divine beings; supernatural agents) or functional (e.g. complexity reduction; coping with contingencies and anxiety; social integration) characteristics, but we suggest regarding them secondary and putting them on hold, in order to bring the elementary to the foreground.

Such starting point with the basic experiential and structural elements corresponds well to psychology, because its object is the individual,

more specifically: individual experiences, beliefs, attitudes and commitments in their relation to behavior and action in the social environment. From such central position of the individual, for which we may e.g. refer to James (1902), our focus is on individual religiosity and the religious individual as actor in the religious field. For our approach therefore it may be adequate to use conceptual markers for 'religion' which are *verb-like* and describe experiences, attitudes and activities of the individual.

Transcendence and Ultimate Concern as Key Characteristics of 'Religion'

Our key concepts for religion are *transcendence* and *ultimate concern*. For 'transcendence,' we refer to the social-phenomenological tradition of Schütz and Luckmann (1989), Luckmann (1967) and Knoblauch (1991). For 'ultimate concern,' we refer to Tillich's (1925, 1951, 1957) philosophy of religion. Both transcendence and ultimate concern have verb-like character: transcendence refers to "transcending the everyday world" and ultimate concern to be committed and "to be ultimately concerned." The experience of transcending only secondarily finds its way into symbolization and into the social construction of reality, including dimensions of belief. Thus we find it useful to distinguish an immediate experience from what is subsequently an elaborate interpretation of experience which is associated with religion as both belief and institutionalization or the social constructions associated with religious experience (Hood, 2006; Hood et al., 2009, Chaps. 10 and 11). Both concepts, transcending and being ultimately concerned, are necessary and complement each other.

Transcending everyday reality is possible in a variety of ways and directions. As suggested by Schütz and Luckmann (1989, pp. 117–130) and Luckmann (1991, pp. 164–182), "great" transcendences occur in sleep and dream, in day-dreaming and ecstasies, in crises and death, and finally in the theoretical orientation. Thereby, it would be a misunderstanding to take any kind of

"great" transcendence as religion. On the contrary, this conceptual approach to religion is based on the process of transcending in various provinces of the life-world. Which experiences of transcendence are associated with religion, depends on the symbol system that is used to come to terms with and communicate these experiences. The *religious* symbolization depends on the *religious* character of the social construction of reality in which the individual is at home. Thus, the social construction of reality can be in response to a sensed sacred reality and need not be prior to an experience, but only later seen as explicitly sacred (Hood, 2006).

Thus, we regard transcendence a necessary, but not sufficient condition for religion. Transcendence is a central, *necessary* condition for religion, because it claims (a) that religion is *grounded in experiences*, which only secondarily are reconstructed in symbols and rituals; (b) that religion is grounded in experiences of *distance* and *departure from everyday*, of interruption of everyday, of being drawn into another "world"; and (c) that these experiences of transcendence per se are *not divided into natural and supernatural*, because these experiences occur in the life-world—and only secondarily are narrated in stories and interpreted in different religious symbol systems. These characteristics indicate that a concept of religion based on this understanding of transcendence is particularly open for an inclusion of what we later call "horizontal transcendence."

If we state that transcendence is a necessary, but not sufficient definitional characterization of religion, we need to say in what way it is not sufficient. Interpreting religion as based upon experiences of transcendence does not say anything about the importance or centrality of these experiences and their symbolic reconstruction for the individual. In principle, such experiences could be marginal, occasional and insignificant for the life of the individual. But there is another, and perhaps more serious, definitional insufficiency and need for precision: What defines a symbolization as '*religious*' symbolization? If it is not the experience of transcendence per se, then another criterion is required.

Instead of referring to the variety of substantive and functional criteria, we suggest an elementary structural alternative: Tillich’s conceptualization of religion. His notion of ultimate concern helps to identify the symbolization of experiences of transcending that are not simply important, but *ultimately* important for the individual, because they respond to *ultimate* questions and refer to an *ultimate* environment. In *Dynamics of Faith*, we read:

Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man’s ultimate concern. Man, like every living being, is concerned about many things, above all about those which condition his very existence, such as food and shelter. But man, in contrast to other living beings, has spiritual concerns—cognitive, aesthetic, social, political. Some of them are urgent, often extremely urgent, and each of them as well as the vital concerns can claim ultimacy for a human life or the life of a social group. [...]

If faith is the state of being ultimately concerned, all preliminary concerns are subject to it. The ultimate concern gives depth, direction and unity to all other concerns and, with them, to the whole personality. (Tillich, 1957, p. 1, 105)

Tillich, as we see in this quotes, claims a kind of hierarchical order of concerns. Thus, “(W)hat concerns one ultimately becomes holy” (pp. 12–13). Tillich links ultimate concern with the holy, but interestingly enough, in a verb-like formulation: they *become* holy. This is consistent with Tillich’s view that also totally this-worldly concerns can become ultimate and holy, such as success, nation or a political leader—which Tillich, from his theological standpoint, qualifies as “idolatrous faith” of course.³

Summarizing our argument so far in a definition, we may propose that *religion is the symbolic and ritual, thus social construction of experiences of “great” transcendences in terms of ultimate concern.*

³Also Emmons (1999), in *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns*, refers to Tillich’s ultimate concern. The problem with Emmons’ proposal is that he made a plural for a concept that does not allow for a plural. Thus the contradiction is already in the title of the book—foreshadowing a problematic construction of measures and research design.

The Difference Between Vertical and Horizontal Transcendence

Combining the concepts of transcendence (Schütz; Luckmann) and ultimate concern (Tillich) in a definition of religion has a great advantage in regard to a more inclusive, somewhat broader, but still precise understanding of religion. This understanding of religion is open for, but does not require, an exclusive directedness towards a heaven or a “world above” with divine beings or supernatural agents—however the individual may envision this “other world” in substantive terms. But such understanding of religion is open for the possibility that symbolizations of transcendences and ultimate concern are directed toward things, causes or concerns *within* and *part of* this world. Thus on the basis of our understanding of religion we may distinguish between vertical and horizontal symbolization of transcendence, and between horizontal and vertical ultimate concern.

The distinction between vertical and horizontal transcendence has been proposed by Hood et al. (2009, p. 282, 286). It is meant to prevent the misunderstanding of people who are not religiously affiliated, identify with non-theism, agnosticism or humanism, but explicitly self-identify as “spiritual” or are committed to a variant of religion which we may call “implicit religion.”

Thus the distinction between vertical and horizontal reflects the distinction between implicit and explicit religion, which is highly important for the analysis of contemporary religious in cultures in America and Europe. This has been demonstrated by Bailey’s (1997, 2002) studies. Also Schnell (2004, 2008) has developed a concept of implicit religiosity and has used this in research with special attention to the non-religious and “spiritual atheists” (Schnell, 2012; Schnell & Keenan, 2011, 2013). Interesting here is also Pasquale’s (2007) identification of, what he calls, “non-transcendentalist” self-identifying “spiritual” people in the North West of the USA. There is also some parallel of horizontal transcendence with what Taylor (2007, e.g. p. 726) calls “immanent transcendence.” An elaborate conceptualization of

implicit religion has been proposed by Thomas (2001), which in turn owes much to Kaufmann's (1989) poly-thetic, but primarily functionalist understanding of religion. While in Thomas' (2001) perspective, the "implicit" is considered a derivative of the "explicit," our distinction between vertical and horizontal regards both as equal and avoids such primary-secondary hierarchy.

The distinction between vertical and horizontal transcendence and ultimate concern suggests including those segments into the religious field which previously have been (mis-) understood as *non-religious* and *outside* of the religious field. What we now label "horizontal transcendence and ultimate concern" has been lumped together with the "secular," with "unbelief" or "exclusion of transcendence," thus has not been regarded religious.⁴ Our concept of horizontal transcendence allows us to include those types of experiences, attitudes and concerns as (implicit) religion which qualify as "great" transcendences and have become the ultimate concern. This kind of implicit religion applies to those persons who may identify themselves as "spiritual but not religious" or as "more spiritual than religious" (Hood, 2003; Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009).

The distinction between vertical and horizontal transcendence and ultimate concern is however not an either-or division. Vertical and horizontal can occur in combination and there may be even some kind of middle ground. The reason for this is obvious: the way of coming to

terms with and communicate experiences of transcendence depends on the variety of symbol systems that are available and alive in a specific (sub-) culture. And symbol systems are changing—which is perhaps the major factor of change in the religious fields in America and Europe.

For a characterization of the middle ground between horizontal and vertical transcendence and ultimate concern, we refer to the distinction between theistic and non-theistic. There is a broad variety of non-theistic symbolizations in established religious traditions as well as new religious movements and charismatic groups: for example animistic, pantheistic, spiritualistic or esoteric⁵ symbolizations. Here, the direction of transcendence and ultimate concern is not necessarily vertical in the sense of a clear and primary concern with a heaven with God(s) or divine beings, but it is not simply horizontal either, since an "other world" or realm is not denied. In many instances there is the imagination of a world "behind" as residence for the dead, ghosts, angels, supernatural helpers or impersonal symbols such as cosmic energy. It is very likely that people with this kind of middle ground between vertical and horizontal transcendence may be hesitant to self-identify as "religious," but—and if it is only because of the lack of alternatives—self-identify rather as "spiritual." Thereby "spirituality" refers to a "world behind" and not simply to the (perhaps not yet discovered or acknowledged) relations within nature.

⁴Here we see one of the shortcomings of the conceptual model on which the Post-Critical Belief Scale (PCBS, Duriez, Fontaine, & Hutsebaut, 2000; Duriez, Soenens, & Hutsebaut, 2005; Fontaine, Duriez, Luyten, & Hutsebaut, 2003; Hutsebaut, 1996) is based. The PCBS is not responsive to horizontal transcendence, but is based on Wulff's (1997, p. 635) problematic polarization between inclusion of transcendence and exclusion of transcendence. In this polarization it is presupposed as taken-for-granted what transcendence means—a kind of taken-for-granted normativity that stands also behind the distinction between belief and unbelief.

⁵Faivre (2010) characterizes esotericism as follows: "The four fundamental characteristics are as follows: 1. The idea of universal correspondences. Non-'causal' correspondences operate between all the levels of the universe [...] 2. The idea of living Nature. The cosmos is not only a series of correspondences. Permeated with invisible but active forces, the whole of Nature, considered as a living organism, as a person, as a history, connected with that of the human being and of the divine world. [...] 3. The role of mediations and of the imagination. These two notions are mutually complementary. [...] 4. The experience of transmutation. [...] It is the transformation of oneself, which can be a 'second birth'; and as a corollary of a part of Nature (e.g., in a number of alchemical texts)." (p. 12)

The Difference Between Institutional Mediation and Individual Mediation

Individualization has become one of the most influential characterizations of modern religious culture in Western societies. It assumes that experiences, beliefs and practices which for centuries have been embedded in, mediated through, and controlled by religious institutions have increasingly become the private affair of individuals. We may talk about processes of de-institutionalization of religion (Hood et al., 2009, pp. 372–380; Streib, 2007).

Luckmann, together with Berger (1967) and Berger and Luckmann (1966), described individualism as major transition in modern cultures, which heavily influenced also the religious domain. It is Luckmann’s (1967) thesis that religion has not disappeared in modernity, but that religion has changed its form: It moved from institutional embeddedness to individual autonomy and individual preference. Therefore Luckmann talks about “invisible religion”—which claims that part of religion has become invisible on the screens of sociologists and others, when they primarily attend to the institutionalized and organized social world. Of course, such expertise is possible only because Luckmann’s rather wide concept of religion includes a primary focus on individual experiences of transcendences and their communicative reconstructions.

Berger (1979) perhaps went one step further when introducing the notion of a “heretical imperative” which suggests that persons in modern Western societies have to make an individual choice about their religious preference and affiliation. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility that people make a choice in favor of their past institutional affiliation. But Berger proposed three options for religious thought: reassertion of authority and tradition (deductive option), interpretation of the tradition in terms of modern secularity (reductive option), and the resort to experience as ground of religious affirmations (inductive option). In these options, we can discern the polarity between institutional mediation vs. individual mediation.

It is the merit of Troeltsch (1912) to describe religious individualism decades earlier—however not as new phenomenon in the contemporary religious landscape of his time, but as a type of religiosity that has been around for centuries: mysticism. His definition of mysticism in “the widest sense of the word” is this: mysticism “is simply the insistence upon a direct inward and present religious experience” (p. 730). As already noted in more detail above, in his historical analysis and portrait of mysticism, Troeltsch presents a clear polarity between individual immediacy and institutional mediation. But more: This polarity is presented as frequent, and rather inevitable, development in the history of religion. For this polarity, it is important to note that Troeltsch also accounts for a type of mysticism *outside* organized religion.

Taken together, Troeltsch’s detailed historical analysis of mysticism, Luckmann’s analysis of invisible religion, and Berger’s heretical imperative describe the emergence of an experience-based individual religiosity which is not embedded in religious organizations and does not need, and perhaps does not even accept, any institutional mediation.

Thus we think it is justified to construct a second specific difference for our conceptualization of religion, in order to account for an important differentiation in the religious field: that between individual mediation and institutional mediation. To characterize both poles of the polarity: Institutionalized mediation says that, for the individual, there is no other way to transcendence but through the church, the sacraments and priests; that there is no other truth than the institutionally sanctioned teachings; and that the ultimate concern is determined by the institution and its tradition. Consistently, institutional mediation requires religious institutions or organization with a high degree of organization and an established wealth of resources. Following the expertise of Weber and Bourdieu, we conceptualize also here a middle ground, a third option. This third way of mediation is labeled charismatic, thus reflects the sect type of mediation through a prophetic and charismatic person.

At the other pole of the spectrum, there is no or very low mediation of transcendence, but instead the experiential immediacy of the individual; there are no claims of absoluteness, but individualistic evidence based on experience; there is also no or very low degree of organizational structure. It is the kind of religion that we (Streib & Hood, 2011) have called the “privatized, experience-oriented religion.”

Conclusion

Understanding “spirituality” is possible in a conceptual framework of ‘religion,’ when this framework is comprehensive and detailed enough as to include and account for versions of religion that are characterized by ways of symbolization of transcendence and ultimate concern other than vertical and by ways of mediation other than through tradition, institution, organization and charismatic authority—in other words: When privatized, experience-oriented religion and its immediacy can be accounted for.

In this chapter, we have outlined such a conceptual model with reference to classic expertise in the philosophy, sociology and psychology of religion. And this should be sufficient in the context of this volume, which is dedicated to presenting the results from the empirical study of “spirituality” in the USA and Germany. Thus, in the context of this volume, the aim of this chapter is setting demarcations for a framework for understanding “spirituality” and for the interpretation of results from research—and eventually disappointing readers who may expect from our book a new theory of spirituality. There is no more theory of spirituality in the chapters to follow than “grounded” in, or emerging from, the responses of our research participants to our invitation to give us their subjective definitions and indicate their semantic preferences and their responses to a variety of instruments that were analyzed in the most sophisticated ways we could afford.

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Deconversion and “Spirituality”— Migrations in the Religious Field

2

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Abstract

The Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality” has been inspired by the previous Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on Deconversion. In this chapter we review this previous study and highlight the open questions and desiderata for the present study. Linking the two research perspectives implies the interesting question: Does “spirituality” and biographical development toward “spirituality” involve processes of deconversion? Because both are changes in the religious field that are associated with the “spiritual” self-attribution, our model of the religious field may help to understand this link. Where is privatized, experience-oriented religion located in the religious field?

It need not be kept secret: The inspiration for studying the semantics and psychology of “spirituality,” which is presented in this volume, originates in our previous study on deconversion: When this previous study, the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on Deconversion (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009) came to a conclusion, we reflected on the most urgent desiderata following from this research.

And one of the unexpected findings was that deconversion was associated with a strong preference to identify as being “more spiritual than reli-

gious” and to a lesser degree with being “neither religious nor spiritual,” but in any case with a reluctance to identify as “being religious” (Streib et al., 2009, pp. 85–87; 239). Correlations of self-identified “spirituality” with scales on personality, fundamentalism and religious schemata, and also careful reading of the interviews with a selection of deconverts did profile the self-identified “spirituality” to some extent. Still, we could not determine precisely what our respondents mean by the word “spirituality.” This led us to note a desideratum and conclude that “further research is needed about the semantics of spirituality in a cross-cultural comparison” (p. 240).

Chapters 5–10 in this volume present an empirical response to this desideratum. In this chapter we aim at outlining the conceptual frame and locate “spirituality” and deconversion in our model of the religious field (Streib & Hood, 2013).

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The Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study on Deconversion

The Deconversion Project was the collaboration of two teams, one based at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, USA and the other based at the Bielefeld University, Germany. Field work was completed in 2005. Besides the book publication (Streib et al., 2009), a number of articles and chapters address detailed questions such as the relation of conversion and deconversion (Paloutzian, Murken, Streib, & Namini, 2013; Streib, 2014), interpreting deconversion trajectories (Keller, Klein, Hood, & Streib, 2013), or the relation of deconversion and atheism (Hood & Chen, 2013; Streib & Klein, 2013).

The Deconversion Project was based on a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data, starting with the qualitative. The study included a total of 129 deconverts in the two countries. Narrative interviews and faith development interviews were conducted with 99 deconverts from a broad variety of religious groups and organization in the USA and Germany. Aside from these qualitative instruments, an extensive questionnaire was answered by all deconverts; in addition, in-tradition members also answered the questionnaire (“in-tradition members” is the term used in the Bielefeld-based Deconversion Project for members of the religious groups from which the deconverts have disaffiliated), the goal being to interview ten in-tradition members per deconvert. Thus, the quantitative database includes questionnaire data from 1067 in-tradition members and 129 deconverts. The measures included in the questionnaire assess self-identification as “spiritual” and “religious,” personality traits, psychological well-being and growth, religious fundamentalism, right-wing authoritarianism, and religious styles. In addition to the 99 faith development interviews of deconverts, 177 faith development interviews with in-tradition members were conducted. As can be seen from this brief characterization of the data, this research on deconversion is based on an innovative design triangulating quantitative and qualitative data; also this design has inspired the present study on “spirituality.”

Deconversion Trajectories as Migrations in the Religious Field

Preparing for the empirical assessment of deconversion, it was not only necessary to develop and profile a concept of ‘deconversion’—there we have identified a set criteria such as *loss of religious experience, intellectual doubt, moral criticism, emotional suffering* and *disaffiliation from the community* (Streib & Keller, 2004; Streib et al., 2009, p. 22). It was also necessary to conceptually clarify the possible deconversion trajectories as migrations in the religious field. And this conceptual work resulted in a reconstruction of the model of the religious field, as we know it from Weber (1921) or Bourdieu (1971a, b); for this reconstruction, Troeltsch’s (1912) expertise on mysticism (see Chap. 1, this volume) has revealed very helpful, but needs to be translated into the framework of the religious field—as we will describe below in this chapter.

In the Deconversion Project, we considered as deconversion trajectories the following options (Streib et al., 2009, pp. 26–28):

1. *secularizing exit*: termination of (concern with) religious belief and praxis, termination of membership in organized religion;
2. *oppositional exit*: adopting a different belief system of, or engaging in different ritual praxis in, or affiliation with, a higher-tension, more oppositional religious organization, which could mean e.g. conversion into a fundamentalist or new religious group;
3. *integrating exit*: adopting a different belief system of, or engaging in different ritual praxis in, or affiliation with, an integrated or more accommodated religious organization;
4. *privatizing exit*: termination of membership, but continuity of private religious belief and private religious praxis; this is what is meant by ‘invisible religion’ (Luckmann, 1967);
5. *heretical exit*: individual heretical appropriation of new belief system(s) or engagement in different religious praxis (syncretistic, invisible religion, spiritual quest) without new organizational affiliation.

The first four of these deconversion trajectories can be understood within the framework of the (traditional) religious field with church and sect as most powerful actors in competition for the affiliation of lay people: secular exiters could be expected to leave the religious field, oppositional and integrating exiters migrate between church and sect, and religious switchers move between churches of similar degree of integration.

In contrast, privatizing and heretical exiters pose a problem to the traditional concept of the religious field because they continue holding religious beliefs and engage in religious praxis of some sort—eventually a rather different sort, or a kind of quilt composition of beliefs and practices—but privatizing and heretical exiters do not care about, and turn their back on, the organized religious actors (church; sect), and only a few may have become private clients of magicians. The privatizing and heretical exiters apparently have changed the “rules of the game.” To account for these kinds of migrations, we have therefore proposed the identification of a segment in the religious field that is not “organized,” i.e. not dominated by powerful religious actors such as churches and sects, but are highly privatized and characterized by rather occasional networks or scenes.

In the empirical work of the study, the deconversion trajectories have been explored. Using the biographical information from the interviews, the deconversion trajectories of the 99 cases could be identified. All types of deconversion trajectories are represented:

29	Secular exiters
24	Privatizing exiters
9	Heretical exiters
13	Religious switchers
16	Integrating exiters and
8	Oppositional exiters.

Thus almost two third of our deconverts have left the field of organized religion: one third in privatizing and heretical exits; and 20 out of these

29 privatizing and heretical exiters self-identify as “more spiritual than religious.” However, even from those who took secular exits, not all can be regarded atheist, but eight of them self-identify as “more spiritual than religious.”

Thus, these deconverts, who have been identified and categorized on the basis of personal interviews, contribute to the unexpected high number of “more spiritual than religious” deconverts in this previous Deconversion Project. Results from the quantitative data support and detail this qualitative finding.

Higher Self-identification as “Spiritual” Among Deconverts

As Table 2.1 shows, our quantitative results reveal high numbers of people who self-identify as being “more spiritual than religious”: more than 18 % members in religious organizations in Germany and almost 37 % in the USA. However, the *deconverts*’ preference for the “more spiritual than religious” self-identification almost doubles to 36.5 % in Germany and 63.6 % in the United States.

It was an unexpected finding and it is a challenge for interpretation that deconversion is associated with such strong preference to identify as being “more spiritual than religious.” Of course, for the self-identification as being “neither religious nor spiritual,” the difference between deconverts and in-tradition members is even greater; but this may be easier to understand because of the relatively strong presence of secular exiters. But in both cases the question arises: what do the deconverts mean when self-identifying as “spiritual”?

We may speculate that a person who has just disaffiliated from a “religion,” eventually including emotional suffering and moral criticism, is rather reluctant to identify as “being religious” and—perhaps because of the lack of alternative options in the questionnaire item—thus identifies as “spiritual.” But this still leaves open the question of the semantic of “spirituality.”

Table 2.1 Spiritual/Religious Self-identification of Deconverts and In-tradition Members in the USA and Germany in the Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study of Deconversion

		More religious than spiritual (%)	More spiritual than religious (%)	Equally religious and spiritual (%)	Neither religious nor spiritual (%)	Total (%)
Germany	In-tradition members (n = 356)	43.3	18.3	32.6	5.9	100.0
	Deconverts (n = 52)	19.2	36.5	23.1	21.2	100.0
United States	In-tradition members (n = 649)	10.2	37.0	46.8	6.0	100.0
	Deconverts (n = 66)	6.1	63.6	13.6	16.7	100.0

Source Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study of Deconversion

The Open Question for the Semantics of “Spirituality”

It is obvious from this detailed observation of deconversion trajectories and their association with self-identification as being “spiritual” that there may be a variety of different meanings associated with “spirituality” in the different deconversion trajectories. However, based on the data from the Deconversion Project, the questions for the semantics of “spiritual” self-identification could not be answered. Thus, it was clear that, at the end of the Deconversion Project, we had to conclude with a desideratum and call for further research on the semantics of “spirituality.”

However, there is another insight from the Deconversion Project in regard to “spirituality”: It is clearly suggested to understand “spirituality” in terms of the religious field including migrations in the religious field. It is obvious that the varieties of both deconversion and “spirituality” suggest a revision of Weber’s and Bourdieu’s model of the religious field.

The Religious Field and “Spirituality”

The Legacy of the Classics

According to Weber’s (1921) work and Bourdieu’s (1971a, b) reconstruction, the basic pattern for a model of the religious field is the distinction between church and sect. The church-sect distinction has become one of the basic tools for

understanding religion in sociological terms and for constructing the religious field.

As detailed in Chap. 1 of this volume, when taking a closer look into Weber’s work, we find a distinction not between two, but between *three* actors. Not only the *sects* with their prophets compete with the churches and their priests; the third party of actors in the religious field are the *magicians*. What has been widely ignored, but is the longer the more necessary to recall (Daiber, 2002), is that also Troeltsch (1911, 1912) talks about *three* types, but called this third type *mysticism*.

Bourdieu’s (1971a, b) work sets the stage for a sociological perspective on what is called a “field.” His model of the religious field is close to Weber’s in respect to the religious expert actors and their characterization. It is noteworthy that it also includes the third religious expert actor which, in accord with Weber, is the *magician*. But Bourdieu’s special concern has been the dynamic in the (religious) field.

According to Bourdieu, a field is constituted by the dynamics of competition which follow a field-specific principle (nomos) and field-specific “rules of the game.” Thus actors, specialists who know best, and act according to, the rules of the game, compete with each other, they invest and accumulate the specific type of capital which is relevant in the field. They act on the basis of “wealth,” i.e. previous achievements, previous accumulation of capital. Thus, in the framework of this rather strict economic model of the field, as presented in Schäfer, Seibert, Hahne, Tovar, and

Stockmeier (2008) careful reading of Bourdieu, already the relation to the lay people appear as “external relations.” Bourdieu, however, in his (1971b, p. 6) sketch of the religious field, has seen the necessity to *include* the lay people as a fourth pole in the religious field; Bourdieu used two different arrows to indicate the distinction between the kind of relation between the specialist actors and the lay people: Specialist actors (church, sect, magician) interact in relations of competition; lay people interact with these religious suppliers in relations of “transactions” or exchange of commodities. We may take this clearly higher regard for the lay people as justification to go even one step further in considering the influence of lay people in the contemporary religious field.

There appear to be more questions than answers in regard to the application of Bourdieu’s strict economic model to the *religious* domain. Several questions are not easy to answer: What exactly is the “nomos” of the religious field? What are the “rules of the game” here? What is “religious capital”? What is the “product,” what are the “means of production” in the religious field? For our purpose, the following characteristics of a ‘field’ are important: There is competition between various religious actors; religious actors compete with each other in attracting people as clients; religious actors greatly differ in the degree of achievement and “wealth.” The “wealth” of a religious actor is difficult to specify: We could take the degree of organization, the number of personnel, the power of a tradition, influence in culture and society, and finally economic capital as indicators. But all of this can be very low or zero, as in the case of the self-employed actors or “small entrepreneurs” such as some charismatic preachers, most magicians or mystics, who nevertheless can become serious competitors in the religious field. Thus there must be something else to constitute the “wealth”—in other words: the religious capital—of a religious actor.

The discussion of the concept of religion as detailed in Chap. 1 of this volume may help us spell out an answer to the question of religious capital and thus allow to construct the religious field in a way that does not contradict, but include Bourdieu’s, Weber’s and Troeltsch’s expertise—

and finally better account for the influence of the (“lay”) people. Here is our suggestion:

The “wealth,” or capital of religious actors is their expertise in *transcendence management*. This includes:

- (a) Mediation of transcendence, i.e. expertise in the most plausible answers about how to make, cope with, and come to terms with experiences of “great” transcendences in a way that the creative potential of the individual profits most;
- (b) Mediation of ultimate concern, i.e. expertise in the most plausible answers to questions of meaning-making, supply of the best answers to questions of ultimate concern.

This immediately makes clear that religious actors with no organization, no personnel, no tradition, no money can hold the most capital and can be very successfully competing with established and well-organized religious actors in the religious field. This may be the reason for the success of “spiritual” actors who are completely without any organizational power and wealth.

And finally: This understanding of religious capital allows account for the individualization that has influenced and changed Western societies so heavily. In principle, anyone can become an actor in the religious field, when the only necessary capital is the wealth of transcendence management, and neither tradition, cultural or economic capital, nor the power of an organization are required. Thus, this model of religious field is open for and may include “spiritual” actors. And the most sociological form of organization may be the workshop or the “spiritual” scene.

Reconstruction of the Religious Field

The religious field needed to be designed to account for the dynamics of change in contemporary religion. The primary focus has been on the religious institutions, on the churches as the well-established, powerful and “wealthy” institutions, the second focus was on the sects and prophetic movements as serious competitors in the

religious field. About the third type of actors in the religious field—whether it is the magician (Weber; Bourdieu) or the mystic (Troeltsch)—there has been uncertainty regarding the organizational status and sociological relevance already in the early sociological discourse (see Simmel, 1911).

With reference to a plentitude of studies of contemporary religiosity, we conclude that there is an important—and possibly growing—segment of the religious field which has sociological relevance, but is clearly and radically individualistic, features individual immediacy to the transcendent and allows for no authority other than the individual experience-based evidence. Of the three classics, we find most resonance with the detailed and thoughtful analysis of Troeltsch on mysticism. Therefore, we find it justified to include all kinds of mysticism and radically individualized religiosity into the religious field and indicate that it is located in an low or not organized segment of the religious field (we may talk about religious or spiritual *scenes*, occasional networks), thus claim for the mystic the status of a full, powerful and eventually wealthy religious actor.

In a second step of reflection, we need to account for the fact that, as detailed in Chap. 1 of this volume, individuals greatly differ in their understanding of transcendence: There is *vertical transcendence* and ultimate concern and there is *horizontal transcendence* and ultimate concern. But exactly this may constitute the second coordinate for our construction of the religious field. Thus we work with two coordinates in constructing the religious field which can now be integrated into one model: There are (a) differences in the way transcendence is understood and socially reconstructed, differences in the direction of transcendence and ultimate concern: vertical and horizontal; there are (b) differences in the degree and structure of mediation of transcendence and ultimate concern: institutional mediation vs. individual mediation.

In Table 2.2, the ideal types of religious actors are presented. But also the middle ground variants in both dimensions are accounted for in separate cells. This way, we think, the types of actors in the contemporary implicit and explicit religious fields in the America and Europe can be outlined.

The distinction between vertical and horizontal constitutes one coordinate of the religious field. Table 2.2 visualizes this dimension as axis y, the horizontal versus vertical axis. To describe the endpoints on the vertical and horizontal axis: Vertical transcendence and ultimate concern is characterized (a) by the social reconstruction of experiences of “great” transcendences in other-worldly symbols and (b) by a direction of ultimate concern to a supernatural world; the most common symbol here is the “heaven” with God, or gods or other divine beings. Horizontal transcendence and ultimate concern is characterized (a) by the social reconstruction of experiences of “great” transcendences in this-worldly symbols, e.g. as “generalized entanglement” or in metaphors of wholeness and (b) by a direction of ultimate concern to the sanctity and the creative potential of life, including the individual person, humanity, or nature.

We are aware that we suggest a major change in the dimensions of the religious field by the inclusion of horizontal transcendence. As noted already (see also Chap. 1, this volume), the type of religiosity featuring horizontal transcendence has been identified by different terms, “invisible religion” and “implicit religion” among them. We regard this inclusion absolutely necessary for an adequate understanding of the contemporary religious landscape—and we may be among the first to suggest this inclusion into a religious field model which is derived from the classics. Thus we expect that this model of ideal type actors in the contemporary religious fields in America and Europe may elicit critical and constructive response, but will also be conceptually helpful for understanding the developments in contemporary religion and “spirituality”—and that it stands empirical testing.

Conclusion: “Spirituality” in the Religious Field

It is also obvious in Table 2.2 that “spirituality” in various versions has a place in the religious field. The three ideal types of mysticism in the

Table 2.2 Ideal-Types in the US and European Religious Fields Constructed in the Frame of Two Coordinates: Symbolization (y) and Mediation (x) of Transcendence and Ultimate Concern

		Max. ← mediation of transcendence and ultimate concern → min. (thus: degree of organization)		
		Institutional	Charismatic	Individual
Vertical ↑ Symbolization of transcendence and Ultimate Concern ↓ Horizontal		Churches , established religious organizations or institutions featuring theistic symbolizations of transcendence and ultimate concern	Theistic religious sects , oppositional, prophetic religious groups (eventually around a charismatic), featuring theistic symbolizations of transcendence and ultimate concern	Theistic religious mystics , individual religious belief and practice with theistic symbolizations of transcendence and ultimate concern, practiced in private or occasional networks
		Non-theistic religious traditions , old and new established religious traditions and institutions, featuring non-theistic religious symbolizations of transcendence and ultimate concern	Non-theistic (new) religious groups , religious groups (eventually around a charismatic) featuring non-theistic religious symbolizations of transcendence and ultimate concern	Non-theistic mystics , individual religious belief and practice, featuring non-theistic religious symbolizations of transcendence and ultimate concern, practiced in private or in occasional networks
		Implicitly religious organizations , established organizations that are (rather not regarded “religious,” but) featuring experiences of transcendence and (ultimate) concern with the sanctity or creativity of life and nature	Implicitly religious groups , groups (eventually around a charismatic or idea) that are (rather not regarded “religious,” but) featuring experiences of transcendence and (ultimate) concern with the sanctity or creativity of life and nature	Implicitly religious mystics , individual belief and practice (rather not regarded “religious,” but) featuring experiences of transcendence and (ultimate) concern with the sanctity or creativity of life and nature; practiced in private or occasional networks

right column correspond to three versions of “spirituality,” which here, as in Chap. 1 of this volume, is no more, but no less than a conceptualization in the framework of the theory of religion and the religious field.

But this way, three ideal types of “spirituality” can be identified: “spirituality” in terms of vertical symbolization of transcendence, where “spirituality” may be just seen as part of traditional, e.g. Christian religion, or experiences of transcendence are communicated in other theistic symbol systems. And there is, in the middle row, the version of “spirituality” in which experiences of transcendence come to terms and are communicated in non-theistic symbol systems, which are not based on symbols of a God or divine beings in heaven, however still include the notion of something beyond or an “other” world—whether this “other” world is populated with person-like beings such as ancestors, ghost, helpers, or filled with higher power and energy.

Mysticism, in the third row/third column, would be the place for a kind of “spirituality” in which experiences of transcendence are symbolized in this-worldly terms and every notion of an “other” world behind or above is not needed. Instead nature, the universe, humanity or the (inner, higher) self is seen as holy.

Certainly, we do not expect that individuals with these three versions of mysticism, especially the latter, implicit version, self-identify as being “spiritual” in each and every case. It is, of course, possible that symbolizations of the creativity and sanctity of nature, humanity and self are not at all associated with “spirituality” or any symbol that may belong to the semantic clusters of religion, faith, spirituality or the sacred. But, there is the possibility that research participants may associate these kinds of non-theistic or implicit religious symbolizations with “spirituality.” Some people have no problem and see no contradiction to self-identify as “atheists” or “non-theists” and

as “spiritual” at the same time. So we should not be surprised to find this in empirical research, especially when listening to research participants in interviews. When we write this here in the second chapter of our book, we of course know that our data include just this kind of “spiritual atheists and non-theists.” The reason to present this here is concern with the framework of interpretation: In our re-construction of the model of the religious field, we have such conceptual framework that may stand the empirical test and allow to better understand our participants in research.

Finally, the model of the religious field is a way to understand dynamics and migrations. Other than the—relatively static—Table 2.2 may suggest, there is movement and migration between the cells. Therefore, it is consistent to link conversion/deconversion with “spirituality.” Results from our study on deconversion even suggest that movements are not restricted to once-in-a lifetime decisions, but there are individuals with multiple deconversions and conversions. This is consistent with a vast empirical literature on conversion, spiritual transformation, and deconversion (Hood et al., 2009; Chap. 8, this volume).

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Investigating “Spirituality”: Between Survey Data and the Study of Biographies

3

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Abstract

“Spirituality” has become a rather popular way of self-describing one’s world view and practice in relation to the ultimate. While for many “spirituality” is more or less identical with “religion,” surveys document that a growing number of people contrast “spirituality” and “religion,” self-identifying as “spiritual, but not religious” or as “more spiritual than religious.” These are indications of changes in the religious field. This chapter aims at locating the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality” in the context of results from recent large-scale survey research (General Social Survey; Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaft; Religion Monitor). Survey results on “spirituality” will be presented to contextualize analyses that are presented in later chapters of this volume—and to profile our research design and its aims. Contextualization however also means to introduce the research design of our study—which is not another survey, but rather the attempt to answer questions that surveys leave open. Most urgent desiderata in the study of “spirituality” regard the semantics, psychology and biographical significance of spirituality. Our study has thus employed a variety of methods: quantitative self-report data, free entries in the questionnaire, semantic differentials, an experimental approach, and last but not least a large amount of personal interviews. This chapter ends with an outline of the combination and triangulation of the variety of methods and sorts of data.

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Survey Results on Self-rated “Spirituality”

Results from GSS and ALLBUS

Looking at recent survey data, one thing is evident and the interpretation of the data does not leave much room for alternatives: An enormous change in the semantic field has occurred, by which “spirituality” has emerged as a serious competitor for “religion.” This geological fault in the religio-semantic landscape has taken place in a relatively short time—with great geographic and cross-cultural differences.

In the United States of America, to begin with, the semantics of “spirituality” appears to have found the most fertile soil. As presented in Table 3.1, the General Social Survey (GSS 1972–2012, 2013) documents for the year 2012 that 30.1 % self-rate as “very spiritual” and 38.0 % as “moderately spiritual,” while only 10.5 % indicate that they are “not spiritual.”

Thus a clear majority of two out of three US-Americans self-rate as moderately or very “spiritual.” Noteworthy are the proportions between “religion” and “spirituality”: The number of “not religious” (19.7 %) is almost twice the number of the “not spiritual” (10.5 %) respondents, while the number of the “very spiritual” (30.1 %) is considerably higher than that of the “very religious” (18.3 %).

Table 3.1, however, yields also some insights in different versions of the relation of “spirituality” and “religion”: On the diagonal from upper

left to lower right, the ratings on both scales are equal; thus the “equally religious and spiritual” respondents appear in the diagonal cells on the lower right half of the diagonal, while on the upper left corner, we find the “neither religious nor spiritual” and the little “religious” and “spiritual” respondents. Above the diagonal in the darker cells are the “more religious than spiritual,” while below the diagonal in the lighter cells are the “more spiritual than religious” respondents.

Over half of the US-Americans (57.6 %) assemble in the diagonal cells, and most of them (about 40 %) on the lower right; they clearly can be regarded “equally religious and spiritual.” Almost a third of the US-American respondents (30.4 %) can be identified as “more spiritual than religious,” 10.1 % of them as “clearly more spiritual than religious” (rating difference ≥ 2). Finally, 11.8 % are “more religious than spiritual” and only 1.3 % of them “clearly more religious than spiritual.” However, whether a slight difference of only one rating stage between self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious”—as is the case for the 20.3 % slightly “more spiritual than religious” in the cells right below the diagonal and the 10.5 % slightly “more religious than spiritual” in the cells right above the diagonal—expresses rather divergence or convergence of “spirituality” and “religion” remains a question for discussion. Taken together, according to the GSS, the majority of US-Americans appear to identify equally with “religion” and “spirituality”; but about one out of three US-Americans prefers “spirituality” over “religion” as self-attribution,

Table 3.1 Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in the USA (GSS 1972–2012, 2013)

	not religious	slightly religious	moderately religious	very religious	total
not spiritual	7.4%	2.1%	0.8%	0.2%	10.5%
slightly spiritual	4.8%	11.1%	5.2%	0.3%	21.5%
moderately spiritual	4.2%	6.0%	24.5%	3.2%	38.0%
very spiritual	3.2%	2.7%	9.5%	14.6%	30.1%
total	19.7%	21.9%	40.1%	18.3%	100.0%

Note Cross-tabulation based on $N = 1920$ respondents; bivariate correlation between “spiritual” and “religious” self-rating: $r = .57$ ($p \leq .001$)

Table 3.2 Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in Germany (ALLBUS 2012, 2013)

	not religious	little religious	moderately religious	quite religious	very religious	total
not spiritual	24.9%	7.2%	10.0%	7.6%	4.8%	54.4%
little spiritual	3.7%	3.5%	2.3%	4.2%	1.3%	14.9%
moderately spiritual	2.2%	1.6%	4.7%	4.3%	2.0%	14.8%
quite spiritual	1.5%	1.0%	1.7%	4.0%	2.3%	10.4%
very spiritual	0.8%	0.2%	0.6%	1.1%	2.8%	5.5%
total	33.1%	13.4%	19.2%	21.2%	13.0%	100.0%

Note Cross-tabulation based on $N = 3153$ respondents; bivariate correlation between self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious;” $r = .35$ ($p \leq .001$); the ten-point Likert scale for self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious” in the German ALLBUS survey has been transformed into a five-point scale format for better comparability with other data reported in this chapter. Since East Germans are overrepresented in the ALLBUS, percentages have been calculated using the weights for East and West German residence

while only a small group of about 10 % of them identifies as “spiritual, but not religious.”

For Germany as an exemplary European country, all of these proportions are reverse: According to the *Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften* (ALLBUS 2012, 2013), less than 6 % self-rate as “very spiritual,” while over 50 % as “not spiritual.” The percentages are detailed in Table 3.2.

In contrast, self-rating as “religious” appears to be more common in Germany: While one third of the Germans describe themselves as “not religious” (33.1 %), another third self-rate as “quite” (21.2 %) or “very religious” (13.0 %).

As in the USA, those who express their “spirituality” and “religion” in continuity are the largest group; about 40 % assemble in the cells of the diagonal from upper left to lower right. The group of persons in the lower left segment of Table 3.2 who self-rate as “more spiritual than religious” is considerably smaller (14.4 %) whereby 8.1 % describe themselves as slightly “more spiritual than religious” (rating difference = 1) and 6.3 % as clearly “more spiritual than religious” (rating difference ≥ 2). In comparison, the percentage of the “more religious than spiritual” is three times higher (46.0 %), with 16.1 % self-rating as slightly “more religious than spiritual” and 29.9 % as clearly “more religious than spiritual.”

Because for religion in Germany large differences between new and old states still exist even more than two decades after the re-union, we use this unique situation and present results for West Germany in Table 3.3 and East Germany in Table 3.4 separately. In West Germany (Table 3.3), only 6.2 % identify as “very spiritual,” while 50.0 % self-rate as “not spiritual,” 16.5 % as “little spiritual.” With 25.8 % “not religious” and 14.7 % “very religious,” West Germany appears somewhat more secular than the USA. Thus, while in regard to self-rated “religiosity” West Germany’s secularity appears clearly, but not extremely higher than in the USA, in regard to self-rated “spirituality” the difference is extreme and the proportions are clearly reversed in comparison with the USA.

When half of the population can be estimated to reject “spirituality” for themselves, there is not much room for the “more spiritual than religious,” which amounts to 14.6 % according to the ALLBUS; and the “clearly more spiritual than religious” respondents are a minority of 6.1 % in West Germany.

In East Germany (Table 3.4), 72.0 % respondents in the ALLBUS self-rate as “not spiritual,” 8.2 % as “little spiritual,” while only 2.5 % as “very spiritual.” With 63.4 % “not religious” and 9.4 % “little religious,” the clear majority of East Germans appear to reject

Table 3.3 Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in West Germany (ALLBUS 2012, 2013)

	not religious	little religious	moderately religious	quite religious	very religious	total
not spiritual	17.8%	7.6%	11.0%	8.3%	5.2%	50.0%
little spiritual	3.7%	4.0%	2.5%	4.9%	1.4%	16.5%
moderately spiritual	1.9%	1.7%	5.1%	4.9%	2.2%	15.7%
quite spiritual	1.5%	1.0%	1.8%	4.5%	2.6%	11.5%
very spiritual	0.9%	0.1%	0.7%	1.3%	3.2%	6.2%
total	25.8%	14.5%	21.2%	23.9%	14.7%	100.0%

Note Cross-tabulation based on $n = 2122$ respondents; bivariate correlation between self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious”: $r = .32$ ($p \leq .001$); the ten-point Likert scale for self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious” in the German ALLBUS survey has been transformed into a five-point scale format for better comparability with other data reported in this chapter

Table 3.4 Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in East Germany (ALLBUS 2012, 2013)

	not religious	little religious	moderately religious	quite religious	very religious	total
not spiritual	53.7%	5.5%	5.6%	4.4%	2.8%	72.0%
little spiritual	3.7%	1.4%	1.3%	1.0%	0.7%	8.2%
moderately spiritual	3.6%	1.4%	3.1%	2.1%	0.9%	11.2%
quite spiritual	1.8%	0.8%	0.9%	1.8%	0.9%	6.1%
very spiritual	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0.6%	1.1%	2.5%
total	63.4%	9.4%	11.1%	9.9%	6.3%	100.0%

Note Cross-tabulation based on $n = 1,048$ respondents; bivariate correlation between self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious”: $r = .40$ ($p \leq .001$); the ten-point Likert scale for self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious” in the German ALLBUS survey has been transformed into a five-point scale format for better comparability with other data reported in this chapter

“religion.” East Germany reveals as probably the most secular region in the world, as for example concluded also by Schmidt and Wohlrab-Sahr (2003).

Given such strong rejection of both “religion” and “spirituality,” we would not expect large portions of self-rating as “spiritual” in East Germany. But surprisingly there appear to exist “more spiritual than religious” people in East Germany, and they amount to 13.6 %—which is only slightly smaller than for West Germany. The “clearly more spiritual than religious” are even slightly higher (7.0 %) in East Germany. Of course, one swallow does not make a summer,

but this is an indication that should be observed in the years to come.

Results from the Religion Monitor

For comparison with data from another source, we calculated the self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious” according to the 2012 wave of the Religion Monitor (RM, 2012), an international survey on religion in 14 countries (Pickel, 2013). Results are presented in Tables 3.5 and 3.6. The advantage of the RM data is that in the questionnaire a 5-point rating scale was used just as in

Table 3.5 Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in the USA (Religion Monitor, 2012)

	not at all religious	little religious	moderately religious	quite religious	very religious	total
not at all spiritual	4.1%	0.7%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%
little spiritual	3.6%	4.8%	3.0%	0.2%	0.1%	11.6%
moderately spiritual	2.6%	3.7%	14.8%	5.8%	1.8%	28.7%
quite spiritual	1.5%	2.2%	5.8%	14.4%	4.6%	28.6%
very spiritual	2.3%	0.9%	3.9%	5.2%	13.5%	25.8%
total	14.1%	12.3%	27.9%	25.6%	20.0%	100.0%

Note Cross-tabulation based on $N = 983$ respondents; bivariate correlation between self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious”: $r = .58$ ($p \leq .001$)

Table 3.6 Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in Germany (Religion Monitor, 2012)

	not at all religious	little religious	moderately religious	quite religious	very religious	total
not at all spiritual	14.5%	6.5%	8.3%	2.4%	0.9%	32.7%
little spiritual	5.6%	8.4%	10.9%	3.7%	0.6%	29.2%
moderately spiritual	1.4%	3.4%	12.6%	5.3%	1.3%	23.9%
quite spiritual	0.7%	0.6%	2.4%	4.6%	1.0%	9.3%
very spiritual	0.6%	0.4%	0.9%	1.3%	1.7%	4.9%
total	22.8%	19.3%	35.1%	17.3%	5.6%	100.0%

Note Cross-tabulation based on $N = 1922$ respondents; bivariate correlation between self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious”: $r = .45$ ($p \leq .001$)

the questionnaire for our Spirituality Study (see Chap. 4), which makes comparison to our results easier. Also, comparison between US and German results is possible more directly while comparison with GSS (4-point rating) and ALLBUS (originally a 10-point rating) results is a bit more complex and we need to reckon with stronger rating on the neutral.

With 5.3 % “not at all spiritual” and 25.8 % “very spiritual” respondents, we see a ratio in the US-American RM data which is comparable to the GSS data, but on a slightly lower level. And with 20.0 % “very religious” and 14.1 % “not at all religious” respondents, also the ratio appears similar than in the GSS data, but a bit more

pronounced in the RM data (which may be due to the 5-point rating). And similar are also the sums in the diagonal for equal self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious” (51.6 % in RM; 57.6 % in GSS) —with truly “equally religious and spiritual” assembling in the lower right cells. The “more spiritual than religious” respondents (lighter cells below the diagonal) are slightly above 30 % in both surveys, while with 16.7 %, the RM documents a slightly higher number of “more religious than spiritual” respondents.

Taken together, a coherent and comparable picture emerges for the USA on the basis of GSS and RM data; and we can conclude with even greater certainty: About one of three

US-Americans self-rates as “more spiritual than religious,” while about an even greater number of US-Americans (about 40 %) self-rates as “equally religious and spiritual.”

On first sight, the RM data for Germany appear to present a somewhat different picture than the ALLBUS: The RM documents only 32.7 % (the ALLBUS 54.1 %) “not at all spiritual” self-ratings; and with only 22.8 % “not at all religious” respondents, the RM is considerably below the ALLBUS which documents 32.7 % “not religious” (we may speculate whether this difference is due to the difference between the 10-point rating in the ALLBUS and the 5-point rating in the RM or also to sampling effects, because respondents of the RM have initially been asked whether they are willing to participate in a survey about “worldviews, values, and social cohesion”). The difference disappears, however, when we attend to the diagonals. This is what we present in the following section.

Synopsis of Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in the Presented Survey Data

This synoptic view has a focus on the cells on the diagonal. To identify the percentages of “converging” and “diverging” (Huber & Klein, 2011,

p. 60) types of “spiritual”/“religious” identities more easily, Table 3.7 presents the summed-up percentages for the diagonal cells, resp. the cells below and above the diagonal.

The calculation for the USA reveals that a majority of 57.6 % (GSS) or 51.6 % (RM) rates equally on both scales for “religion” and for “spirituality”; they belong to the convergent type which does not make a big difference between self-rating as “religious” and “spiritual.” Table 3.7 quantifies the “more spiritual than religious” in the lighter cells below the diagonals with 31.7 % (RM) and 30.4 % (GSS), while the “more religious than spiritual” in the darker cells above the diagonal sum up to 16.7 % (RM) or 11.8 % (GSS).

Attending to the diagonal cells for the German RM and ALLBUS results, we see that 41.8 % (RM) or 39.9 % (ALLBUS) have equal ratings on both scales. Also on the cells below the diagonal, we have comparable results, i.e. 17.3 % (RM) and 14.4 % (ALLBUS) “more spiritual than religious” respondents; and 40.9 % (RM) and 46.0 % (ALLBUS) “more religious than spiritual” respondents.

To go into more detail with the diagonal: While the highest percentages among American respondents (about 40 %) can be found in the cells with converging types of “spiritual” and “religious” identity on a medium or high level (self-rating as “equally religious and spiritual”), the highest percentages among Germans (about

Table 3.7 Summed Percentages of Diagonal Cells for Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in the USA and Germany

	GSS 2012 USA	Religion Monitor 2012 USA	ALLBUS 2012 Germany	Religion Monitor 2012 Germany
Clearly more religious	1.3%	2.6%	29.9%	17.2%
Slightly more religious	10.5%	14.1%	16.1%	23.7%
Equal ratings as “religious” and “spiritual”	57.6%	51.6%	39.9%	41.8%
Slightly more spiritual	20.3%	18.3%	8.1%	12.7%
Clearly more spiritual	10.1%	13.4%	6.3%	4.6%

Note For better comparability the ten-point Likert scale for self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious” of the German ALLBUS survey has been transformed into a five-point Likert scale format. Since East Germans are overrepresented in the ALLBUS, percentages have been calculated using the weights for East and West German residence

30 %) can be found also in the cells with converging types of “spiritual” and “religious” identity, but in those cells with both self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious” on medium/low level (these correspond to the “neither religious nor spiritual”). This pattern mirrors the difference of secularization between both cultures.

Further, it is obvious that, for the USA, the percentages in the lighter segment of Table 3.1 (GSS) and Table 3.5 (RM) are higher than those in the darker segment, while the opposite pattern can be observed for the German respondents in Table 3.2 (ALLBUS) and Table 3.6 (RM). This finding reflects that “spirituality” is the more common term in the USA while, in Germany, it is still more common to talk about “religion.” According to both Religion Monitor and GSS, the percentages of the diverging, slightly and clearly more “spiritual” types cover about 30 % of the US respondents and double the percentage of the slightly or clearly more “religious” types. In Germany, on the contrary, the percentages of the slightly and clearly more “religious” are more than twice as high as the percentages of the slightly and clearly more “spiritual” types.

It has to be noticed, however, that more than half of the Americans belong to the converging type of equally “spiritual” and “religious” ratings. In Germany, the converging type of the equally “spiritual” and “religious” is not as present as in the USA, but nevertheless with about 40 % of the respondents the most common type of identity. The somewhat lower correlations between self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious” for the German Religion Monitor and ALLBUS samples correspond with the observation of this cultural difference. Nevertheless, the correlations are still highly significant and substantial in both countries. The empirical finding that large proportions of the populations in both the USA and Germany express their “spirituality” and their “religiousness” in continuity clearly contradicts attempts to separate both terms sharply on the conceptual level.

On Route to a “Spiritual” Society? Trends Over Time

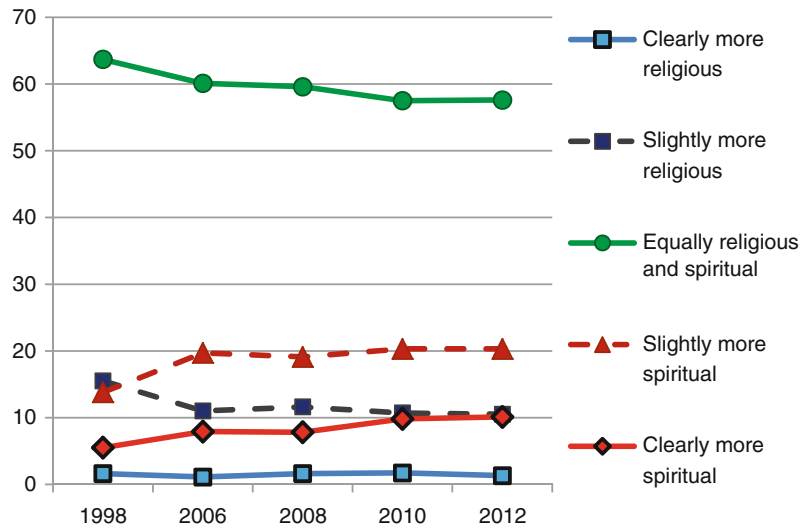
Fortunately for the USA, GSS survey data on self-rated “spirituality” are available beginning with the year 1998. After a break of eight years, self-rated “spirituality” has been assessed in addition to self-rated “religion” on a regular basis since 2006. Hence, there are data for every other year from 2006 to 2012. These data allow to demonstrate a considerable increase of self-rated “spirituality” in the USA between 1998 and 2012. For visualization in Fig. 3.1, we use the same five types of converging and diverging “spiritual”/“religious” identity as in Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 and present the increase and decrease of their percentage between 1998 and 2012.

For the interpretation of Fig. 3.1, it should be noted that in 1998 much of the changes in the religio-semantic field have very likely already occurred (and unfortunately, we have no GSS data from the years before 1998 on self-rated “spirituality”). But still, after 1998 the trend towards a preference of self-rating as “spiritual” is remarkable. As shown in Fig. 3.1, the size of the “more spiritual than religious” groups has continuously increased: from 13.8 % in 1998 to 20.3 % in 2012 for the “slightly more spiritual than religious,” and from 5.5 % to 10.1 % for the “clearly more spiritual than religious.” In the same time span, the number of the “slightly more religious than spiritual” decreased from 15.5 to 10.5 % while the (small) number of the “clearly more religious than spiritual” appears to be rather constant (1.6 % in 1998; 1.3 % in 2012 with slightly higher or lower values in the years between). Interestingly, also the number of those who rate their “spirituality” and “religion” equally has continuously decreased: from 63.7 % in 1998 to 57.6 % in 2012.

Thus, the preference of “spirituality” was steadily growing. The increase of the “more spiritual than religious” groups is in particular at the expense of those who rate their “spirituality”

Fig. 3.1 Changes of Converging and Diverging “Spiritual” and “Religious” Identities in the USA 1998–2012 (Percent)

Note GSS, 1998: *N* = 1422; GSS, 2006: *N* = 2942; GSS, 2008: *N* = 1979; GSS, 2010: *N* = 2015; GSS, 2012: *N* = 1920



and “religion” in continuity and the “slightly more religious than spiritual.” The growing popularity of distinguishing one’s self-rated “spirituality” from one’s self-rated “religion” might thus hint to a process of religious diversification. Taken together, we may speak of an earthquake in the religio-semantic field in the USA—and the data as presented in Fig. 3.1 reflect its aftershocks.

Unfortunately, we do not have comparable data for Germany because self-ratings for both “spirituality” and “religion” have been included in the ALLBUS 2012 (2013) for the first time (this may also reflect that talking about “spirituality” is less common in Germany than in the USA). The only large-scale survey data for Germany wherein self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” have been assessed more than once are those of the Religion Monitor. But still there have been only two waves of the Religion Monitor yet so that profiling the increase of self-rated “spirituality” is not possible in as much detail as for the USA. Figure 3.2 presents the changes of the percentages of the five types of “spiritual”/“religious” on the basis of the Religion Monitor waves 2008 and 2012.

In comparison to the USA, the group of the “clearly more spiritual than religious” appears to be rather stable in Germany between 2008 (4.5 %) and 2012 (4.6 %). A slight increase is,

however, visible for the “slightly more spiritual than religious” who have grown from 11.2 % (2008) to 12.7 % (2012). The “more religious than spiritual” groups seem to be rather stable; also the numbers for the “slightly more religious than spiritual” do not differ at all (23.6 % in 2008 and 23.7 % in 2012) while the numbers for the “clearly more religious than spiritual” differ only minimally (16.7 % in 2008; 17.2 % in 2012).

The clearest (although small) difference can be found for those who rate their “spirituality” and “religion” equally whose number has

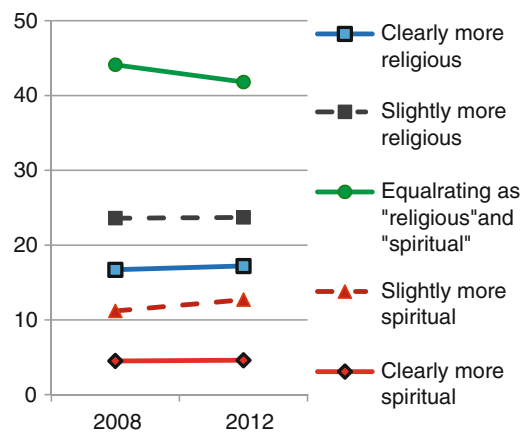


Fig. 3.2 Changes of Converging and Diverging “Spiritual” and “Religious” Identities in Germany 2008–2012

Note RM 2008: *N* = 956; RM 2012: *N* = 1922 (in percent)

decreased from 44.1 % in 2008 to 41.8 % in 2012. Of course, two points of measurement are clearly not enough to establish a statistical trend. In comparison to the changes which have been observed for the American religio-semantic landscape, we might nevertheless notice a similar picture deriving from the Religion Monitor data for Germany: An increase (however, only a small one) of the number of people describing themselves as “more spiritual than religious” at the expense of those rating their “spirituality” and “religion” in continuity. Whether this picture is only a snapshot or does really show a similar development in Germany as in the USA, however, is an open question for future research.

We have presented these survey results in some detail to give examples of the diversity in the religious fields and the cross-cultural differences in regard to the new semantics of “spirituality” as indicated by the most valid data, namely self-ratings. Examples could be extended, of course, to include many other countries in the world. As data for such comparison, the data from the World Value Survey (WVS, 2014) could be used; the data from the International Social Survey Programme with a focus on religion date back to 2008 (ISSP, 2008) and might be limited due to a rather questionable wording for “spiritual” self-identification (“I consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred or the supernatural”).

Further Research on “Spirituality” Using Survey Data

Based on the WVS data 1981–2000, Houtman and Aupers (2007) have published their lively discussed article in which they document a “spiritual turn,” a “spread of post-Christian spirituality” in fourteen Western countries. Based on a selection of questions regarding the image of God (personal God; some sort of spirit or life force; etc.), New Age affinity, disagreement with traditional Christian beliefs, but simultaneous disagreement with secular rationalism, Houtman and Aupers’ analysis indicates that France, Great Britain, the

Netherlands and Sweden most clearly reveal a pattern of decline of traditional values and religion. The authors’ analysis shows, for the religious fields in the USA and in Germany, a modest (USA) or recognizable (Germany) longitudinal increase of post-Christian spirituality from 1980 to 2000.

In another study using data from the fourth wave (2008–2010) of the European Value Study, Siegers (2012) has profiled value orientations of “alternatively spiritual” persons. Alternative spirituality has been identified on the basis of a selection of questionnaire responses: church attendance = no; religious individualism = yes; spiritual interest = yes; image of God = impersonal; belief in reincarnation = yes; prayer/mediation = yes; importance of God = no. Siegers concludes (p. 320) that “alternative spiritualities are a relevant option in Europe, with large regional differences however.” According to his analyses, “alternative spiritualities” are more frequent (between 10 and 15 %) in the North and West of Europe, while less frequent in the Catholic countries in the South and Middle of Europe.

Huber and Klein (2011) have used the data for Germany from the Religion Monitor 2008 to compare the beliefs, practices, and experiences of people according to their self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious.” They compared four extreme groups of converging and diverging “spiritual”/“religious” identities: both self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” on a low level, both on a high level, or solely “spirituality” or “religion” on a high level. They found that people who describe themselves as “spiritual,” but not as “religious” displayed high levels of meditation, but did not differ from people describing themselves as “religious” in terms of experiences of all-unity or an impersonal image of God as some kind of “energy.” Solely “religious” people were found to express more experiences of a divine intervention in their lives, to imagine God rather as a person, and to pray more often. However, the most important finding of Huber and Klein is that people who rated themselves both as highly “spiritual” and “religious” displayed the highest level both on prayer *and* meditation, experiences

of divine intervention *and* all-unity, and of God images as person *and* as energy. Additionally, they expressed higher levels of religious quest than the other groups. The group of the highly “spiritual” *and* “religious” scored significantly higher on all variables, including meditation, unity experiences, and an impersonal God image, than the solely “spiritual” group. Thus, even supposedly “spiritual” beliefs, practices, and experiences might become more visible when expressed in continuity with one’s “religion.”

Conclusion for the Survey Results on “Spirituality”

Taken together, the survey results clearly demonstrate that self-rated “religiosity” has become a new semantic competitor with the name “spirituality”—with considerable cross-cultural differences. This assessment of self-rating in large-scale surveys is a major step forward. This is an important contribution to mapping changes the religious field.

Even if the monitoring of “spirituality” started somewhat late after the semantic turn to “spirituality,” some survey data allow for the documentation of changes of the semantic preferences over time. Some results also tentatively indicate that this new semantic development may correspond to the rise of “alternative” or “post-Christian” spiritualities—a conclusion that is not without criticisms (Popp-Baier, 2009). But these analyses also show that “spirituality” is not at all a well-defined construct, as we argue in Chap. 1, and no real consensus has been reached about how to operationalize “spirituality” in large-scale survey data, as we see in the different strategies of Houtman and Aupers and of Siegers.

And here is another question which the large-scale surveys raise, but can only tentatively answer: As we have shown above for the data from GSS, ALLBUS and Religion Monitor, the majority of respondents self-rate as being *equally* “spiritual” and “religious,” while there are—with considerable difference between countries—more

or less large groups which self-rate *stronger* as “spiritual” than as “religious”; and others self-identify as “more religious than spiritual.” One may assume that the “equally religious and spiritual” respondents would not see much difference between “religion” and “spirituality,” while the “more spiritual than religious” have a more distinct understanding of “spirituality.” But this assumption is highly speculative and not based on research results—and later chapters in this volume, especially Chap. 9, will document the diversity.

Thus, even though we regard the inclusion of items for self-assessment of “spirituality”—and the self-rating scales are probably the most valid data the surveys contribute to our question—as major step forward in research on the religious field, it largely leaves open the question what respondents may have in mind when self-identifying as “spiritual.” This is the question for the semantics of “spirituality”—which we regard as the most urgent desideratum to which the research presented in this volume responds.

Investigating “Spirituality”—Steps Toward a Research Design

This is the point where we can clearly state what the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality” should accomplish and what we did not aim at: We did not aim at adding another large-scale survey to the established surveys. Instead, our aim was to take up some of the most urgent desiderata in regard to the semantics and psychology of “spirituality.” Research design, sampling strategy, method and instrument selection and the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches profile our distinct study aims.

Thus the presentation of survey results in this chapter has various aims: to present the most recent survey data on “spirituality” that our study is not able to provide; to evidence that our study responds to a growing development in the religious landscape; to contextualize the results of our study in a framework of survey results; to

present estimates of the proportions of “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual” and “more religious than spiritual” groups in Germany and the USA, and thus help to draw correct conclusions from the proportions of these groups in our study (see Chap. 4); and finally: to point to questions that large-scale surveys leave open and that our research may answer.

As noted already, we conclude from the previous research, including the large-scale surveys, that it remains a largely open question what respondents mean when they self-identify as “spiritual.” Thus one of the primary tasks is the assessment of the semantics of “spirituality.” Therefore the primary challenge is the construction of a research design for the semantics of “spirituality” in which to include the most elaborate methods and instruments, and use the most sophisticated evaluation procedures. This re-opening of the semantic question includes a decisive step in the direction of idiographic approaches.

This, of course, does not mean that nomothetic perspectives are excluded or put on hold. But if we want to know what people on the street mean by “spirituality,” we have to attend to what they tell us, i.e. implement methods to collect their understandings in their own words. As detailed in Chap. 4, we included methods such as semantic differentials, free-text entries in the questionnaire, an indirect reaction-time experiment and personal interviewing. And, while each of these methods has produced valuable insights, it is the free-text entries and the personal interviews that are most strongly embedded in an idiographic approach—and, as Chap. 9 and the case study chapters (Chaps. 18 through 22) demonstrate, have generated a wealth of information about the semantics of “spirituality” – and strongly suggest that there are varieties of meanings that respondents associate with the word “spirituality.”

A second big question that does not find sufficient answers on the basis of survey data is the question for the psychological correlates. What predicts self-attributed “spirituality”? What are the psychological outcomes? For answering

these questions, research should include a decisive emic approach. Therefore, we have decided against including any of the many “spirituality” scales. This reluctance is based on the conceptual consideration which, as detailed in Chap. 1, poses serious questions against any attempt to establish a concept of ‘spirituality’ distinct from, or as substitute for, ‘religion.’ The understanding of spirituality as “privatized, experience-oriented religion” does not suggest the development and implementation of “spirituality” scales.

Nevertheless we made one exception: scales which assess mysticism. The clear expertise from classic works in the philosophy, sociology and psychology of religion suggest a relation between mysticism and “spirituality.” Therefore we explored this relation in our study—and found clear relations to “spirituality.”

For the investigation of psychological correlates, the reference point should always be the self-attributed “spirituality” and the meanings that respondents associate with this word. On the basis of our data, we especially have elaborated personality (Chap. 12) and religious styles (Chap. 13) as potential predictors, and generativity and well-being (Chap. 25) and faith development (Chap. 24) as potential outcomes.

Finally, a third big question about “spirituality” regards the biographical developments that led respondents to their way of understanding and identifying with “spirituality.” Here we consistently rely on idiographic approaches, and the personal interview is the method to use. Here the richness and depth of structural and narrative data can be overwhelming, but types may emerge from the data.

Taking it all together, we see the need for research designs that complement survey data by psychometric scales and idiographic tools, which allow us to find answers to the questions about “spirituality” that cannot be answered by survey data alone. The major challenge with such approach is the triangulation of methods and various sorts of data. In Chap. 4 we present our approach to a research design that combines a variety of instruments and generates a variety of data of different sorts. The chapters to follow may convince the reader that step-by-step these

data and results can be triangulated in a way that yield insight in the semantics and psychology of self-attributed “spirituality.”

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Design, Methods, and Sample Characteristics of the Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study of “Spirituality”

4

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Abstract

The Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality” aims at an in-depth understanding of what people call “spirituality.” For this aim, a multi-method design has been applied. Self-report instruments such as psychometric scales were used with a large sample in Germany and the USA. Our sampling procedure, aiming at capturing the varieties of being “spiritual,” resulted in a sample of 1113 participants in the USA and 773 in Germany. This chapter introduces the instruments which were compiled for our questionnaire, the Faith Development Interview, and the Implicit Association Task which we used with a selected smaller sample. The chapter also describes the construction of “focus groups,” groups defined according to participants’ self-identification as “spiritual,” as “religious” or as “atheist/non-theist.” These focus groups have been used to structure the sample with respect to positions in the religious field. They were also used for the selection of participants for personal interviews, the Faith Development Interview (FDI), and an experiment, the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The characterization of the focus groups concludes the chapter.

Conceptualizing the Cross-Cultural, Multi-method Study Design

What does being “spiritual” mean to those who identify with this self-attribution? Can different versions of being “spiritual” or of understanding “spirituality” be identified in the USA and Germany? Can we discern social, biographical and psychological preconditions for being “spiritual,” which may also be different in the different

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religious landscapes? Can we identify effects and outcomes? To explore these questions, the project has taken a multi-method approach and has collected quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaires, experiments, and semi-structured interviews. This combination of different methods allows the analysis of an individual's relation to "spirituality" at different levels of description: Self-report measures in the questionnaire ask for responses to pre-defined options and the participants decide what best represents their view or corresponds to their opinions. These measures depend on subjects' understanding of the stimuli offered and on their awareness of what they consider "spiritual." An experiment like the Implicit Association Test (IAT) asks for spontaneous responses to stimuli presented and can thus tap into attitudes respondents may not be aware of. The Faith Development Interview (FDI) invites respondents to use their own language or find their own words, and thereby talk about their life, reflect on their experience and thus relate their biography with their way of being "religious," "spiritual," "atheist" or something else. Here, participants have the opportunity to elaborate their own view on "spirituality," drawing on their personal history as the interview proceeds and the short term relationship between interviewee and interviewer develops. In the course of the FDI, interviewees are confronted with existential questions, referring to the meaning of their lives and to their ideas regarding the finiteness of life (see also Chap. 15).

We combined these methods because each has its strengths and drawbacks. Quantitative data were obtained with psychometrically sound instruments applied to the large sample which allows generalizations with respect to sample characteristics, and statistical analyses for the identification of meaningful relationships of the concepts and of commonalities and differences of the groups under study. For the exploration of individual dynamics, we used the experimental approach and the personal interview. These methods afford specific technology, skills, and time, and have been administered to respondents

in the USA and Germany. The sample was further divided in subsamples ("focus groups"), which were constructed according to quantitative analyses (see below) as indicators for positions in the religious field.

Studying "Spirituality" in Cultural and Biographical Context

The most central term of this study is "spirituality," however, not as a scientific concept that defines or explains something, but as self-identification and as everyday expression (see Chaps. 1 and 3 for more details). The central research interest of the study is the differential cross-cultural (comparing Germany and the USA) analysis of contemporary forms of self-identified "spirituality" as characterized by their positive or negative relation with religious traditions and with secular orientations. Therefore, central to the design is the semantic analysis of "spiritual" self-identification in the context of related self-identifications. We strive to explore its subjective meanings and functions.

One of the central questions was: what kinds of semantics are linked to "spirituality"? Therefore, the semantics of "spirituality" was studied by different methods with different degrees of standardization. We used the semantic differential, which offers the same stimuli to all respondents, we invited subjective definitions of "spirituality" as understood by respondents, we used respondents' answers in interviews exploring the biographical development of their faith, and we tested their responses to experimental stimuli. To relate subjective self-identifications to indicators of spirituality, we included scales measuring "Attitudes toward God," and "Mysticism."

The assessment of the socio-biographical dispositions was another objective: Culture, including religious affiliation, the respective society, and position in the respective social space were explored as potentially contributing

to individual conceptions of “spirituality.” The individual appropriations of “spirituality” are also supposed to be shaped by personality dispositions such as personality traits, religious schemata, attachment/mentalization, wisdom-related performance, and faith development. As socio-biographical consequences we modelled decisions about affiliations, but also everyday decisions. While the former were explored with respective items in the questionnaire, the latter were explored by analyzing interviews. Generativity and psychological well-being are possible outcomes of specific types of “spirituality” and were studied by including well-introduced measures in the questionnaire.

In Fig. 4.1, approaches and instruments are assembled and grouped according to their primary intent: on the middle level on both sides the approaches for better understanding the self-identification as being “spiritual” from the subjective perspective (semantic analysis) and an objective evaluation (measures of spirituality) are displayed. Dispositions are placed on the top and consequences on the bottom of the figure, each divided in socio-biographical and psychological aspects; they are supposed to indicate the dynamics which informed the design and com-

pilation of instruments. How is “spirituality,” how are varieties of spiritualities captured by psychometric instruments? What are the social or biographical and psychological dispositions of “spirituality”? What are the social or biographical and psychological consequences of being “spiritual”? These questions structured the design of the study as displayed in Fig. 4.1.

Instruments and Measures

To put this design at work, a questionnaire was compiled which contains, besides closed and open questions, an invitation to be interviewed and to participate in an experiment. The strategy was to start with quantitative data collection and select, from the quantitative data, subsamples according to different self-identifications with respect to “spirituality” for personal interviews. Here, we first describe the questionnaire, then the instruments used with the subsamples. Table 4.1 gives an overview of all instruments used in the large sample and selected subsamples. Table 4.2 gives an overview of means, and reliabilities of all instruments used in the large sample.

Fig. 4.1 The Design of the Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study of “Spirituality”

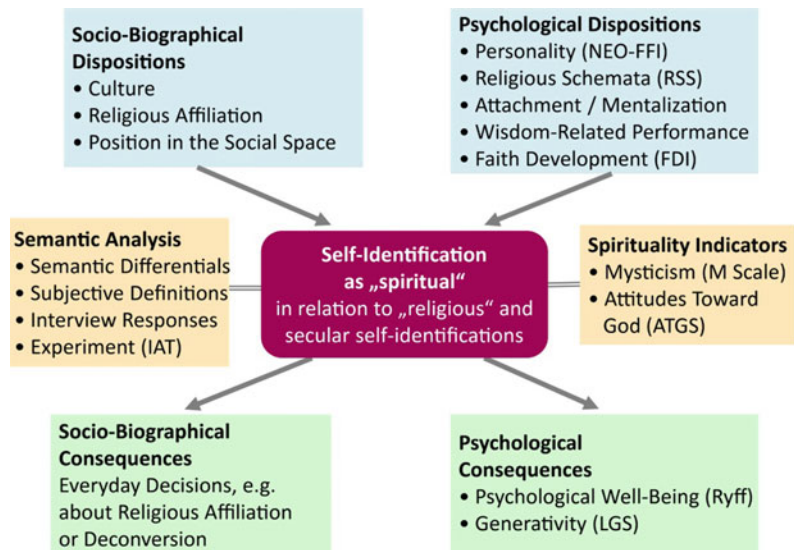


Table 4.1 Instruments in the Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study of “Spirituality”

	Scale (author) in questionnaire	Items
1	Demographics (Streib et al.)	22
2	NEO five factor inventory (Costa and McCrae)	60
3	Attachment (Granqvist)	8
4	Psychological well-being and growth scale (Ryff)	42
5	Loyola generativity scale (McAdams)	20
6	Religious schema scale (Streib, Hood, & Klein)	15
7	Attitudes toward god scale attitudes toward god scale (Wood, Worthington, Exline, Yali, Aten, & McMinn)	9
8	Mysticism scale (Hood)	32
9	Semantic differentials (identical polar adjectives for “religion” and for “spirituality”) (a) Osgood semantic differential (Osgood) (b) Context-specific semantic differential (Streib, Hood et al.)	2 × 18 2 × 30
10	Forced-choice items of identifying oneself as religious versus spiritual and of rating one’s environment at age 12 as religious versus spiritual (Streib, Hood et al.)	1 1
11	Continuous measures of self-ratings as (a) “religious,” (b) “spiritual,” and (c) “dedicated to causes greater than myself”	3
12	Definitions of “religion” and “spirituality”: How would you define the term “religion”? How would you define the term “spirituality”?	2
Subsample: Interview and Experiment Instrument (author)		
	Faith Development Interview (Fowler)	
	Implicit Association Tests (Klein et al.)	

The Questionnaire: Measures for the Entire Sample

Socio-biographical Dispositions and Consequences: The Demographics Section of the Questionnaire

The demographic section includes sex and age, and also economic and cultural parameters (economic and cultural capital) that were constructed according to the International Standard Classification of Education 1997 (UNESCO, 2006) and OECD (2011a) indicators, in order to allow for comparison with current representative statistics (ALLBUS, 2012; GESIS, 2013). The questionnaire asked for number of household members with and without income and for family income to allow for comparison with statistics on per-capita income in the USA and Germany as calculated by the OECD (2011b) or the Statistisches Bundesamt (2014). In order to allow for

regional perspectives, the questionnaire asked for current place of residence, place of birth, and place of growing up using the first two digits of the zip codes as indicator. Current and earlier religious affiliations were assessed for the reconstruction of religious migrations such as conversions and deconversions. Self-identifications with respect to “spirituality” were assessed in varying formats, as follows.

Assessment of “Spiritual” Self-identification

For the assessment of self-identifications of being “religious” or “spiritual,” we used the forced-choice four-options item to self-identify as “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual” or “neither religious nor spiritual.” As parallel instrument for the assessment of the degree of self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious,” we

included 5-point ratings from 1 = “not religious” to 5 = “religious” and 1 = “not spiritual” to 5 = “spiritual” as continuous measures. To capture self-identifications beyond being “spiritual” and/or “religious,” we included a multiple-choice item with yes/no-options for self-descriptions such as “agnostic,” “atheist” and “non-theist.” We also asked for the description of the respondents’ environment at age 12 as “religious” or “spiritual,” using the same forced choice format described above, in order to allow reconstructions of trajectories and migrations in the religious field.

Instruments for the Semantics of “Spirituality”

To explore semantics of “spirituality,” we have included Osgood’s (1962; Snider & Osgood, 1969) classical semantic differential. With its 18 pairs of adjectives, it assesses three dimensions/factors: *evaluation*, *power*, and *activity*. In addition, we have created a Contextual Semantic Differential with 30 adjective pairs to assess connotations of “religion” and “spirituality” in their embeddedness in their semantic contexts (sample items: ‘thisworldly–otherworldly,’ ‘secular–holy,’ see Chap. 7 for details). All semantic differentials had a 5-point scale between the two adjectives. With both sets of adjective polarities, in the Osgood Semantic Differential and the Contextual Semantic Differential, the same stimuli (“religion” and “spirituality”) were offered in the same format and with the same instructions: “Here we ask you to choose the one of both adjectives that best describes ‘spirituality’” and “Here we ask you to choose the one of both adjectives that best describes ‘religion.’” Thus we have four blocks of semantic differentials, which allow the juxtaposition of the semantic associations of religion and of spirituality on the same adjective polarities (see Chap. 7 for more details and for results).

Another approach of the exploration of semantics of “spirituality” and “religion” was the invitation to the respondents to write down their subjective definitions in free entry fields. These responses were used for corpus analysis (see

Chap. 8) and coded for dimensional analyses (see Chap. 9).

Indicators for “Spirituality” and “Religion”

For the exploration of dimensions of “spirituality,” of its dispositions and consequences, we also chose a collection of well-introduced objective instruments with sound psychometric qualities. As suggested in our hypothetical model, we assumed that the Mysticism Scale (M-Scale) and the Attitudes toward God Scale (ATGS) could be indicators for different facets of “spirituality.” The ATGS focusses on the relationship with God and includes conflicted feelings. The M-Scale measures “spiritual” experience at the level of experiential facets.

The three scales of the M-Scale correspond to its three-factor structure which is based on eight experiential facets (Chen, Hood, Yang, & Watson, 2011; Hood, 1975; Hood et al., 2001) in the questionnaire: *Introvertive mysticism* is composed of *ego loss*, *timelessness/spacelessness*, and *ineffability*, denoting an inward unitary consciousness beyond time and space (sample item: “I have had an experience that was both timeless and spaceless”). *Extrovertive mysticism* is framed by *unity* and *inner subjectivity*, implying an outward merging with the wholeness of all existence (sample item: “I have had an experience in which all things seemed to be aware”). *Interpretation* incorporates *positive affect*, *sacredness*, and *noetic quality* that qualifies both types of mysticism (sample item: “I have had an experience in which a new view of reality was revealed to me”). Items of the M-scale were rated on a 5-point scale from 1 = “very inaccurate” to 5 = “very accurate.” Means and reliabilities are presented in Table 4.2; results are presented in Chap. 11.

For the 9-item Attitudes toward God Scale, the authors report two factors: (1) Positive Attitudes toward God and (2) Disappointment and Anger with God (Wood, Worthington, Exline, Yali, Aten, & McMinn, 2009). Subjects were, for example, asked to indicate, on rating scales from 0 = not at all to 10 = extremely, to what extent

they currently have specific experiences of God: “Trust God to protect and care for you” (sample item for positive attitudes) or “Feel abandoned by God” (sample item for anger toward God). Means and reliabilities of the ATGS are presented in Table 4.2.

The M-Scale and the ATGS were translated into German for this project by Barbara Keller and Katharina Hauck, using a translation-backtranslation routine. These instruments are introduced to German language research contexts in this study.

Assessment of Psychological Dispositions

Personality traits were assessed with the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) (Costa & McCrae, 1985; McCrae, Costa, del Pilar, Rolland, & Parker, 1998) in the English version; the German translation was published by Borkenau and Ostendorf (1993). The NEO-FFI measures, with 12 items each, five dimensions of personality: *neuroticism*, *extraversion*, *openness to experience*, *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness*. Means were calculated on a 5-point rating scale ranging from 0 = “strongly disagree” to 4 = “strongly agree.” For means and reliabilities, see Table 4.2; for more details and for results, see Chap. 12.

Attachment was assessed with Granqvist’s (2002) 8-item Attachment Questionnaire, which offers ratings on a five-point scale for each attachment style (secure, avoidant/dismissing, ambivalent/preoccupied, and fearful) for father and mother separately. This instrument was also translated for the purpose of this study, again by Keller and Hauck.

Religious style preference was assessed with the Religious Schema Scale (Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010). This scale consists of three subscales measuring these schemata: The schema that features an exclusivist and authoritative understanding of one’s own sacred texts has been operationalized in the subscale *truth of texts and teachings* (*ttt*). A sample item is “What the texts and stories of my religion tell me is absolutely true

and must not be changed.” To capture the opposite notion of appreciation of difference, of the other, the subscale *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* (*xenos*) was constructed. A sample item is “We need to look beyond the denominational and religious differences to find the ultimate reality.” The third subscale, *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* (*ftt*), shares with *xenos* the opposition to *ttt*, but has its own profile of an “objectifying” and supposedly “neutral” approach focusing on justice and fairness. A sample item is “It is important to understand others through a sympathetic understanding of their culture and religion.” Items were rated on five-point scales. For means and reliabilities, see Table 4.2; for more details and for results, see Chap. 13.

Assessment of Psychological Consequences

For the assessment of psychological well-being and growth, Ryff’s multidimensional measure was used, which consists of six subscales of psychological well-being with seven items each: *autonomy*, *environmental mastery*, *positive relations with others*, *personal growth*, *purpose in life* and *self-acceptance* (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 1998). The German translation was included with permission of U. Staudinger (Staudinger, Lopez, and Baltes, 1997). The items in the Ryff-Scale were rated on a 5-point scale.

In the questionnaire, also the 20-item Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) has been included, which measures the extent to which someone reports to take care of the next generation (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993; McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997; McAdams, Hart, & Maruna, 1998). For the German sample we used the translation reported by Hofer, Busch, Chasiotis, Kärtner and Campos (2008). Rating scale was from 1 for “never applies to me” to 4 for “applies to me very often or nearly always.” For means and reliabilities of the Ryff-Scale and the LGS, see Table 4.2; for more details and for results, see Chap. 25.

Table 4.2 Means and Reliabilities for All Scales Used in the Study

	US sample (<i>N</i> = 1,113)		German sample (<i>N</i> = 773)		Total sample (<i>N</i> = 1,886)	
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	α	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	α	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	α
<i>Neuroticism (NEO-FFI)</i>	20.8 (8.6)	.88	18.8 (8.3)	.88	20.0 (8.5)	.88
<i>Extraversion (NEO-FFI)</i>	28.9 (6.9)	.82	27.6 (6.5)	.80	28.3 (6.7)	.81
<i>Openness to exp. (NEO-FFI)</i>	31.7 (6.9)	.81	35.2 (5.5)	.70	33.1 (6.6)	.77
<i>Agreeableness (NEO-FFI)</i>	31.3 (6.1)	.78	33.3 (5.6)	.76	32.4 (6.0)	.77
<i>Conscientiousn. (NEO-FFI)</i>	32.2 (7.1)	.86	31.0 (6.4)	.81	31.7 (6.9)	.84
<i>Introvertive mystic. (M-scale)</i>	41.1 (11.2)	.89	42.5 (13.4)	.92	41.7 (12.1)	.90
<i>Extrovertive mystic. (M-scale)</i>	26.1 (8.3)	.89	27.3 (9.6)	.92	26.6 (8.9)	.90
<i>Interpretation (M-scale)</i>	45.2 (9.8)	.87	44.4 (11.5)	.90	44.9 (10.5)	.89
<i>Mysticism (total) (M-scale)</i>	112.4 (26.3)	.95	114.2 (31.8)	.96	113.2 (28.7)	.95
<i>Autonomy (Ryff scale)</i>	26.5 (4.1)	.74	25.7 (3.9)	.68	26.1 (4.0)	.69
<i>Environmental mastery (Ryff)</i>	24.4 (4.6)	.77	25.0 (4.7)	.81	24.6 (4.7)	.79
<i>Personal growth (Ryff scale)</i>	28.9 (3.9)	.78	29.9 (3.2)	.65	29.3 (3.7)	.74
<i>Positive relations (Ryff scale)</i>	27.7 (4.6)	.80	27.2 (4.2)	.76	27.5 (4.4)	.78
<i>Purpose in life (Ryff scale)</i>	26.8 (4.4)	.77	26.0 (4.1)	.67	26.5 (4.3)	.73
<i>Self-acceptance (Ryff scale)</i>	25.6 (4.7)	.84	26.5 (4.6)	.85	26.0 (4.7)	.84
<i>Generativity (LGS)</i>	59.7 (8.6)	.86	56.4 (8.2)	.83	58.4 (8.7)	.85
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	75.1 (21.9)	.88	69.2 (20.9)	.85	72.7 (21.7)	.87
<i>Truth of texts & teach. (RSS)</i>	14.2 (6.5)	.92	10.8 (5.3)	.87	12.8 (6.2)	.91
<i>Fairness, tolerance ... (RSS)</i>	21.4 (3.1)	.77	22.0 (2.5)	.57	21.7 (2.9)	.71
<i>Xenosophia/inter-relig. (RSS)</i>	17.4 (4.2)	.73	18.1 (4.2)	.71	17.6 (4.2)	.72

Instruments for Subsamples: Faith Development Interview and Implicit Association Test

The Faith Development Interview (FDI) and the Implicit Association Test (IAT) for “spirituality,” “religion” and “atheism” were conducted with smaller subsamples of participants who were selected to represent the focus groups.

Faith Development Interviews have been evaluated for 48 respondents in Germany and for 54 in the USA (see Chap. 24 for more details). The FDI allows the exploration of self-identifications in the context of the narrative reconstructions of participants’ biographies. Besides the revised rating of faith development introduced with the *Manual for Faith*

Development Research (Fowler, 1981; Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004), we worked with exploratory ratings of proxies of wisdom-related behavior as introduced in the Berlin Aging Studies (Staudinger, Smith, & Baltes, 1994), of attachment (Bowlby, 1969; Bartholomew & Horowitz 1991) and mentalization (Fonagy, Jurist, Gergely, & Target, 2002; Fonagy, Target, Steele, & Steele, 1998) (see Chap. 16 for more details). Also the self-identification as “religious,” “spiritual” or with related self-attributions has been asked in one of the FDI questions. Based on these data, self-identification is thus studied in biographical context.

With subsamples of participants ($N_{USA} = 67$ and $N_{GER} = 37$), we used the IAT, because it taps into non-conscious attitudes toward “religion,”

“spirituality” and “atheism.” A detailed presentation in the development of our IAT for “spirituality,” “religion” and “atheism” is given in Chap. 6.

Sampling and Data Collection

Data collection has been completed using a bilingual online questionnaire and sending out invitations using primarily internet communication. For example, our invitation was advertised on our website. Opting for diversity we took care to post our invitation on numerous websites and internet platforms dedicated to discussions of religious and secular world views. We monitored advertisement success by asking participants how they learned about our research. In Germany, great care was taken to include Eastern (former GDR) and Western regions. Selected print media were successfully addressed. In the USA, the strategy included also radio and TV-stations.

The online-questionnaire was hosted on the server of unipark (www.unipark.de). Data could be exported to local computers in form of SPSS files at any time. Also paper versions of the questionnaire were used to include citizens without internet access; this option proved helpful for some elderly citizens. The paper questionnaires were continuously entered into the dataset. In general, the questionnaire was well received.

The large percentage of participants (71 % in Germany, 52 % in the USA) willing to be approached for a personal interview shows that we generated interest and motivation. The semantic differentials, however, proved difficult for part of the sample (9 % in Germany, 2 % in the USA, see Table 4.6).

Regular weekly exports of data and summaries of frequencies of basic answering patterns were reviewed by the American and German team. Joint monitoring of responses helped to adjust advertising of our research interest with the aim of optimizing our samples for correspondence to

basic criteria of representativity such as age, gender and religious affiliation.

We closed the quantitative data collection in early summer 2011 and immediately started with cleaning the data. This meant the replacement of missing responses, resp. the elimination of ca. 20 % cases for persons who did not answer entire parts of the questionnaire or cases for which our rule for missing replacement (replacing single missing responses by individual subscale means) could not be applied. This work resulted in exact parallel US-German versions of all basic variables that were necessary for further analyses. Of special importance was the definition and construction of focus groups as these were used as heuristics for the generation of diverse subsamples to be interviewed in Germany and in the USA.

Description of the Sample

The resulting sample consists of 1886 persons who completed most of our instruments. Focus groups were defined based on the forced choice measure of being “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “neither religious nor spiritual” in combination with self-identification as being “atheist” or “non-theist.” This combination allows the location of different individual versions of relating to or identifying with “spirituality.” These focus groups have also been used to structure the selection of participants for the personal interview (Faith Development Interview) and the Implicit Association (IAT) experiment.

Basic Characteristics of the Sample

The sample will be displayed by country respectively research site, which were the USA and Germany. First, basic demographic characteristics will be shown. Then we will display

Table 4.3 The Sample According to Life Phases

	US sample		German sample	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Emerging adulthood (age 25 and younger)	439	39.4	71	9.2
Young adulthood (age 26–45)	410	36.8	375	48.5
Middle age (age 46–65)	226	20.3	269	34.8
Old age (age 66 and older)	38	3.4	58	7.5
Total	1,113	100.0	773	100.0

religious affiliation and self-identification as more religious, more spiritual, both, or neither. Finally, we will introduce the subsamples created for further analyses.

Basic Demographic Characteristics

After cleaning of the quantitative data set, it included $N = 1,886$ respondents, $n = 773$ in German and $n = 1,113$ in the US subsample. Male-female relation is acceptable: 63.1 % female participants in the US sample; 56.8 % female participants in German sample. Mean age in the US sample is 34.4 years, ranging from 15 to 82 years; in the German sample mean age is 43.2, ranging from 16 to 90 years. Table 4.3 presents the subsamples according to life phases.

Mean per-capita income for the US sample is \$40,658 ($SD = 28,088$), for the German sample \$38,910 ($SD = 24,535$). Cultural capital (school education and vocational training) has been assessed and recalculated according to ISCED standards to allow comparison with current OECD data. Comparison indicates that in our data we have a higher percentage of upper secondary (USA: 51.9 %; GER: 42.5 %) and tertiary (USA: 47.9 %; GER: 55.7 %) education respondents for both countries, while lower educated people are underrepresented.

In regard to the regional origin (e.g. migration background) of our research participants, the German sample includes 3.9 % people who were raised in countries other than Germany and, of the participants with German origin, 20.8 % grew up in Eastern States (neue Bundesländer). The US sample includes 8.5 % people who grew up in countries other than the USA; of the

participants who grew up in the USA, 55.8 % have lived in the South East and 44.2 % in other States.

Table 4.4 presents the sample according to religious affiliation. Thereby, we have summarized respondents' information according to major traditions.

Self-identification and Over-Representation of “Spiritual” and “Atheist/Non-theist” Respondents

Our sample has a clear over-representation of “spiritual” or “more spiritual” respondents, but also a higher percentage of respondents who self-identify as “atheist” or “non-theists.” As Table 4.5 shows, 50.9 % respondents in the USA and 48.8 % in Germany explicitly self-identify as “more spiritual than religious.” The self-rating item “not spiritual—spiritual” leads to similar results: 40.0 % in the US sample and 40.6 % in the German sample score highest on the 5-point scale “I am spiritual.” This clearly high preference for “spirituality” in our data was intended and allows specific and powerful analyses on the “spiritual” and “more spiritual” respondents.¹

In comparison with recent survey results, a clear contrast is obvious: On the basis of recent survey results of the Religion Monitor 2012,

¹The oversampling of higher educated persons may be secondary effect of this, if the observation of Berghuis, Pieper and Bakker (2013) for the Netherlands can be extrapolated. They conclude from their representative study that “spirituality” is an “elite” word (p. 391).

Table 4.4 Religious Affiliations in the US and the German Samples

	US sample		German sample	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Protestantism	524	47.1	195	25.2
Roman Catholicism	118	10.6	82	10.6
Judaism	10	.9	2	.3
Islam	6	.5	9	1.2
Hinduism	5	.4	4	.5
Buddhism and other eastern traditions	29	2.6	38	4.9
Neo-Paganism, other spiritual groups, and idiosyncratic syncretists	92	8.3	68	8.8
Nones	322	28.9	371	48.0
Missing	7	.6	4	.5
Total	1,113	100.0	773	100.0

Table 4.5 Frequencies of “Religious”/“Spiritual” Self-identifications

	US sample		German sample	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
I am more religious than spiritual	71	6.4	79	10.2
I am more spiritual than religious	566	50.9	377	48.8
I am equally religious and spiritual	304	27.3	146	18.9
I am neither religious nor spiritual	172	15.5	171	22.1
Total	1,113	100.0	773	100.0

“clearly more spiritual” persons can be estimated with 13.4 % in the USA and 4.6 % in Germany, and “slightly more spiritual” persons with 18.3 % in the USA and 12.7 % in Germany; thus “more spiritual” persons in the USA are estimated less than a third, and in Germany less than a fifth of the population (see Chap. 3, this volume for more details).

Table 4.5 presents the frequencies of “spiritual”/“religious” self-identifications on the forced-choice measure in our data.

The oversampling of “more spiritual than religious” and “neither spiritual nor religious” respondents in our study offers options of more differentiated explorations of the semantics, contexts and predispositions of self-identified “spirituality.” Therefore, it was consistent that we used the “spiritual”/“religious” self-identification as presented in Table 4.5 for focus group construction.

Construction of Focus Groups

As stated above, focus groups were constructed for further analyses and as structuring guideline for sampling. The four groups of “spiritual”/“religious” self-identification in Table 4.5 were split further according to the self-identifications as “atheist” or “non-theist,” resulting in eight groups, as presented in Table 4.6.

Closer inspection of Table 4.6 shows that the groups of the “more religious than spiritual atheists/non-theists” and of the “equally religious and spiritual atheists/non-theists” are very small. Even though theoretically the combination of religiosity and atheism is possible—and for example refers to the appreciation of atheists in the theologies of Bonhoeffer, Tillich or the God-is-dead-theology—this is obviously a minority in our sample. We suggest studying these minorities in further research. In the current

Table 4.6 Eight Groups of “Spiritual”/“Religious”/“Atheist/Non-theist” Self-identification

	US sample		German sample	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
More religious than spiritual, not atheist/non-theist	70	6.3	75	9.7
Equally religious and spiritual, not atheist/non-theist	302	27.1	140	18.1
More spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist	540	48.5	337	43.6
More spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists	26	2.3	40	5.2
Neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist	107	9.6	94	12.2
Neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists	65	5.8	77	10.0
More religious than spiritual atheists/non-theists	1	0.1	4	0.5
Equally religious and spiritual atheists/non-theists	2	0.2	6	0.8
Total	1,113	100.0	773	100.0

Table 4.7 Six Focus Groups of “Spiritual”/“Religious”/“Atheist/Non-theist” Self-identification

	US sample		German sample	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
FG1 more religious than spiritual (not atheist/non-theist)	70	6.3	75	9.7
FG2 equally religious and spiritual (not atheist/non-theist)	302	27.1	140	18.1
FG3 more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist	540	48.5	337	43.6
FG4 more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists	26	2.3	40	5.2
FG5 neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist	107	9.6	94	12.2
FG6 neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists	65	5.8	77	10.0
Total	1,110	100.0	763	100.0

study, we will discuss such self-identifications when they occur in interviews for case studies. For statistical analyses, however, we limit the number of focus groups to six.

This final focus group construction is presented in Table 4.7. And the chapters to follow in this volume demonstrate the usefulness and effectiveness of the division of our sample into these six focus groups.

A synoptic overview about how effectively the focus group division opens perspectives and profiles different versions of being “spiritual” and how these interact with the various scales in our data is presented in two comprehensive tables in the Appendix (Tables A.2 and A.3). The focus group division, furthermore, guided the selection of interviewees for the FDI and participants for the IAT. Finally, we use means of central measures of

the six focus groups as background of interpretation for our case studies (see Chaps. 14 and 16).

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the multi-method design of the study. The large sample was studied with a questionnaire consisting of basic demographic variables and measures of religiosity, spirituality, and their assumed psychological preconditions and outcomes. Of central importance are instruments exploring “spiritual” self-identifications and the semantics related to “spirituality.” Interviews and experimental methods were used with a subsample which was selected based on evaluations of self-identifications. In the large sample, the self-identification as “spiritual” shows an overrepresentation compared to current surveys of Germany and the USA. This is the result of sampling for persons interested in “spirituality” and an asset for studying what they mean by identifying as “spiritual.” Our approach thus reflects a theoretical sampling strategy, which we further refined by using quantitative characteristics for the construction of focus groups as a basic element of the study. Based on “spiritual”/“religious” self-identifications combined with self-assessment as “atheist” or “non-theist,” the focus groups were used to structure the analyses. The multi-method approach includes a variety of assessment methods encompassing self-report scales, interview data, and experimental data, but also refers to the method of sampling which used theoretical considerations together with quantitative analyses.

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Abstract

This chapter explores the “spiritual/religious” self-identifications in cross-cultural perspective. In addition to current self-identifications we asked how respondents remembered their environment at age 12 and combined this information with the current self-identification. Therefore, we can look at trajectories in both subsamples. Further, we explore aspects of social identity, such as sex, age, and current religious affiliation. Results indicate that participants who self-identify as “more religious” are affiliated with traditional, mostly Christian religious groups in both countries. Christian affiliates in our sample nevertheless self-identify more frequently as “equally religious and spiritual” or as “more spiritual than religious.” The majority of respondents in our sample self-identify as “more spiritual” whether they report affiliation with a religious tradition or not. In Germany, most “more spirituals” report “no religion,” while in the USA most “more spirituals” belong to a religious organization. The self-identification as “neither religious nor spiritual” in most cases is connected to non-affiliation, with the exception of a small group of Protestants. Similarities and differences are discussed with reference to semantics in both research contexts.

Self-identifications as “Religious” and/or “Spiritual” in the German and the US Sample

When interpreting the data from the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality,” we state clearly in the beginning that, regarding self-identification such as being “religious,” “spiritual,” “atheist” or something else,

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Table 5.1 Comparison of Frequencies of “Religious” Versus “Spiritual” Self-identifications

	US sample		German sample	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
I am more religious than spiritual	71	6.4	79	10.2
I am more spiritual than religious	566	50.9	377	48.8
I am equally religious and spiritual	304	27.3	146	18.9
I am neither religious nor spiritual	172	15.5	171	22.1
Total	1,113	100.0	773	100.0

we do not present a representative survey. Exact estimation of frequencies of these self-identifications in the population of the USA and Germany was not the aim of our study. On the contrary, as detailed in Chap. 4, our sampling strategy included the purposeful search for the “spiritual” and the “atheist” or “non-theist” respondents. We did, however, include measures used in surveys such as the ISSP and the Religion Monitor, therefore our more detailed explorations of “spiritual” self-identifications can be related to these larger samples. This is illustrated in Chap. 3 which presents a condensed summary of the most recent survey data (see especially Table 3.7).

The frequencies of self-identifications according to categories in the forced choice format question for each country are shown in Table 5.1. Our sample includes a very high number of research participants who self-identify as „more spiritual”: every second participant not only in the US sample, but also in the German sample. “More religious” is, in contrast, the option least represented. In the US sample, those identifying as “equally religious and spiritual” are the second-largest group, in the German sample those identifying as “neither religious nor spiritual” are taking the second largest position. This may refer to “eurosecularity” meaning that in European countries such as Germany a higher degree of secularity is observed: One-third of the population does not belong to a religious organization, and for the Eastern States, statistics report an even higher number of people (41.5 %)

who have never been members of a religious organization (Streib, 2008; Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009; Utsch & Klein, 2011).

The great opportunity of our sample is that we have “spiritual” and “atheist” respondents in such large numbers that we are able to answer, on the basis of quantitative and qualitative analyses, specific questions which cannot be answered easily by survey data. The multi-method approach which we use allows integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses, and this is another unique feature of our study. The central question of self-identification is studied from different methodological perspectives. The focus groups as category of evaluation were based on self-identification via forced-choice format combined with indications of theism versus non-theism, resulting in six groups (see Chap. 4 for more details and Table 4.7 for frequencies)

FG1 more religious than spiritual (not atheist/non-theist)

FG2 equally religious and spiritual (not atheist/non-theist)

FG3 more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist

FG4 more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists

FG5 neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist

FG6 neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists

To characterize the focus groups further, we present the ratings of the focus group members on the scales for self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious” (see Fig. 5.1). This is possible because we included, besides the forced-choice format for “spiritual”/“religious” self-identification, two separate continuous measures with the question “How would you describe yourself?” and offer a five-point scale from “not religious” to “religious” and “not spiritual” to “spiritual,” respectively. The combination of the measures allows interesting nuances to become visible. The dots represent the centroids of the focus groups in the US and the German subsamples.

Rather clear and unambiguous are the profiles of the “equally religious and spiritual” focus

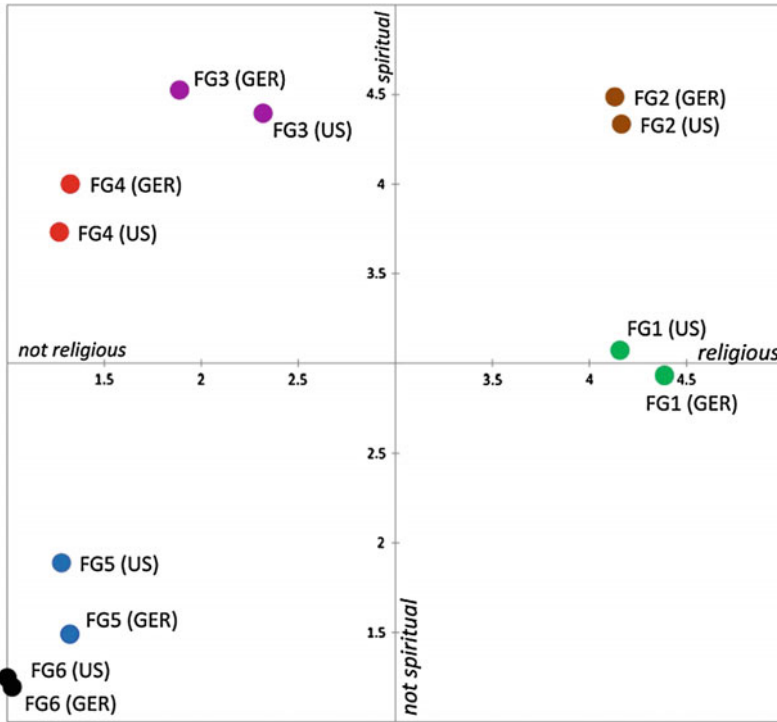


Fig. 5.1 Focus Groups in the Coordinate System of “Spiritual”/“Religious” Self-attribution.

Note FG = focus group: FG1 = “more religious than spiritual”; FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual”; FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist”; FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists”; FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist”; FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists”; variables for sex, age, cultural capital and per-capita income have been controlled in the analyses

groups (FG2) in the US and the German data: They fall rather exactly on the diagonal in the upper right segment where self-rating as both “spiritual” and “religious” are equally high. Equally clear and unambiguous are the profiles of the “neither religious nor spiritual” focus groups (FG5, FG6), whether they self-identify as “atheist/non-theists” or not: They fall rather exactly on the opposite end of the same diagonal; this is most pronounced in the focus groups of the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” (FG6) because they have the lowest rating on the items for “spirituality” and “religiousness.”

Already the focus groups of the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” (FG3) slightly deviate from the diagonal and indicate a somewhat lesser reluctance of the FG3 members to self-identify as “religious.” Finally, the “more religious than spiritual”: They clearly indicate that they self-identify as “religious,” but generally

do not object to the self-identification as “spiritual.” This is interesting and should be kept in mind in the evaluation of these focus groups.

In conclusion, this indicates that no focus group in our data really rejects being “spiritual,” except for the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups. This can be taken as another indication of the high regard for “spirituality” in our sample.

Trajectories of Socialization and Religious Change

Do our respondents feel that they always adhered to the self-identifications they indicate now in the questionnaire? For an estimation of trajectories we combined the current “spiritual”/“religious” self-identifications with the “spiritual”/“religious” profile of the social environment at early

adolescence. The latter was operationalized in our questionnaire as respondents' own estimation of their environment at age 12 as "more religious than spiritual," "more spiritual than religious," "equally religious and spiritual" or "neither religious nor spiritual." Thus, the questionnaire included the four-options forced-choice item twice: for the self-attribution today and for the description of the environment at age 12 in the respondents' present recollection.

For an estimation of religious and spiritual trajectories we then related each respondent's current self-identification as "religious" or "spiritual" to the reconstructive estimation of his/her "religious" environment when the respondent was 12 years old. If the respondent had marked "more religious than spiritual" as current self-identification as well as descriptor of his/her environment at age 12, we labelled this as "continuous religious." For someone who is now "more religious than spiritual," but estimated the environment at age 12 as "more spiritual than religious," we chose "spiritual to religious turn." For those who presently identify as "more religious than spiritual," but rate their environment at age 12 as "equally religious and spiritual," we chose "religious intensification." Finally, for respondents identifying with being "more religious than spiritual" presently, but rate their environment at age 12 as "neither religious nor spiritual," we chose "religious conversion" as label. We labelled all possible trajectories correspondingly. Table 5.2 shows the calculated trajectories for both countries.

The largest group in the US sample consists of people who report a turn from a "religious" environment to self-identifying as "spiritual." Another considerable part of the US sample reports an "equally religious and spiritual" environment at age 12 and continues with this self-identification to the present. We also see what we call "spiritual intensification" which means that these respondents self-identify as "more spiritual than religious" today, while they grew up in an "equally religious and spiritual" background. "Spiritual conversion" refers to those who self-identify at present as "more spiritual than religious," while growing up in a "neither

religious nor spiritual" environment. The main thrust seems to refrain from a self-identification as being "religious" unless this is combined with being "spiritual" or a turn toward being "more spiritual." Less frequent in the US sample are turns toward self-identifications as "neither religious nor spiritual"—which corresponds to what we have labeled deconversions with secular exit (see Streib et al., 2009).

In Germany, we also see change toward the self-identification as "spiritual"—but here the majority appears to come, in almost equal proportion, either from a "more religious than spiritual" or a "neither religious nor spiritual" background. Only a minority reports a development from a "more religious than spiritual" environment to a "neither religious nor spiritual" identity—we do not see much of a secularization process. We see considerable continuity of self-identification with the earlier environment for "neither religious nor spiritual" respondents.

While we can discern movement toward being "more spiritual than religious" in both countries, it is important to note that the change to the self-identification as "neither religious nor spiritual" is a developmental road less travelled in the USA. Instead, we see more movements toward "spirituality" or combinations of "spirituality" and "religion." Nevertheless, for Germany our data document an impressive number of "more spiritual" conversions, movements from growing up in a "neither religious nor spiritual" environment to self-identify today as "spiritual." Does this reflect diverse trajectories?

Taking into account that these trajectories are based on self-report data on current and past "religiosity" and "spirituality," we suggest to regard them as subjective reconstructions. To move from being "more religious" toward being "more spiritual" in the USA, and from being "neither religious nor spiritual" toward being "more spiritual" in Germany results in different trajectories. In both countries, however, to self-identify as "spiritual" may serve the function to account for what is felt to be an individual move beyond a perceived mainstream ideology, which in Germany is more secular, in the USA more religious. To self-identify as "spiritual"

Table 5.2 “Spiritual”/“Religious” Trajectories in the US and the German Sample

	USA		Germany	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Missing	2	0.2	2	0.3
Continuous religious	49	4.4	44	5.7
Spiritual to religious turn	4	0.4	2	0.3
Religious intensification	7	0.6	3	0.4
Religious conversion	11	1.0	29	3.8
Religious to spiritual turn	256	23.0	169	21.9
Continuous spiritual	74	6.6	13	1.7
Spiritual intensification	125	11.2	17	2.2
Spiritual conversion	111	10.0	177	22.9
Religious to equally spiritual and religious turn	91	8.2	68	8.8
Spiritual to equally spiritual and religious turn	17	1.5	1	0.1
Continuous equally spiritual and religious	156	14.0	22	2.8
Equally spiritual and religious conversion	38	3.4	55	7.1
Religious to secular turn	69	6.2	72	9.3
Spiritual to secular turn	11	1.0	8	1.0
Equally spiritual and religious to secular turn	36	3.2	9	1.2
Continuous neither-nor	56	5.0	82	10.6
Total	1,113	100.0	773	100.0

Note Distribution between both samples differs significantly: $\chi^2 = 184.329, p < .001$

may allow claiming a position different from mainstream expectations without running the risk of being seen as falling from the faith (USA) or as regressing to a naïve way of handling the vicissitudes of life (Germany).

Religious Affiliations and “Religious”/“Spiritual” Self-identification

Table 5.3 presents the affiliations with religious traditions which we found in our sample in the USA and in Germany.

Affiliations are here described according to our grouping of respondents’ information into groups of major traditions. Table 5.3 thus allows a first general impression of “who is spiritual” in both the US and the German sample. Next, we present this information together with focus group membership.

Religious Affiliation in the Focus Groups

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 present the affiliations according to focus groups in both subsamples. As detailed in Chap. 4, for the construction of focus groups we combined our respondents’ self-identifications as “spiritual”/“religious” with the self-identification as “atheist”/“non-theist.” This results in theoretically eight,¹ practically six focus groups: “more religious than spiritual (not atheist/non-theist),” “equally religious and spiritual (not atheist/non-theist),” “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist),” “more spiritual

¹The more religious and the equally religious and spiritual atheists and non-theists, which would constitute the focus group seven and eight, were too small for meaningful quantitative comparisons (see Chap. 4). It is noteworthy, however, that we documented all these combinations, and the at first sight counter-intuitive self-identifications of being “spiritual” or “religious” as well as atheist deserve further study.

Table 5.3 Religious Affiliations of Respondents in the US and German Sample

	USA		Germany	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Protestantism	524	47.1	195	25.2
Roman Catholicism	118	10.6	82	10.6
Judaism	10	0.9	2	0.3
Islam	6	0.5	9	1.2
Hinduism	5	0.4	4	0.5
Buddhism and other eastern traditions	29	2.6	38	4.9
Neo-paganism, other spiritual groups, and idiosyncratic syncretists	92	8.3	68	8.8
Nones	322	28.9	371	48.0
Missing	7	0.6	4	0.5
Total	1113	100.0	773	100.0

Note Distribution between both samples differs significantly: $\chi^2 = 114.470, p < .001$

than religious atheists/non-theists,” “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” and “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists.” Distribution of religious affiliations across focus groups differs significantly between the US and German samples ($\chi^2 = 762.626, p < .001$). As expected, those who self-identify as “more

religious” (FG1) are affiliated with traditional religious groups in the subsamples from both countries. Christian affiliates may confess to be “more religious than spiritual” and they even more frequently self-identify as “equally religious and spiritual” (FG2), but also as “more spiritual than religious” (FG3). Most respondents self-identify as “more spiritual than religious,” whether they report affiliations with a religious group or not.

In the US sample here we find all groups: Protestant and Catholic Christians and the other Abrahamic traditions, along with Buddhists and other Eastern traditions, Neo-Pagans and other syncretist groups. Also, here we find most of the “nones” of this subsample. Being “spiritual” seems to be popular for a wide variety of Christian and other traditions, for church and unchurched people in the USA.

While in the USA most people self-identifying as “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” (FG3) appear to belong to a religious organization, in the German subsample the majority in this focus group are the respondents without religious affiliation (“nones”). In the German subsample, the “equally religious and spiritual” (FG2) respondents are most likely to belong to a religious organization or denomination. In the German as well as in the US subsample, most “nones” belong to the self-identified “more spiritual than

Table 5.4 Religious Affiliations According to the Focus Groups in the US Sample

	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	Total
Protestantism	47	218	248	1	8	0	522
Roman Catholicism	17	50	45	0	6	0	118
Judaism	1	2	5	0	2	0	10
Islam	1	2	3	0	0	0	6
Hinduism	0	2	3	0	0	0	5
Buddhism and other eastern traditions	0	2	21	3	2	0	28
Neo-paganism/spiritual groups/idiosyncratic syncretists	0	15	74	1	1	1	92
Nones	4	10	135	21	88	64	322
Total	70	301	534	26	107	65	1,103

Note FG = focus group: FG1 = “more religious than spiritual”; FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual”; FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist”; FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists”; FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist”; FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists”; distribution in focus groups and religious affiliations is significantly different ($\chi^2 = 545.512, p < .001$)

Table 5.5 Religious Affiliations According to the Focus Groups in the German Sample

	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	Total
Protestantism	53	52	59	5	18	4	191
Roman Catholicism	15	33	29	1	2	1	81
Judaism	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Islam	2	5	2	0	0	0	9
Hinduism	0	2	1	0	1	0	4
Buddhism and other eastern traditions	1	9	22	3	1	0	36
Neo-paganism/spiritual groups/idiosyncratic syncretists	2	14	46	4	0	1	67
Nones	2	24	175	27	72	70	370
Total	75	140	334	40	94	76	759

Note *FG* = focus group; *FG1* = “more religious than spiritual”; *FG2* = “equally religious and spiritual”; *FG3* = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist”; *FG4* = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists”; *FG5* = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist”; *FG6* = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists”; distribution in focus groups and religious affiliations is significantly different ($\chi^2 = 304.691, p < .001$)

religious” focus group. The self-identification as “neither religious nor spiritual,” whether “atheist”/ “non-theist” or not, in most cases is connected to non-affiliation, with the exception of a small group of members in the Protestant Churches.

The self-identification “spiritual” is used by members of a wide variety of religious associations and by individuals who are not affiliated with a religious organization. While self-identifications in which “religion” is explicitly included are more likely for members of religious affiliations, such members may also choose to self-identify with “spirituality.” Similarly, while “nones” are most likely to self-identify as “neither religious nor spiritual,” when compared to members, most “nones” in our sample self-identify as “more spiritual.” Thus, it appears that the self-identification of being “spiritual” versus “religious” does not tell us who is affiliated and who is not.

Religious Affiliation and Continuous Self-ratings as “Religious” and “Spiritual”

We can also use our continuous measures of self-rated “spirituality” and “religiosity” and combine them as coordinates of a two-dimensional space. Then we can place the

different groups in that space by interpreting the focus group means as vectors. The dots in the Figs. 5.2 and 5.3 represent the centroids of the respective groups.

In these figures then, some differing degrees of identification with being “spiritual” and “religious” become apparent: In both countries the “nones” show the lowest tendency to identify with either “religion” or “spirituality”; the centroids are in the lower left quartile, exactly on the diagonal of self-rated “religion” and “spirituality.” Protestants and Catholics are most likely to identify with both “religion” and “spirituality,” thus appear in the right upper quartile; this is especially obvious for the Christians in the US sample because they are exactly on the diagonal. Interestingly, Christians are close to Hinduists in the US sample, and in the German sample close to Hinduists, Buddhists and Muslims.

In the German sample, also Jews are placed in the highly “religious,” (relatively) low “spiritual” quartile of the diagram. In the US sample, Muslims are placed in the quartile for high “religion” and moderately low “spirituality,” while US Jews in our sample fall in the rather low “religious” and low “spiritual” quartile, not far from the “nones.”

As “high spiritual low religious” (upper left quartile) in the US sample, we find the Buddhists and, next to them, Neo-pagans and other syncretists. In the German subsample the Neo-pagan

Fig. 5.2 Self-rated “Religion” and “Spirituality” of Affiliates and “Nones” in the US Sample.

Note The axes cut each other at the mean value for self-rated “religion” and “spirituality”

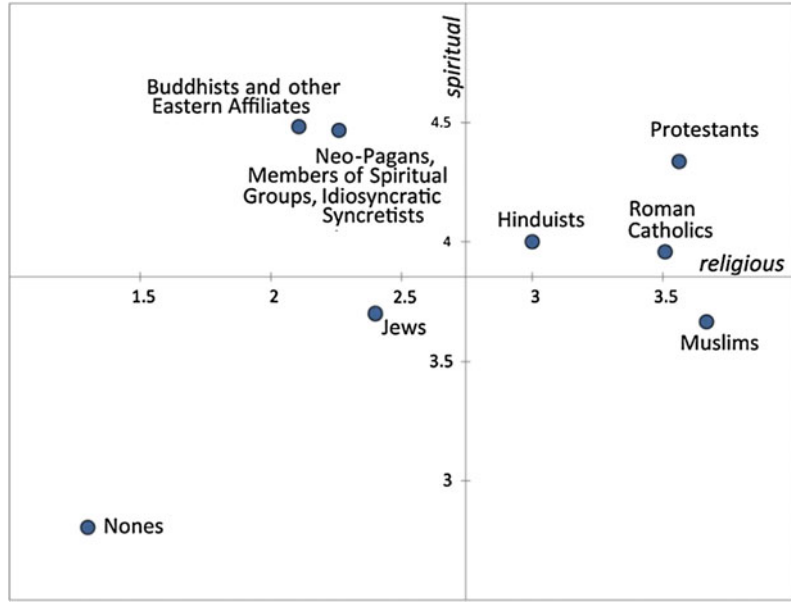
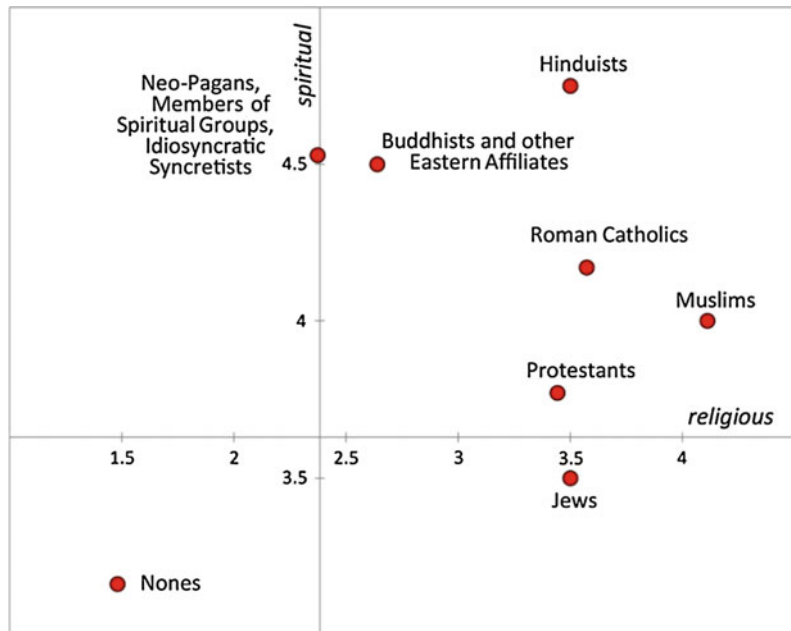


Fig. 5.3 Self-rated “Religion” and “Spirituality” of Affiliates and “Nones” in the German Sample.

Note The axes cut each other at the mean value for self-rated “religion” and “spirituality”



and syncretist group is also among the highly “spiritual” groups, and on the border with regard to high versus low self-rating as “religious.”

These differences in the usage of the self-identifications may be related to differences

in semantics to be explored in later chapters. So far we can state that in our data all religious groups have their centroid above 3.0 which indicates “neutral” in the 5-point measure, thus self-rate in general more in favor of being

“spiritual.” This is even true for the “nones,” though placed in the “low religious low spiritual” quartile: They are more likely to self-rate as “spiritual” in the German sample and are just somewhat below 3.0 in the US sample. This documents again the high regard for “spirituality” in our sample.

emerging adulthood group, for which a relatively high number self-identifies as “equally religious and spiritual” in the US sample, while in the German emerging adulthood group self-identifications are distributed more equally. Interestingly is also that, for the oldest group (65 and older) in the German sample, “equally spiritual and religious” self-identification is the most frequent self-identification.

Age and “Spiritual”/“Religious” Self-attribution

“Spiritual”/“Religious” Self-ratings and Age/Cohort

Focus Groups and Age Groups

Table 5.6 presents the cross-tabulation of the six focus groups with four age groups. This allows the inspection of how “spiritual,” “religious” and “atheist/non-theist” self-identifications are related to age.

Now we turn, again, to the continuous measures for self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious,” and look at smaller age groups, plotting their means on five-point scales ranging from “not spiritual” to “spiritual” resp. “not religious” to “religious.” Results are presented in Figs. 5.4 and 5.5. Three trends become visible for both subsamples: (1) Across all age groups, self-rating as being “spiritual” is higher than as being “religious,” with “spiritual” being above, and “religious” mostly below the middle of the scale. (2) Respondents in the first half of life are more likely to not identify with “religion.” (3) Self-identification with being “spiritual” as

Again, the self-identification as “more spiritual than religious” is dominant in both the US and the German samples; thereby in both age groups in the middle, the young adulthood and midlife, one out of two respondents self-identify as “more spiritual than religious.” This is somewhat different for the younger respondents in the

Table 5.6 Distribution of Four Age Groups in the Focus Groups in the US and German Sample

	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	Total
<i>US sample</i>							
Emerging adulthood (25 years and younger)	33	117	198	7	59	24	438
Young adulthood (26–45 years)	24	96	212	13	41	22	408
Midlife (46–65 years)	10	75	115	6	6	14	226
Old age (66 years and older)	3	14	15	0	1	5	38
<i>German sample</i>							
Emerging adulthood (25 years and younger)	8	14	21	6	10	12	71
Young adulthood (26–45 years)	27	58	182	15	50	41	373
Midlife (46–65 years)	29	50	121	19	28	17	264
Old age (66 years and older)	11	18	13	0	6	7	55

Note FG = focus group: FG1 = “more religious than spiritual”; FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual”; FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist”; FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists”; FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist”; FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists”; distribution in age groups and focus groups is significantly different (USA: $\chi^2 = 42.369, p < .001$; GER: $\chi^2 = 52.230, p < .001$); distribution between USA and Germany differs also significantly ($\chi^2 = 53.764, p < .001$)

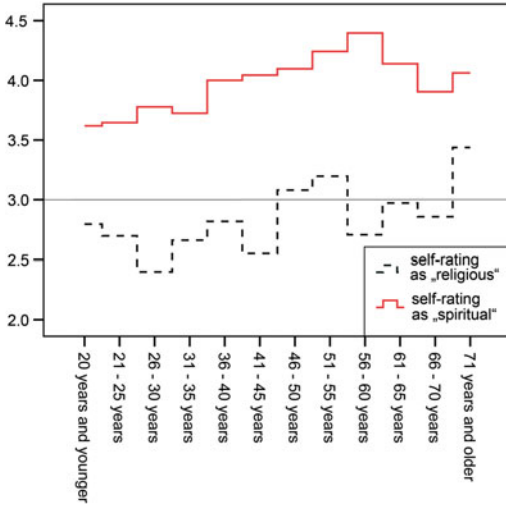


Fig. 5.4 Self-rating as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in Age Groups for the US Sample

well as with being “religious” is higher for older persons in our sample, though the oldest respondents may identify less strong with being “spiritual.”

There are differences: In the German sample, (1) across all age groups self-rating as being “spiritual” is higher than as being “religious,” however, (2) younger respondents are not always

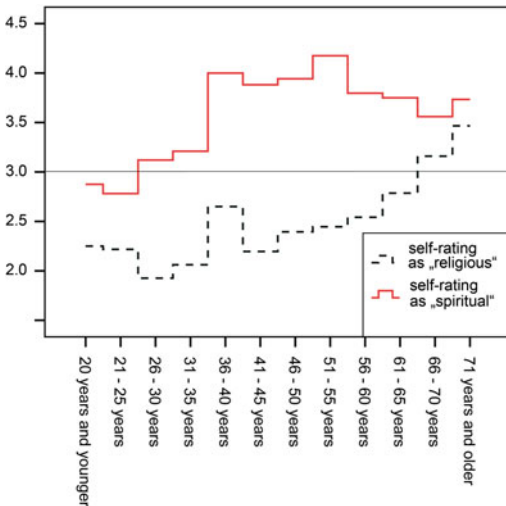


Fig. 5.5 Self-rating as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in Age Groups for the German Sample

rating high as “spiritual,” and (3) while there is also an upward trend according to age group for the self-rating as “religious,” this seems to go along with a higher age. Self-rating as being “spiritual” is, again, less strong for older respondents.

A trend of “spirituality” and/or “religion” increasing with age would correspond to developmental assumptions of individuation (C. G. Jung) or turning inward (Fowler, 1981, p. 274), however, we are looking at cross-sectional data. The differences observed might also be attributed to different generations (Mannheim, 1952) under study. In fact, in the USA, the onset of identifying as “spiritual” has been ascribed to the generation of the post-war Baby-Boomers who were born between 1946 and 1962. Based on his results from a large number of interviews, partially in longitudinal research, Roof (1993, 1999) described a “generation of seekers” interested in the experiential aspects of religion, in the context of a “spiritual marketplace.” The Baby-Boomers were, when our study started, 48–64 years old, and this age group seems to most strongly identify with “being spiritual” in the US sample (see Fig. 5.4). We cannot report a parallel phenomenon for the German subsample. Religion or spirituality seems not to have been an issue for the roughly corresponding “generation of 1968,” although this generation may share with the older American Baby-Boomers concern with social and political issues, awareness of or participating in students’ protests and the women’s movement. This may, again, reflect a more secular mainstream culture in Germany. The plot shows an increase of self-assessed “spirituality” starting around age 30 or with members of a later generation in the German subsample, however, with a slightly lower peak than compared to the US sample (see Fig. 5.5). We will attend to the interplay of age, generation, and cultural context in our case studies (Chaps. 18–22). This issue deserves to be studied further in longitudinal observations. These might also shed light on differences of trajectories in different cultural contexts.

Is “Spirituality” Female?

It has been argued that “holistic spiritualities” are especially attractive for women as “they align with traditional spheres and representations of femininity, while simultaneously supporting and encouraging a move away from selfless to expressive selfhood” (Sointu & Woodhead, 2008). This echoes similar assumptions regarding the larger participation in or identification with religious matters attested to women. However, the relationship between gender and religiosity is a complex one. Religious as well as gender specific behaviors exist worldwide, however, they also differ across cultures and historical times.

In both subsamples of our study, there are more women than men: 63.1 % female participants in the US sample; 56.8 % female participants in the German sample. Women being overrepresented is reported in other studies on “spirituality,” e.g. Buxant, Saroglou, and Tesser (2010), Berghuis, Pieper, and Bakker (2013), Büssing, Pilchowska, Baumann, and Surzykiwicz (2014). This may be a consequence of self-selection during the sampling process because women are known to express greater interest in spiritual and religious issues (Francis, 1997; Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009; Woodhead, 2007). This may, however, be part of a more general phenomenon: A “moderate surplus of female respondents” is reported as “not

untypical’ for convenience samples in communications” (Leiner, 2014, p. 17).

Distribution of Gender in the Focus Groups

When inspecting sex distribution across the focus groups (see Table 5.7), we see that the female majority characterizes the more religious, equally religious and spiritual and more spiritual theist groups in both countries. The “neither religious nor spiritual” groups, theist and non-theist, are gender balanced (USA) or have a male majority (Germany).

Ratings on Self-rating Scales for “Spirituality” and “Religion” and Other Central Measures in the Study by Gender

Büssing et al. (2014) have compared means of relevant measures and found that females had significantly higher scores for Religious orientation (RO): Prayer/Trust in God (p. 115). We have explored gender differences in the continuous measure of self-rating as “religious” and “spiritual” and in other central measures in the current study. For the assessment of different facets of religiosity and spirituality we used the Attitudes

Table 5.7 Male and Female Respondents in the Focus Groups in the US and German Sample

	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	Total
<i>US sample</i>							
Male	25	101	187	11	53	33	410
Female	45	201	353	15	54	32	700
Total	70	302	540	26	107	65	1,110
<i>German sample</i>							
Male	23	49	126	17	46	56	327
Female	52	91	211	23	38	21	436
Total	75	140	337	40	94	77	763

Note FG = focus group: FG1 = “more religious than spiritual”; FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual”; FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist”; FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists”; FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist”; FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists”; distribution in gender groups and focus groups is significantly different (USA: $\chi^2 = 15.810, p < .007$; GER: $\chi^2 = 50.977, p < .001$); distribution between USA and Germany differs also significantly ($\chi^2 = 64.002, p < .001$)

Table 5.8 Gender Differences on Selected Religiosity and Spirituality Scales in the US Sample

	Males		Females		Cohen's
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>
Self-rating as "religious"	2.6	1.5	2.8	1.5	0.16
Self-rating as "spiritual"	3.6	1.5	4.0	1.2	0.27
Attitudes toward God	71.9	22.8	77.0	21.2	0.23
Truth of texts and teachings	13.7	6.3	14.5	6.5	0.12
Fairness, tolerance and rational choice	21.3	3.4	21.5	2.9	0.05
Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog	17.2	4.2	17.5	4.2	0.06
Introvertive mysticism	40.4	11.4	41.5	11.0	0.10
Extrovertive mysticism	25.0	8.3	26.7	8.3	0.21
Interpretation (of mysticism)	44.0	10.3	46.0	9.4	0.20
Mysticism (M-scale sum score)	109.40	26.9	114.2	25.81	0.18

Note For all scales frequencies are: $n = 411$ males and $n = 702$ females, except for self-rating as "religious" (males: $n = 409$; females: $n = 697$) and self-rating as "spiritual" (males: $n = 410$; females: $n = 702$); Cohen's d = estimate for effect size of mean difference, according to Cohen (1988), who interprets effect sizes as follows: $d < 0.2$ indicates no effect, $0.2 \leq d < 0.5$ indicates a small, $0.5 \leq d < 0.8$ a medium, and $d \geq 0.8$ a large effect size

toward God Scale (ATGS; Wood, Worthington, Exline, Yali, Aten, & McMinn, 2009), the Mysticism Scale (M-Scale; Hood, 1975; Hood, Ghorbani, Watson, Ghramaleki, Bing, Davison, Morris, & Williamson, 2001; Chen, Hood, Yang, & Watson, 2011) and the Religious Schema Scale (RSS; Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010). Results are presented in Tables 5.8 and 5.9. We calculated ANOVAs and found differences significant with $p \leq .001$ and with $p \leq .010$ for self-ratings as "religious" and "spiritual" in the US subsample.

Self-rating as "Spiritual" and "Religious"

The women in both subsamples describe themselves as more religious and as more spiritual compared to the men. Does this reflect a genuine difference or rather a difference in self-attribution, due to gender role socialization or orientation? Before we take up these questions, we consider more results:

Attitudes Toward God (ATGS)

The ATGS taps into positive and negative aspects of the relationship to a personal God. The two subscales capture *positive attitudes toward*

God with 5 items and *anger toward God* with 4 items. The general phrase "To what extent do you currently..." was followed by, for example, for *positive attitudes toward God* by "Feel loved by God," for *anger toward God* by "Feel angry at God," to be assessed on an 11-point scale.

In the German as well as the US subsample women score significantly higher regarding *positive attitudes toward God* (ANOVAs, differences significant with $p \leq .001$), while there was no difference on *anger toward God* (see Tables 5.8 and 5.9). This result, in line with the results reported above by Büssing and colleagues, may invite speculation about women being more social or relationship-oriented. Again, it can also be attributed to gender role orientation.

Mysticism (M-Scale)

The M-scale measures mystical experience as described by Stace (1960) and operationalized by Hood and colleagues (e.g. Chen et al., 2011, Hood, 1975; Hood et al., 2001). Here, we report comparisons based on the three subscales assessing different experiential dimensions of relating toward the transcendent: *introvertive mysticism*, *extrovertive mysticism*, and *religious interpretation*.

Table 5.9 Gender Differences on Selected Religiosity and Spirituality Scales in the German Sample

	Males		Females		Cohen's
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>
Self-rating as “religious”	2.1	1.5	2.6	1.5	0.31
Self-rating as “spiritual”	3.2	1.7	4.0	1.3	0.50
Attitudes toward God	63.4	20.3	73.7	20.3	0.51
Truth of texts and teachings	9.6	4.9	11.7	5.4	0.40
Fairness, tolerance and rational choice	21.9	2.5	22.0	2.4	0.05
Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog	17.40	4.3	18.6	4.2	0.28
Introvertive mysticism	39.4	14.2	44.9	12.2	0.42
Extrovertive mysticism	24.7	9.9	29.3	8.9	0.50
Interpretation (of mysticism)	41.4	11.83	46.74	10.73	0.47
Mysticism (M-scale sum score)	105.5	33.4	120.9	28.9	0.50

Note For all scales frequencies are: $n = 334$ males and $n = 439$ females, except for “not religious–religious” (males: $n = 331$; females: $n = 433$) and “not spiritual–spiritual” (males: $n = 333$; females: $n = 437$)

In the German subsample women score higher on all three subscales. In the US subsample women score higher on the scales measuring *extrovertive mysticism* and *interpretation* (ANOVAs, differences significant with $p \leq .001$). For *introvertive mysticism* the difference is in the expected direction, however not significant. It is interesting to note that this differentiated instrument renders results which are less straightforward, at least for the USA, and that gender differences are more pronounced for the subsample from “eurosecular” Germany. However, as Klein, Keller, and Traummüller (2015) note, gender difference is most likely to be found with self-assessment instruments and in highly developed countries with a history of sex-role segregation.

Religious Schema Scale (RSS)

Religious style preference was assessed with the Religious Schema Scale (Streib et al., 2010; see Chaps. 4 and 13 for more details). This scale consists of three subscales measuring these schemata: The schema of an exclusivist and authoritative understanding of one’s own sacred texts has been operationalized in the subscale *truth of texts and teachings* (*ttt*). To capture the opposite notion of appreciation of difference, of the other, the subscale *xenosophia/inter-religious*

dialog (*xenos*) was constructed. The third subscale, *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* (*frt*), shares with *xenos* the opposition to *ttt* but has its own profile of an “objectifying” and supposedly “neutral” approach focusing on justice and fairness.

In the US subsample there are no significant differences according to gender, *ttt* perhaps could be interpreted as showing a trend of women scoring marginally higher ($p = .060$). This is different for the German subsample, where scores for women are higher for *ttt* and *xenos* ($p \leq .001$), but not for *frt*. This may point to an interaction of gender and culture, indicating more of a gender difference in Germany—interestingly in those schemata which assess exclusivist adherence to on one’s own tradition and its opposite, friendly interest for “other” ways of being religious.

Taking results together and inspecting the effect sizes we see that differences are, again, more pronounced in the German sample, where we see small to medium effects for all measures except *frt* from the RSS, while in the US sample there are small effects for self-rated “spirituality,” the ATGS, and *extrovertive mysticism* and *interpretation* from the Mysticism Scale. This may be counterintuitive at first sight in light of “religious” USA and “eurosecular” Germany. However, based on data from the Religion Monitor, Klein and colleagues report that non-affiliated

persons in highly civilized countries with Christian traditions may display high gender differences in measures of religiosity. They relate this to cultural notions of essential gender differences which have been preserved in enlightenment discourse (Klein et al., 2015).

Conclusion

It has been shown that “spiritual” as self-identification is shared by people who belong to different Christian or other religious affiliations, who are unaffiliated, and who do or do not believe in God or some higher power, who do or do not pursue concerns beyond their personal happiness. The self-identification as “spiritual” does not indicate a specific position in the religious field (see Chap. 1) nor can it be used to reliably indicate horizontal versus vertical transcendence. The trajectories we calculated show predominantly, in the US sample, religious to spiritual turns, while in the German sample we found spiritual conversions, that is, changes from being “neither” to being “spiritual.” We might assume that different trajectories involve different semantics of “spirituality”?

Who, then, is “spiritual”? Taking the observations reported together, we might answer: Anyone who makes this claim. Who does make this claim, and the amount of the emphasis of this claim is related to culture, gender, age and generation. It can, therefore, not be reliably predicted by any of these, and implications for what “spirituality” means, are, so far, problematic.

This may sound disheartening for researchers interested in concepts with clearly defined boundaries. However, a complex and multifaceted concept may be very useful for articulating subjective private experiences and then linking diverse experiences, to a social discourse. An overarching, “fuzzy” concept offers space for the co-existence of different and individual ways of relating to what individuals who use it consider sacred or special. Therefore, our study of “spirituality” involves looking at different configurations of person- and context-related variables as

well as subjective constructions of religious experience with the aim of a systematic analysis of what being “spiritual” means to whom in what context.

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Part II

Semantics of “Spirituality”

Is “Spirituality” Nothing but “Religion”? An Indirect Measurement Approach

6

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Abstract

While people might distinguish strictly between “spirituality” and “religion” on the explicit level of cognition, it is possible that such differences disappear on the implicit level. Implicit Association Tests (IATs) provide a reliable and valid indirect procedure to measure implicit cognition. However, IATs comparing “spirituality” and “religion” have not been used often in research yet. Earlier studies have tried to contrast both concepts either directly in one IAT or have used both concepts as a single category. Thus, in their operationalization they did not take the broadness, vagueness, and partial overlap of both terms into account satisfyingly. For a more valid comparison, in the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality,” both “spirituality” and “religion” have been assessed by using the same stimuli and have been contrasted with “atheism” as a third concept. The results based on a subsample of 104 participants (USA: $n = 67$, Germany: $n = 37$) show that the task difficulties were reasonable and that both IATs proved to be reliable. The general IAT effects were .33 (USA) and .36 (Germany) for “spirituality” and .26 (USA) and .22 (Germany) for “religion,” indicating a preference for both “spirituality” and “religion” when contrasted with “atheism.” The effect sizes differ in parts significantly between four groups of explicit “spiritual/religious” self-identification in both countries. Explicit “spiritual”/“religious” self-ratings correlate highly significant with the IAT effects for “spirituality” and “religion.” Although, in general, the IAT scores are also very highly correlated, comparison between the four subgroups revealed that explicit self-rating and implicit attitude towards “spirituality” differ significantly among those who distinguish between their “spirituality” and “religion” on the explicit level.

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Introduction: Problems of Separating Spirituality From Religion

During the last decades, the term “spirituality” and speaking of oneself as being “spiritual” have gained surprising popularity in everyday language as in scientific discourse. In particular, the rise of the self-descriptions as “more spiritual than religious” (Streib, 2008) or even as “spiritual but not religious” (Ammerman, 2013; Fuller, 2001; Wuthnow, 1998) has received much attention. The growing number of persons who identify themselves in surveys rather as “spiritual” than as “religious” has led some scholars to postulate a “spiritual turn” (Houtman & Aupers, 2007) or even a “spiritual revolution” (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Tusting, 2005). In particular, researchers in the fields of medicine, psychology, and other health sciences have tried to define “spirituality” as a specific concept distinct from concepts of “religion” (for critical overviews cf. Clarke, 2009; Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson, & Zinnbauer, 2000; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Koenig, 2008; Oman, 2013; Reinert & Koenig, 2013; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). Yet there are several conceptual and empirical problems related to such attempts to separate “spirituality” from “religion” of which some of the most important shall be discussed here briefly.

Conceptual Problems

Some scholars have tried to define spirituality as a kind of relation to an ultimate, absolute, higher or transcendent sphere or entity. For instance, Peteet (1994, p. 237) defined “spirituality” as “[viewing] the human condition in a larger and/or transcendent context and [being] therefore concerned with the meaning and purpose of life and with unseen realities, such as one’s relationship to a supreme being.” The problem here is that relating to the ultimate or transcendent realm lies also at the core of many definitions of “religion.” For instance, such influential classical definitions as Schleiermacher’s (1799, pp. 22–23) “sensibility and taste

for the infinite” or James’ (1902, p. 42) definition: “The feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine” have focused particularly on the human experience of some kind of relation with a transcendent absolute. It is probably no coincidence that today both Schleiermacher and James are often seen as predecessors of the post-modern understanding of “spirituality” (Westerink, 2012). However, their definitions still shape the present understanding of the term “religion” as well. Limiting the meaning of “religion” to particular traditions neglects the various forms of privatized religiousness (Luckmann, 1967)—of which self-declared “spirituality” beyond any “religion” might simply be today’s most prominent version.

Other researchers described “spirituality” completely without any reference to a transcendent or ultimate realm, but tried to define “spirituality” in terms of meaning-making and positive mental states (cf. Hill et al., 2000, for critical discussion). Examples of such attempts are the definitions of Doyle who defined “spirituality” as “the search for existential meaning” (1992, p. 302) or Tanyi (2002, p. 690) who defines “spirituality” as “a personal search for meaning and purpose in life, which may or may not be related to religion.” Definitional attempts like these are indeed broader than common concepts of “religion,” but they run into other problems because they assume implicitly or explicitly that every human being is necessarily “spiritual” in the defined sense. Beside the fact that this assumption does not correspond with the emic understanding of “being spiritual” as evidenced in surveys—since not all respondents describe themselves as “spiritual”—such conceptualizations are worthless because they do not allow much differentiation. “Spirituality” then becomes nothing else but a synonym for concepts like “worldview,” “Weltanschauung,” “purpose in life,” or “meaning-making” (Koenig, 2008; Utsch & Klein, 2011). Additionally, understanding “spirituality” in terms of meaning-making runs into problems when such notions of “spirituality” shall be operationalized for empirical research.

Operationalizing “spirituality” as “meaning,” “peace,” “self-efficacy,” or “personal well-being” (e.g. Daaleman & Frey, 2004; Gomez & Fisher, 2003; Peterman, Fitchett, Brady, Hernandez, & Cella, 2002; The WHOQOL Group, 2002) is particularly dangerous within health research: Measures of “spirituality” which are confounded with expressions of positive mental states provoke artificial results, when they are statistically related to measures of positive mental and physical health (Koenig, 2008). Thus, defining and operationalizing “spirituality” in terms of meaning-making is both conceptually and methodologically misleading. Instead, the similarity and overlap of the term “spirituality” with the term “religion” has to be taken seriously.

Lack of Empirical Evidence

When it is hardly possible to separate “spirituality” from “religion” on the conceptual level, it is unlikely that a sharp distinction becomes visible on the basis of results of empirical studies. In this section, the empirical evidence of such a sharp separation will be questioned. Distinguishing strictly between “spirituality” and “religion” on the conceptual level indeed neglects that, in terms of self-identifications in surveys, most people still express their “spirituality” in continuity with their “religiousness” (Marler & Hadaway, 2002; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). The same is true for entire scales: Saucier and Skrzypinska (2006), for instance, reported a strong correlation between measures of “spirituality” and “religiousness” ($r = .68$). The continuity between “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification is true even for the most recent representative surveys: For the USA, in the latest General Social Survey (GSS) from 2012, the correlation between self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” is $r = .57$ ($p \leq .001$) (GSS data taken from National Opinion Research Center, 2013). Also in a more secular country like Germany, where describing oneself as “spiritual” is not as common as in the USA yet, the correlation between self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” is substantial: $r = .35$ ($p \leq .001$) (data of the

ALLBUS survey 2012; taken from GESIS, 2014). Similar results can be found on the basis of the data from the 2012 wave of the Religion Monitor, an international survey on religiousness in 14 countries (Pickel, 2013). Here, the correlation between self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” is $r = .58$ ($p \leq .001$) in the USA and $r = .45$ ($p \leq .001$) in Germany. To illustrate how self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” relate to one another in the USA and in Germany in more detail, we have presented several cross tabulations based on the data of the GSS/ALLBUS and the Religion Monitor in Chap. 3. A comparison of the percentages showed that the group of respondents who expressed completely equally levels of “spirituality” and “religion” (converging “spiritual” and “religious” identity; cf. Huber & Klein, 2011) was the biggest across all surveys and in both countries: More than half of the Americans and about 40 % of the Germans belong to the converging type of completely equally “spiritual” and “religious” identity (see Table 3.7). The empirical finding that large proportions of the populations in both the USA and Germany express their “spirituality” and their “religiousness” in continuity clearly contradicts attempts to separate both terms sharply on the conceptual level.

Further empirical evidence against a strict distinction between “spirituality” and “religion” comes from studies wherein common subjective understandings of the term “spirituality” have been investigated (e.g. Berghuijs, Pieper, & Bakker, 2013; Greenwald & Harder, 2003; La Cour, Ausker, & Hvidt, 2012; Schlehofer, Omoto, & Adelman, 2008; Walker & Pitts, 1998; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). It is striking that there have been identified dimensions of “religion” within the subjective understandings of “spirituality” in more or less all of these studies. For instance, in their factor analysis Greenwald and Harder (2003) detected a factor which they labeled as “Religiosity/Sacredness.” La Cour et al. (2012) found even two factors. While the first one showed an understanding of “spirituality” as a vague striving opposed to religion, the other expressed a notion of “spirituality” as an

integrated part of established religious life. Walker and Pitts (1998) observed that “belief in a higher power” and “has strong beliefs” are the two most characteristic descriptors of both “spirituality” and “religion.” In our own study, comparison of our respondents’ subjective definitions of “spirituality” and “religion” with the American and German national corpora of written language revealed that, in general, there is a strong overlap of the semantic fields of both terms (see Chap. 8, this volume). When analyzing our participants’ understandings of “spirituality” with Principal Component Analysis, we could identify ten basic dimensions of the subjective definitions of “spirituality.” The second of them identified “spirituality” to be an integral “part of religion” (see Chap. 9, this volume).

Thus, according to empirical studies about subjective understandings of “spirituality,” relations to “religion” are among the most important dimensions of “spirituality.” Attempts to separate “spirituality” completely from “religion” therefore neglect widespread associations with the term’s meaning. This brief outline of empirical results might be sufficient to illustrate that conceptualizing “spirituality” without any relation to “religion” is hardly convincing. It seems to be more appropriate to assume that there is a particular group of people who prefer to describe themselves as “spiritual” rather than as “religious” and that these people try to distinguish between their understanding of “spirituality” and what they assume to be “religion.” Whereas this kind of “spirituality instead of religion” is an interesting empirical phenomenon to study, it does not justify a separation of the concepts “spirituality” and “religion” on the level of scientific terminology (Utsch & Klein, 2011).

Research Questions

Are the conceptual problems of separating “spirituality” from “religion” and the lack of empirical evidence which have been sketched above also empirically visible among the particular group of people who prefer to describe

themselves rather as “spiritual” than as “religious”? Many of them have probably read about “spirituality” in books and journals (both popular and scientific) and are somewhat familiar with the term’s etymology, history and contemporary definitional approaches. If this assumption is correct, then it can also be assumed that many of the “more spiritual than religious” know that the term “spirituality” has a religious background. It is rooted in the Christian tradition and has been distinguished from Christianity and other religious traditions no earlier than during the last decades (Westerink, 2012). Maybe some of the “more spiritual than religious” are also somewhat familiar with the scientific discussion about the conceptualization of “spirituality” and “religion” and with some of the problems about separating “spirituality” from “religion.” When they describe themselves rather as “spiritual” than as “religious,” they can be expected to distinguish between both terms for themselves, too (and, by the way, our investigations of their subjective definitions of both terms shows that they do; see Chap. 8, this volume). But do they also experience any challenge of separating “spirituality” from “religion”? Are they sometimes skeptical against their own attempts to distinguish “spirituality” from “religion”?

If this is the case, then it should be possible to observe such latent, maybe suppressed skepticism on the implicit level of cognition. Would it make a difference to “more spiritual than religious” people on the implicit level of cognition whether their sense of transcendence or of the ultimate is labeled either “spirituality” or “religion”? Or are their implicit attitudes towards both terms rather the same when dealing implicitly with the transcendent sphere—so that, on the implicit level, “spirituality” appears to be nothing but “religion”? And what about the implicit attitudes of other groups? Do “more religious than spiritual” prefer the concept “religion” on the implicit level of cognition? Do “equally religious and spiritual” people express quite similar implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion”? And do “neither religious nor spiritual” persons show similar implicit rejections of both concepts? Discussing these

questions in our research team suggested including in our research design an indirect measure assessing implicit attitudes towards the terms “spirituality” and “religion” and to test our research questions empirically with a subsample of our participants.

Method

Sample We invited all persons in our study who had originally been asked to complete the Faith Development Interview (FDI) to additionally complete two Implicit Association Tests (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), indirect computer-based reaction time measures. The interviewees had the opportunity to choose whether they would take part or not and could choose either to complete the tests online on their own computers a few hours or days after the interview or to be tested with one of our notebooks by a member of our research team directly after the FDI. Some persons rejected to participate because they were tired after the interview and did not want to spend some more time for the IATs. Some were also skeptical towards the unfamiliar measurement procedure so that a couple of people dropped out of the IAT sample. Since not all of those who had been asked to be interviewed indeed have been assessed with the FDI afterwards and not all of the FDIs which have been carried out were evaluable, the final FDI sample (see Chap. 17) and the IAT sample are not completely identical. All in all, the IAT sample consists of $n_{\text{IAT}} = 104$ persons whereby the American subsample ($n_{\text{IAT(USA)}} = 67$) almost doubles the size of the German subsample ($n_{\text{IAT(GER)}} = 37$). Maybe the higher response rate among the Americans is due to the sampling procedure in the USA, where the participants could keep contact with the research team more easily. It might have played a role as well that the American sample in general is younger than the German sample (see Chap. 4, this volume) and thus maybe less skeptical towards a computerized measurement procedure.

The general age difference is reflected in the IAT sample as well: Mean age of the 67 Americans who completed the IATs is $M = 39.9$ ($SD = 14.7$), mean age of the 37 Germans is $M = 47.1$ ($SD = 14.3$; $t_{102} = 2.4$; $p = .017$). While there is a majority of women in the American IAT sample (67.2 %), there are fewer women than men in the German IAT sample (32.4 %). Thus, the distribution of sexes differs significantly between both samples ($X^2 = 11.6$; $p = .001$). Education ($U_{104} = 1.3$; $p = .746$) and income ($t_{102} = 1.4$; $p = .173$), however, did not differ significantly.

For comparative analyses, the sample is divided into subgroups based on the forced-choice item asking for the preference for describing oneself as “more spiritual than religious,” “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” or “neither religious nor spiritual” (see Chap. 4). In the American IAT subsample, the subgroup of the “more spiritual than religious” is overrepresented ($n = 40$). The subgroups of the “equally religious and spiritual” ($n = 11$) and the “neither religious nor spiritual” ($n = 15$) are of moderate size. But, unfortunately, only one “more religious than spiritual” person from the USA completed the IATs. Thus, while this person is included in analyses based on the entire US IAT sample, in the comparative analyses reported below this person is excluded. The distribution of the four subgroups in the German IAT sample is a bit more balanced; however, due to the overall small sample size, the subgroups are quite small, too. The “more spiritual than religious” ($n = 13$) are the biggest subgroup in the German sample, too. The subgroup of the “neither religious nor spiritual” ($n = 11$) is of similar size while the subgroups of the “more religious than spiritual” ($n = 5$) and the “equally religious and spiritual” ($n = 8$) are somewhat smaller. But with respect to the high number of IAT trials (see the following paragraph), group comparisons seemed to be possible.

Implicit Association Tests Cognitive processing of information occurs reflectively and controlled on the one hand, but impulsively and automatically on the other (Smith & DeCoster,

2000; Strack & Deutsch, 2004). Answering to items in questionnaires or questions in interviews gives the respondent some time to reason about his decision and involves therefore more reflective and controlled processing of information. But with respect to some research topics, e.g. attitudes and stereotypes, it can also be helpful to assess the more impulsive and uncontrolled parts of cognition by making use of indirect measurement strategies (Gschwendner, Hofmann, & Schmitt, 2006). Using computerized assessment techniques, a variety of indirect measurement strategies has been developed throughout the last 20 years of which the IAT is the most common and reliable (Fazio & Olson, 2003; Schmuckle & Egloff, 2011).

The IAT has originally been developed by Greenwald et al. (1998); it assesses the strength of automatic associations between stimuli which are presented on a computer screen and which represent two targets, e.g. “spirituality” and “atheism,” and two evaluative categories, e.g. pleasant or unpleasant words. An entire IAT consists of seven blocks, five practice blocks and

two test blocks (see Table 6.1). The assumption is that research participants will react faster in a test block when more closely related words (e.g. stimuli for “spirituality” + pleasant words, stimuli for “atheism” + unpleasant words) have to be sorted by clicking the same button whereas they will react slower in a test block when less closely related words (stimuli for “spirituality” + unpleasant words, stimuli for “atheism” + pleasant words) have to be sorted with the same button. The faster a respondent sorts the stimuli into a combined category (e.g. “spirituality” + pleasant words), the stronger the automatic association between the target “spirituality” and a positive valence, i.e. the stronger the positive implicit attitude towards “spirituality.”

To quantify the strength of the implicit association, an IAT effect (“ D_1 ”) is calculated by subtracting the mean reaction time of the congruous test blocks (practice and test block with stimuli for “spirituality” + pleasant words and stimuli for “atheism” + unpleasant words) from the mean reaction time of the incongruous test blocks (practice and test block with stimuli for

Table 6.1 Sequence of Trial Blocks in the IATs on “Religion”/“Spirituality” and “Atheism”

Block	No. of trials	Task function	Items assigned to left-key response	Items assigned to right-key response
<i>Religion-versus-atheism IAT</i>				
1	28	Practice	Positive words	Negative words
2	28	Practice	Religion words	Atheism words
3	28	Practice	Positive + religion words	Negative + atheism words
4	84	Test	Positive + religion words	Negative + atheism words
5	28	Practice	Atheism words	Religion words
6	28	Practice	Positive + atheism words	Negative + religion words
7	84	Test	Positive + atheism words	Negative + religion words
<i>Spirituality-versus-atheism IAT</i>				
8	28	Practice	Spirituality words	Atheism words
9	28	Practice	Positive + spirituality words	Negative + atheism words
10	84	Test	Positive + spirituality words	Negative + atheism words
11	28	Practice	Atheism words	Spirituality words
12	28	Practice	Positive + atheism words	Negative + spirituality words
13	84	Test	Positive + atheism words	Negative + spirituality words

Note The words which have been used as stimuli for “religion” and “spirituality” have been identical. Since the stimuli for positive and negative evaluation did not change throughout the IATs, the practice block for positive and negative words has not been repeated in the Spirituality-versus-Atheism IAT

“spirituality” + unpleasant words and stimuli for “atheism” + pleasant words; cf. Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003, for the algorithm). The score is standardized for each respondent by the intra-individual standard deviations of all critical trials.

In our study, we wanted to compare the implicit attitudes towards both “spirituality” and “religion.” Although there have been some attempts to measure facets of religiousness with IATs (e.g. Meier, Hauser, Robinson, Friesen, & Schjeldahl, 2007; Shariff, Cohen, & Norenzayan, 2008; Wenger & Yarbrough, 2005), so far only very few studies dealt explicitly with the two concepts of “spirituality” and “religion.” LaBouff, Rowatt, Johnson, Thedford, and Tsang (2010) developed an IAT as “implicit measure of general religiousness-spirituality” (p. 441). As indicated in this description, the authors did not differentiate sharply between “spirituality” and “religiousness” but understood them as a “family of constructs” (Note 1, p. 440) and contrasted “general religiousness-spirituality” in their IAT with “nonreligiousness/nonspirituality” as opposing category. “Religiousness-spirituality” has been operationalized by stimuli like “religious,” “spiritual,” “theistic,” or “believer” while “nonreligiousness/nonspirituality” has been measured by their direct counterparts: “nonreligious,” “nonspiritual,” “atheistic,” and “agnostic.” An IAT on attitudes towards Christianity and Humanism also worked with the antagonism of religious and secular orientations, but did not include “spirituality” as concept or stimulus (Ventis, Ball, & Viggiano, 2010). Understanding “religion” and “spirituality” as related concepts like LaBouff and colleagues is in line with our argumentation; however, they left it open to future research to develop specific IATs measuring solely “spirituality” or “religion.”

To our knowledge, the only attempt to measure both “spirituality” and “religion” distinctively with an IAT has been carried out by Bassett and colleagues (2005) who tried to measure “spirituality” and “religion” as two alternative targets. In their study, “religion” has been operationalized by stimuli like “church,” “bible,” “worship,” “baptism,” or “holy communion,”

thus indicating a clearly Christian semantic of “religion.” “Spirituality,” on the contrary, has been operationalized by more abstract stimuli like “higher being” or “soul,” but also by “meditation” and by a number of words signaling positive psychosocial effects (“tranquility,” “inner peace,” “relationship”). The operationalization of Bassett and colleagues thus repeats stereotypical psychological concepts of “spirituality” and “religion” which have been criticized earlier in this chapter. We don’t think that their operationalization is sufficient because it fails to take the overlap and the broadness and vagueness of both terms into account satisfyingly. Rather, it cements the separation of “spirituality” from any kind of “religion” and runs into exactly those conceptual problems which have been described above.

Therefore, we looked for a better way to measure implicit attitudes towards both “spirituality” and “religion.” Since most researchers agree that both concepts deal somehow with a transcendent realm (which some might call God or the Divine) and with a life orientation somehow dedicated to this transcendent, we tried to operationalize both concepts with the same stimuli dealing with a transcendent sphere and with one’s corresponding life orientation. To compare the implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion,” we further needed a third concept as *tertium comparationis* which could be used as counterpart of both “spirituality” and “religion.” Similar to the IATs of LaBouff et al. (2010) and Ventis et al. (2010) we decided that a secular, atheist orientation might function as counterpart. Thus, we took “atheism” as third concept and contrasted “atheism” in a first IAT with “religion” and in a second IAT with “spirituality,” whereby the stimuli for “religion” and “spirituality” did not change between the two tests. Table 6.1 gives an overview over the complete IAT procedure.

Our stimuli for “spirituality” and “religion” consisted of *divine, mystical, holy, devout, spirited, faithful, and sacred*. The stimuli for “atheism” included *secular, thisworldly, without God, skeptical, enlightenment, freethinker, and Darwin*. Since the self-identification as “more spiritual than religious” signals something more and

something less valuable, we think that, for our purposes, among a sample of people interested in “spirituality” it is more appropriate to study implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion” instead of measuring implicit “spirituality” and “religiousness” as traits. Measuring implicit attitudes instead of traits seems also reasonable because IATs have proven to function best as measures of attitudes: While they provide incremental validity for the prediction of attitude-related behavior, IAT scores function less as predictors of trait- or disease-related behavior (Greenwald, Poehlmann, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009). Thus, to design our IATs as indirect measures of implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion” we included two widely used categories for positive and negative evaluation: The stimuli for the positive valence included the words *good*, *pleasant*, *luck*, *love*, *healthy*, *valuable*, and *joy*; the stimuli for the negative valence consisted of *bad*, *unpleasant*, *disgust*, *hate*, *ill*, *useless*, and *poison*. These stimuli have been combined congruously and incongruously throughout the IAT blocks with the stimuli for “spirituality”/“religion” and “atheism.”

The IATs have been administered with the reaction time software Inquisit (www.millisecond.com). The research participants were instructed to sort the stimuli which appeared on the screen of their computers as quickly and as correctly as possible by pressing the ‘I’-key with the right forefinger and the ‘E’-key with the left forefinger. Built-in error penalties have been created because correct responses were required to continue with the next trial. The sequence of congruous and incongruous IAT blocks has been counterbalanced, but with respect to the relatively small sample and the even smaller subsamples of the “more spiritual,” “more religious,” “equally religious and spiritual,” and “neither nor,” we did not counterbalance the sequence of the two IATs. That means that the Religion-versus-Atheism IAT has always been presented first and the Spirituality-versus-Atheism IAT second. Before the calculation of the D_1 effects, excessively slow reaction times (>3000 ms) have been removed to reduce measurement error.

Direct Measures For comparison between the implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion” and the degrees of self-rated explicit “spirituality” and “religiousness,” two single-item measures assessing the self-rating as “spiritual” and “religious” have been included in the analyses. Both items used five-point Likert scales like those applied in the Religion Monitor survey (cf. Chap. 3), ranging from “not spiritual” to “spiritual” and from “not religious” to “religious.”

Results

General IAT Effects

Before we present the results of the subgroup comparison and the comparison between implicit attitudes and explicit “spirituality” and “religiousness,” we start with the report of some quality criteria and the general IAT effects. As presented in Table 6.2, high percentages of correct reactions in both IATs among both the American and the German subsample indicate that our probands understood the instruction correctly. To check the reliabilities of our IATs, we divided the reaction times of all critical trials in two parts and calculated the internal consistencies between the two. The internal consistencies are excellent for both IATs among both samples (Cronbach’s $\alpha \geq .93$).

As expectable, in general our research participants reacted faster in the congruous IAT blocks, i.e. when the “religion” or “spirituality” terms were combined with the positive valence and when “atheism” was combined with the negative valence ($t \geq 2.48$; $p \leq .018$). Although the Germans on average are seven years older than the Americans, there are no significant reaction time differences between the two samples at all.

The overall faster reactions in the congruous IAT blocks result in positive IAT effects signaling that, in general, our research participants show more positive attitudes towards both “spirituality” and “religion” when contrasted with “atheism.” In both samples, D_1 is somewhat

Table 6.2 Percentage of Correct Reactions, Internal Consistencies, Mean Reaction Times and General IAT Effects

	USA (<i>n</i> = 67)		GER (<i>n</i> = 37)	
	Religion versus Atheism	Spirituality versus Atheism	Religion versus Atheism	Spirituality versus Atheism
% correct reactions	94	95	96	96
Cronbach’s α	.97	.93	.94	.94
Mean reaction time (congruous) (ms)	1215.46	1055.59	1135.60	1012.13
Mean reaction time (incongruous) (ms)	1347.83	1236.98	1318.48	1234.97
IAT effect (D_1)	.26	.33	.22	.36

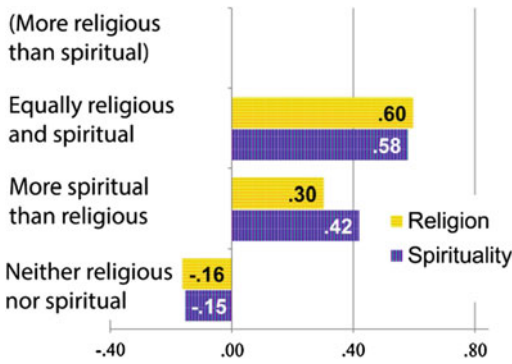


Fig. 6.1 IAT Effects for the Implicit Attitudes Towards “Spirituality” and “Religion” Among Four Subgroups in the USA.

Note There are no bars for the “more religious than spiritual” group because the US IAT sample included only one “more religious than spiritual” person which was excluded from the comparative analysis for statistical reasons

higher for the Spirituality-versus-Atheism IAT than for the Religion-versus-Atheism IAT. But while implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion” do not differ significantly among the US research participants ($\Delta D_{1(USA)} = .07$; *n.s.*), the difference is slightly significant among the Germans ($\Delta D_{1(GER)} = .14$, $t_{36} = -2.22$, $p = .033$). Thus, the German sample shows a somewhat stronger positive implicit attitude towards “spirituality” than towards “religion.”

Subgroup Comparisons

As next step of analysis, we present the IAT effects for the four subgroups of the “more

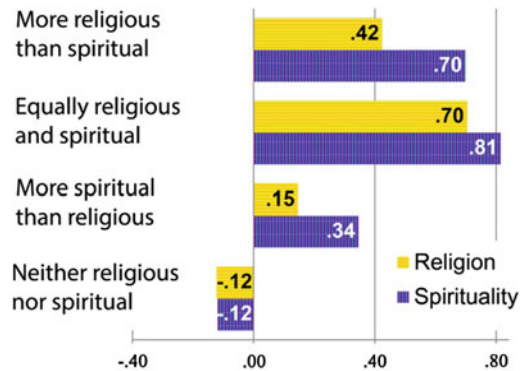


Fig. 6.2 IAT Effects for the Implicit Attitudes Towards “Spirituality” and “Religion” Among Four Subgroups in Germany

spiritual than religious,” “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” and “neither religious nor spiritual.” Figures 6.1 and 6.2 depict the size of D_1 of both IATs for each subgroup in each country.

The subgroups of the “equally religious and spiritual,” the “more spiritual than religious,” and, in Germany, also the “more religious than spiritual” all display positive implicit attitudes towards both “spirituality” and “religion” while the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups in both countries show negative attitudes towards both terms. Or, to put it the other way round, “neither religious nor spiritual” Americans and Germans prefer “atheism” in comparison to “spirituality” and “religion.” One-way ANOVAs with post hoc tests using Scheffé’s procedure revealed that, in the US sample, the D_1 scores of both IATs of the “neither nor” subgroup differ

significantly from the scores of the other two subgroups ($F \geq 8.62$; Mean Difference $\geq .46$; $p \leq .009$) while the scores of the other two groups do not differ (Mean Difference $\leq .30$; *n.s.*)—although, according to Cohen (1988), the effects are of medium size: Cohen's $d \geq .45$. In the German sample, due to the small size of the subgroups the implicit attitude towards "religion" differs only significantly between the "neither nor" and the "equally religious and spiritual" group ($F = 4.95$; Mean Difference = $.83$; $p = .009$). However, here, too, the differences between the other subgroups reach at least medium effect size (Cohen's $d \geq .54$). Further, among the Germans the implicit attitude towards "spirituality" differs significantly between the "neither nor" subgroup on the one hand and the "equally religious and spiritual" and the "more religious" subgroups on the other ($F \geq 9.17$; Mean Difference $\geq .82$; $p \leq .010$). Again, due to the small size of the groups, there are no other significant group differences although the effect sizes usually reach a high level (Cohen's $d \geq .86$) except for the comparison between the "more religious" and the "equally religious and spiritual" (Cohen's $d = .40$). Thus, there are only significant differences between the subgroups with clearly positive and with negative scores, but almost all differences are of medium or high effect size. Nevertheless, since the sample sizes are low, these differences should not be overestimated and probably best be interpreted as tendencies.

While it is probably not too surprising that groups in favor of either "spirituality" or "religion" display higher implicit attitudes towards these concepts than groups who don't, it is striking how parallel the patterns for the implicit attitudes towards "spirituality" and "religion" look across the groups in both countries. In fact, there are no differences between the D_1 scores for implicit attitudes towards "spirituality" and "religion" at all, except slightly significant differences among the "more spiritual" groups in both countries. As indicated by t -Tests, the "more spiritual" display somewhat higher

implicit attitudes towards "spirituality" than towards "religion," although on a rather low level of significance (USA: $t_{39} = 1.99$; $p = .054$; GER: $t_{12} = 1.84$; $p = .091$). With respect to the small sample sizes, we calculated Cohen's d additionally to estimate the effect sizes. While the effect is only small among the "more spiritual" Americans (Cohen's $d = .28$), the effect is of medium size among the "more spiritual" Germans (Cohen's $d = .50$). However, the same is true for the not significant difference between the implicit attitudes of the five "more religious" Germans (Cohen's $d = .54$) so that, again, we should be careful not to over-interpret these findings. What might be said is that persons who describe themselves as "more spiritual than religious" also tend to express slightly more positive implicit attitudes towards "spirituality" than towards "religion."

Implicit Attitudes and Explicit "Spirituality" and "Religiousness"

How do the implicit attitudes towards "spirituality" and "religion" of our research participants relate to their self-rated explicit "spirituality" and "religiousness"? In general, both IAT scores and both direct measures are significantly correlated with each other measure, while the altitude of the correlations does not differ substantially. Within the US sample, the coefficients of correlations between implicit attitudes and self rated explicit "spirituality" and "religiousness" range between $r = .43$ ($p \leq .001$; correlation between explicit "religiousness" and implicit attitude towards "spirituality") and $r = .52$ ($p \leq .001$; correlation between explicit "spirituality" and implicit attitude towards "spirituality"). Within the German sample, correlations range between $r = .41$ ($p = .027$; explicit "spirituality" and implicit attitude towards "religion") and $r = .66$ ($p \leq .001$; explicit "religiousness" and implicit attitude towards "spirituality"). The two IAT scores are correlated even stronger: The correlation between D_1 score for "spirituality" and D_1

score for “religion” is $r = .73$ ($p \leq .001$) among the Americans and $r = .78$ ($p \leq .001$) among the Germans. Given the clear associations between implicit attitudes and self-rated explicit “spirituality” and “religiousness”: Do the labels “spirituality” or “religion” make any difference to our research participants then?

Again, comparing the four subgroups provides further insights. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show the subgroups’ means of self-rated explicit “spirituality” and “religiousness” and the means of their implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion” (for better comparability, all scores have been z-standardized). In general, groups which either favor or reject both concepts (i.e., they hold the same attitudes towards both concepts) show very consistent patterns: Those who belong to the group of the “equally religious and spiritual” display consistently positive scores both on the explicit and implicit level and both with respect to “spirituality” and “religion”/“religiousness.” Similarly, the “neither religious nor spiritual” show consistently negative scores, i.e. they have rated their explicit “spirituality” and “religiousness” both very low and they express

negative implicit attitudes towards both “spirituality” and “religion.” This pattern is visible both among the American and the German research participants.

Interesting are the results of the other groups: Both the “more spiritual than religious” and the “more religious than spiritual” (only in the German sample) display a very clear pattern on the explicit level. While they score high on one of the two single items according to their self-identification, they display low levels on the other. But this does not apply for their implicit attitudes. The scores of the “more spiritual” groups in both countries lay around the overall mean for the implicit attitudes both towards “spirituality” and “religion” (although, as we have seen in the previous section, they differ slightly).

What is striking here is the difference between explicit self-description and implicit attitude. While the differences between explicit “religiousness” and implicit attitude towards “religion” are not significant ($t \leq 1.50$; *n.s.*) among the American and the German “more spiritual” subgroups, explicit “spirituality” and implicit attitude towards “spirituality” differ significantly

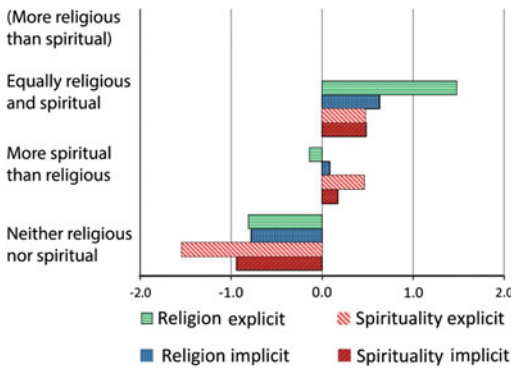


Fig. 6.3 Z-Standardized Means for Implicit Attitudes Towards “Spirituality” and “Religion” and for Self-rated Explicit “Spirituality” and “Religiousness” Among Four Subgroups in the USA.

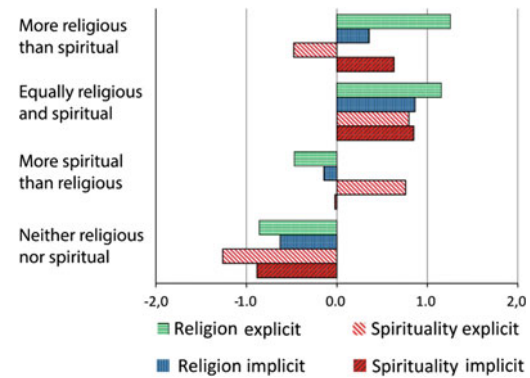


Fig. 6.4 Z-Standardized Means for Implicit Attitudes towards “Spirituality” and “Religion” and for Self-rated Explicit “Spirituality” and “Religiousness” among Four Subgroups in Germany

Note There are no bars for the “more religious than spiritual” group because the US IAT sample included only one “more religious than spiritual” person which was excluded from the comparative analysis for statistical reasons

($t \geq 2.12$; $p \leq .040$) in both groups. While the effect is small to medium among the Americans (Cohen's $d = .44$), the effect is strong among the Germans (Cohen's $d = 1.29$). In the German "more religious than spiritual" group, the difference between explicit "spirituality" and implicit attitude towards "spirituality" is significant, too ($t_4 = 3.21$; $p = .033$), and of large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.76$). The difference between explicit "religiousness" and implicit attitude towards "religion" is non-significant ($t_4 = 2.11$; *n.s.*), however, the effect size is still considerable (Cohen's $d = 1.08$). Thus, notwithstanding the overall high correlations of explicit "spirituality" and "religiousness" with the implicit attitudes towards both concepts, in particular explicit "spirituality" and implicit attitude towards "spirituality" are likely to differ for people who distinguish for themselves between "spirituality" and "religion."

Discussion

We start the discussion of our results with a brief summary of the findings which have been detailed in the previous sections. As the positive D_1 scores for the entire samples show, in general our research participants hold positive implicit attitudes towards "religion" and, to an even somewhat higher degree, towards "spirituality." The size of D_1 , however, differs depending on the research participants' self-identification. While the subgroups who describe themselves either as "spiritual" or as "religious" hold positive implicit attitudes towards both concepts, among those who see themselves as "neither religious nor spiritual," their explicit rejection of "spirituality" and "religion" corresponds with negative implicit attitudes. Within the four subgroups, implicit attitudes towards "spirituality" and "religion" tend to be very similar and differ only slightly among the "more spiritual than religious." Correlational analyses on the basis of the entire samples indicate that, in general, the implicit attitudes are highly associated with each

other as they are with explicit "spirituality" and "religiousness."

Given these high correlations, it seems that we primarily measured implicit and explicit components of a superordinate construct of "general religiousness-spirituality" (cf. LaBouff et al., 2010). This finding would corroborate that "spirituality" and "religion" are primarily alternative names for the same underlying concept. However, as described in the last paragraph, subgroup comparisons reveal that there are some differences with respect to our research participants' self-identifications. Among people who do not express differing levels of "spirituality" and "religiousness" in their self-identifications, explicit "spirituality" and "religiousness" and implicit attitudes towards both terms correspond with each other. But among those who distinguish between "spirituality" and "religiousness" in their self-identifications ("more spiritual" and "more religious" subgroups), in particular their self-rated explicit "spirituality" and their implicit attitude towards "spirituality" differ significantly. It is noteworthy that these differences between explicit self-descriptions and implicit attitudes are bigger than those between the implicit attitudes towards "spirituality" on the one hand and towards "religion" on the other. To put it more simply: Although self-identifications might signal something else, attitudes towards "spirituality" and "religion" do not differ very much on the implicit level. Rather, explicit self-descriptions and implicit attitudes seem to diverge.

Do these results indicate that, on the implicit level of cognition, "spirituality" is nothing but "religion"? Before we draw a final conclusion, it is important to take several shortcomings of our study into account. A limitation which, due to the complex design of our study, we were not able to overcome is that the IAT samples are rather small. This applies in particular to the German sample which is smaller, but on the other hand more balanced than the US sample wherein only one "more religious" person could be included. It is possible that the more balanced composition of the German subsample is the reason that the effects are in part clearer among the Germans, but

this assumption needs to be corroborated in future studies.

An important concern about our study is that the similarity of the D_1 scores for implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion” might have been increased artificially because we have used the same stimuli for both concepts. Nevertheless, it is not a matter of course that the scores strongly resemble each other across all groups. The example of the “neither nor” groups shows that, in general, rejections of “spirituality” and “religion” have been possible. But of course we have to admit that further negative scores could only have occurred if “more spiritual” research participants had preferred “atheism” instead of “religion” or if “more religious” persons had preferred “atheism” instead of “spirituality” which is probably rather unlikely. What might be more likely is indifference, neither in favor of “atheism” nor of “spirituality” or “religion.” Indeed, at least among the “more spiritual” Germans we see a rather narrow D_1 score in the Religion-versus-Atheism IAT. Possible methodological effects of using the same stimuli could be tested in future studies if the design would be balanced by using identical stimuli for “spirituality” and “religion” in contrast to “atheism” in one test sequence and identical stimuli for “spirituality” and “atheism” in contrast to “religion” in another test sequence (for instance, a stimulus like “freethinker” might function for “spirituality” as well as for “atheism”).

Another limitation of our study is that, due to the small sample size, we did not counterbalance the order of the two IATs so that all participants first completed the Religion-versus-Atheism IAT and did the Spirituality-versus-Atheism IAT afterwards. Maybe the differences of the D_1 scores for “spirituality” and “religion” would have been clearer in particular among the “more spiritual” research participants if some of them had completed the Spirituality-versus-Atheism IAT first. In fact, the reaction times presented in Table 6.2 show that there has been some learning effect since the reaction times decreased from the Religion-versus-Atheism IAT to the Spirituality-versus-Atheism IAT. But the decrease is stronger for the congruous test blocks than for the

incongruous which results in somewhat higher D_1 scores in the Spirituality-versus-Atheism IAT. Since we did not have the opportunity to counterbalance the sequence of the two IATs, unfortunately we could not check whether this effect would disappear or whether effects among particular subgroups would even increase if the sequence was counterbalanced. Thus, replicating our study with a bigger sample and an extended design would provide the opportunity to gain additional insights and to answer a couple of questions which we have to leave open for now.

Nevertheless, we can state that the differences between the implicit attitudes towards “spirituality” and “religion” are clearly smaller than explicit distinctions between both concepts seem to indicate. Although the differences do not completely vanish on the implicit level of cognition, “spirituality” and “religion” implicitly seem to be rather closely related concepts. Maybe using the same stimuli for both “spirituality” and “religion” in our operationalization has let our research participants remember that much of their “spirituality” is deeply rooted in religious traditions?

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Semantic Differentials Open New Perspectives on the Semantic Field of “Spirituality” and “Religion”

7

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Abstract

The Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality” had a special focus on the semantics of “spirituality” and “religion,” and for this purpose has included a semantic differential approach. Two semantic differentials were part of the questionnaire and have been completed by 1,082 US-American and 703 German respondents: one of Osgood’s “classical” instruments with 18 pairs of opposite adjectives, which had revealed a three-dimensional structure (*evaluation, potency, activity*) in previous cross-cultural research; the second instrument was a Contextual Semantic Differential with 30 pairs of opposite adjectives that has been constructed for this study. Both semantic differentials have been included twice in the questionnaire: first for “spirituality,” then for “religion.” Results are based on Paired *t*-tests comparing associations with “spirituality” and associations with “religion” for all adjectives, and on ANOVAs with focus groups in the US and the German samples. Results are visualized in line figures and scatter plots, which represent the semantic fields. Results generally indicate high regard for “spirituality” and rather negative evaluation of “religion.” They reveal relatively little differences between Germany and the US, but considerable differences between respondents who self-identify as “more religious,” “more spiritual,” “neither religious nor spiritual” or “atheist” in the respective focus groups. We conclude that the semantic differentials yield insight in the surplus of “spirituality.”

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About three decades we are witnessing changes in the religious fields in the West, which may be called “spiritual turn” and are associated with changes in semantics. Time for the question: What’s the benefit? Is there a semantic surplus of self-attributed “spirituality”? If yes, what is it? The question for the surplus of “spirituality” may

be of particular importance in regard to people who self-identify as “atheists,” as “neither religious nor spiritual” or as “more spiritual than religious” because for them the question could be sharpened: Does “spirituality” offer, for experiences of transcendence, for beliefs and expectations, new semantic options, which were not available by “religion” alone? If yes, how can these new semantic options be described? Or—back to the basic version of this question—what does “spirituality” mean for them?

Answers can be expected from an inspection of the commonalities and differences in the semantic fields for “religion” and “spirituality.” And a promising approach for the reconstruction of the semantic fields for “religion” and “spirituality” are, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, semantic differentials, if they are designed and evaluated adequately. If applied to both “religion” and “spirituality,” semantic differentials may help us not only understand the commonalities and differences between these terms, but permit the reconstruction of the semantic field from closer attention to the thematic connotations of the adjectives of the semantic differentials. This approach has been taken in our study and has turned out productive and effective. To our knowledge, this approach is new, even though we note that a semantic differential approach has been included in previous research.

Zinnbauer et al. (1997) were not only among the first to study the semantics of spirituality inviting 346 persons in the USA to give their own definitions of religiousness and spirituality, but their study has also used an abbreviated version of Osgood’s semantic differential, even though they evaluated the semantic differential for reporting correlational patterns of positive and negative perception only. Several other studies on the semantics of “spirituality” (see reviews in Berghuijs, Pieper, & Bakker, 2013; Keller, Klein, Swahajor-Biesemann, Silver, Hood, & Streib, 2013) did not use a semantic differential, but comparable instruments such as adjective rating (Greenwald & Harder, 2003), word list associations (La Cour, Ausker, & Hvidt, 2012) or sentence completion (Büssing, 2006), or

related, but somewhat more qualitative methods such as subjective definitions (Berghuijs et al., 2013; Schlehofer, Omoto, & Adelman, 2008; this study, see Chaps. 8 and 9 of this volume), faith development interview responses (Streib & Keller, 2007) or connotation to “spirituality” in narratives embedded in biographical interviews and diaries (Ammerman, 2013). Of course, the semantic differential approach is not new in the study of religion and has been used to investigate God images to mention one famous example (Benson & Spilka, 1973; Broughton, 1975; Francis, Robbins, & Gibson, 2006), but, with the exception of Zinnbauer et al. (1997), the semantic differential has not been used in research on the semantics of “spirituality.”

Method

Sample While a total of 1,886 respondents ($n = 1113$ Americans and $n = 773$ Germans) have answered the questionnaire of our Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality” in such a way that their data can be used in most analyses, not all respondents completed the semantic differentials. A few participants reported that they sometimes felt the semantic differentials to be awkward. Although we offered an instruction, this task was skipped by 9 % of the German and 2 % of the American respondents. Therefore the report in this chapter is based on data of those respondents who completed all bipolar scales of the semantic differentials ($n = 1,082$ Americans, $n = 703$ Germans). In the American sample, ages range from 15 to 82 years ($M = 34.2$, $SD = 14.5$) and in the German sample from 16 to 90 years ($M = 42.0$, $SD = 13.6$). Of the American and German respondents 62.8 % and 55.9 % are female, respectively.

For further typological analyses reported in this chapter, data were split into six focus groups, which were (as detailed in Chaps. 3 and 5 of this volume) constructed according to their self-identification as “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more

spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theist,” “more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist,” “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist or non-theist” or “neither religious nor spiritual atheist/non-theist.”

Osgood’s 18-Item Semantic Differential For the systematic study of semantics we used the semantic differential, which has been developed and used in cross-cultural research by Osgood (1962) (Osgood, May, & Miron, 1975; Snider & Osgood, 1969). We used the 18-item version presented by Osgood (1962, p. 16) to be rated on a 5-point scale for “spirituality” and for “religion.” The merits of this method have been corroborated specifically for cross-cultural use by Osgood et al. (1975). It is supposed to assesses three dimensions/factors: *evaluation* (E: nice–awful, fine–coarse, heavenly–hellish, smooth–rough, mild–harsh, clean–dirty), *potency* (P: big–little, powerful–powerless, strong–weak, long–short, full–empty, many–few) and *activity* (A: burning–freezing, hot–cold, fast–slow, sharp–dull, light–dark, young–old).

In our data, the *E-P-A* factor structure could be corroborated, even if not perfectly, by PCA with Varimax rotation with respect to both the eigenvalues and the scree plots. For the term “religion” in both sub-samples, the three identified factors strongly resembled those of Osgood and explained 65.48 % of the variance in the American and 62.92 % in the German sub-sample. For “spirituality,” only the first two factors, *E* and *P*, could roughly be replicated in both sub-samples, while the third factor, *A*, could not be identified. Thus, for the term “spirituality,” Osgood’s factors seem to be only approximately replicable. Therefore, we refer to the *E-P-A* factor structure established by Osgood, when sorting the adjective pairs and estimating the evaluation of “religion” and “spirituality” across the various focus groups.

The Contextual Semantic Differential As we were interested in a more specific and detailed exploration of patterns of semantic-contextual connotations of “religion” and “spirituality,” we developed a Contextual Semantic Differential for this study.

For the construction of our Contextual Semantic Differential, we first created an item pool of descriptives for religion and spirituality, collected in Germany and in the USA; thereby we used dictionaries and published lists of adjectives referring to religion and/or spirituality, e.g. from the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC 2007, <http://www.liwc.net/>) from the Pennebaker Laboratory. The final set of adjective pairs has been selected by an expert rating of our bilingual and bicultural research team to ensure cross-cultural comparability as well as embeddedness in each cultural context. This resulted in parallel American and German versions of the Contextual Semantic Differential.

Our final Contextual Semantic Differential consists of 30 pairs of oppositional adjectives; items are: flexible–inflexible, liberating–oppressive, tolerant–intolerant, relaxing–rigorous, creative–destructive, laissez-faire–demanding, healing–wounding, calm–loud, positive–negative, modern–traditional, fascinating–boring, individual–collective, selfless–selfish, altruistic–egoistic, universal–particular, new–old, seeking–dwelling, thisworldly–otherworldly, mature–immature, feminine–masculine, interconnected–isolated, rational–irrational, moral–immoral, introverted–extroverted, sacred–profane, achieving–complacent, strong–weak, holy–secular, subjective–objective and lonely–sociable.

Thus, in this chapter we report the analyses of the semantics of “spirituality” and of “religion” based on 1785 responses to (a) Osgood Semantic Differential and (b) on our self-constructed Contextual Semantic Differential; each semantic differential was offered in two blocks, one for “spirituality” another for “religion,” in the same format and with the same instructions. Thus we have four blocks of semantic differentials, which allow the juxtaposition of the semantic associations to “religion” and “spirituality” on the same adjective polarities. All in all, we have a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ design (“religion”/“spirituality” \times Osgood’s Semantic Differential/Contextual Semantic Differential \times USA/Germany). Furthermore, for some analyses, we split samples into six focus groups.

Results

Results from the semantic differentials in our data speak in a variety of ways to the difference between “religion” and “spirituality” as the respondents in the study see these differences. Further, the analysis of the semantic connotations helps to profile the understandings of our participants about “religion” and “spirituality.” Finally, by dividing our samples according to country (USA and Germany) and also according to our six focus groups, which, as detailed in Chaps. 3 and 5 of this volume, are constructed according to the “spiritual”/“religious”/“atheist”/“non-theist” self-identifications, a variety of group profiles and group differences can be analyzed—answering the question “who speaks?” Of special interest here are the groups in which the contrast between “spirituality” and “religion” is very high, because this will allow inferences about the surplus of “spirituality” as a relatively new semantic option.

The results reported here are mainly based on paired *t*-tests. These paired *t*-tests were calculated ($CI = .95$) to estimate the differences between the means for “religion” and the means for “spirituality” for each polar adjective pair in both semantic differentials. The most obvious and easy to read visual presentation for these *t*-test results are polar line figures; in order to demonstrate our procedure step by step, we include below (Fig. 7.1) one such polar line figure for results with the Osgood Semantic Differential in the US and German samples.¹

¹First results from our evaluation of the Osgood and Contextual Semantic Differentials were previously published (Keller et al., 2013) with special attention to the difference between “spirituality” and “religion” and thus with the presentation of a whole series of polar line figures, which allow insight in the typological comparison between three sub-groups (‘highly spiritual low religious’, ‘highly religious’ and ‘neither spiritual nor religious’). These three sub-groups were constructed for the purpose of powerful statistical calculation and complexity reduction. This chapter expands these results taking them to further differentiation within the semantic field of “religion”/“spirituality” and calculating with our six focus groups (which e.g. explicitly account for self-identified “atheists”).

However, for the presentation and visualization of results for the semantic field, and especially for the Contextual Semantic Differential, scatter plots may be better suited. The semantic field construction is based also on the paired *t*-tests assessing the differences between the means for “religion” and “spirituality” for each adjective pair. Within the scatter plots, however, the means for “religion” and “spirituality” are interpreted as vectors indicating the affinity of each adjective pair to the axes for “religion” and “spirituality.” For easier reading, only the positive poles of the adjective pairs are presented.

The presentation of results starts with selected results for the Osgood Semantic Differential and then proceeds to the Contextual Semantic Differential. This may reflect a move from the rather structural to a more decisive orientation to content and context.

Commonalities and Differences Between “Spirituality” and “Religion” in the Osgood Semantic Differential

As presented in Fig. 7.1, paired *t*-tests for the German and the US samples reveal significant differences (the majority on the $p < .001$ level) between “religion” (dotted line) and “spirituality” (solid line) for most adjectives.² Between the US and German sample, the differences appear minor, indicating comparable semantics of “spirituality” and “religion” in cross-cultural perspective.

However, it is obvious that the difference in associations to “spirituality” and “religion” is by far greater for the six adjectives on the top. These first six adjective belong to Osgood’s dimension *E* (*evaluation*). This indicates that, for the total group of respondents in our study, evaluation of “spirituality” is by far more positive than their regard for the *potency* (*P*) and the *activity* (*A*) of “religion” and “spirituality.” “Spirituality” is associated with the evaluative adjectives “nice,” “fine,” “heavenly,” “smooth,” “mild” and “clean” much more strongly than “religion”.

²For a presentation of results for all focus groups in both countries see Figs. A.3 through A.14 in the Appendix.

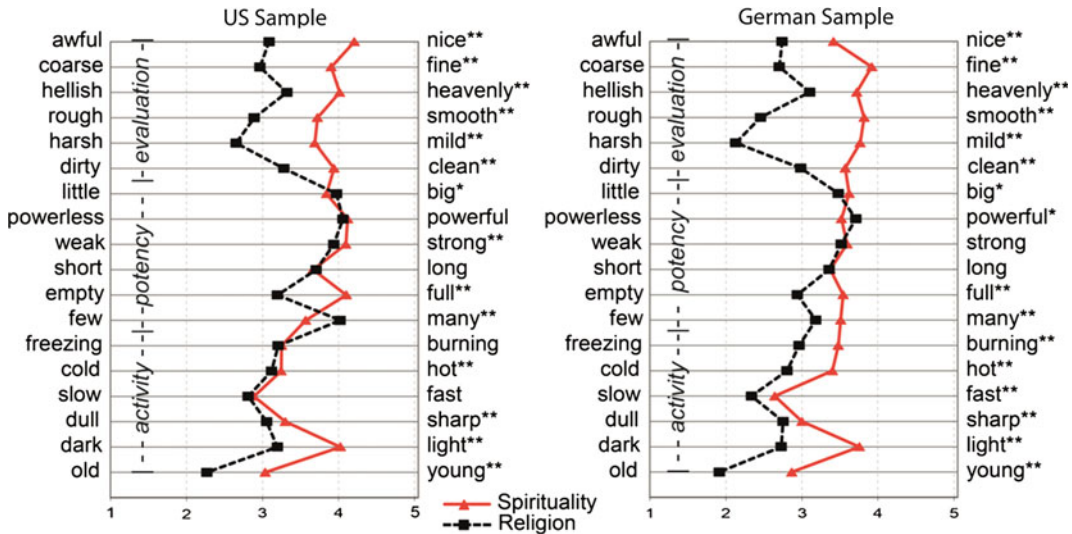


Fig. 7.1 Commonalities and Differences between “Spirituality” and “Religion” Based on Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential in the US and German Samples.

Note ** indicates significant differences on the $p < .001$ level; * indicates significant differences on the $p < .05$ level

Using the same results from the paired *t*-tests, the semantic field can be visualized with vectors for “religion” (x) and “spirituality” (y) (see Figs. 7.2 and 7.3). This visualization has the advantage that we see the adjectives assemble in specific field segments. The field segments can be identified as follows: in the upper right segment, all adjectives assemble that have a positive rating for both “spirituality” and “religion,” which means that in regard to these adjectives there is less difference but rather common ground between “spirituality” and “religion.” In contrast, the adjectives in the upper left segment have negative ratings for “religion” but positive ratings for “spirituality,” which indicates exclusive or more exclusive association of these adjectives with “spirituality.” Lower right segment would be the place for adjectives belonging exclusively or more exclusively to “religion.” It is noteworthy that, on the basis of total sample calculation, there is no single adjective exclusively associated with “religion,” the lower right segment is empty. Finally the lower left segment is the place for adjectives with negative associations for both terms.

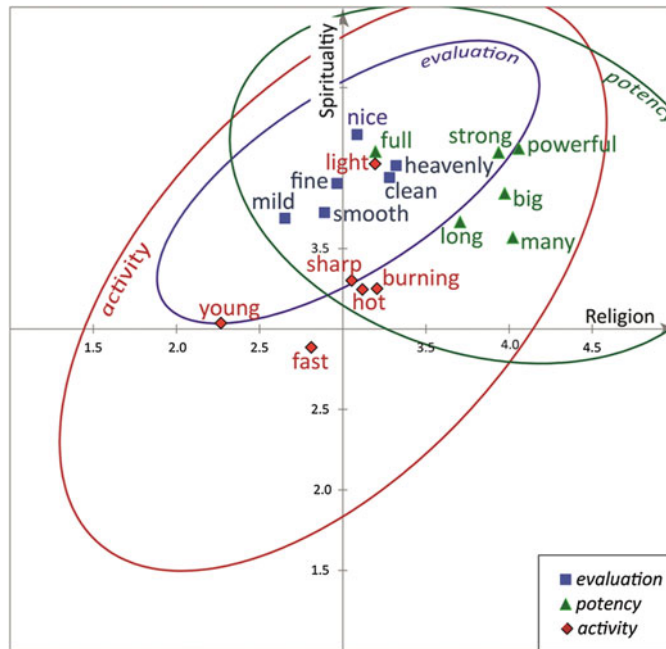
On first observation of Figs. 7.2 and 7.3 we already see that almost all adjectives assemble in the upper field segments; this demonstrates that

only very few adjectives have negative ratings for “spirituality,” but all adjectives are, more or less strongly, but positively associated with “spirituality.” This is different for “religion” where we see positive and negative associations. And here the scatter plots for the Osgood differentials indicate a slight difference between the American and German respondents: respondents in the USA appear to see less difference between spirituality and religion, since most adjectives assemble in the upper-right field segment. In contrast, for the German participants, the adjectives slightly move more to the left into the segment indicating exclusive association with “spirituality.”

To differentiate this result, the associations to Osgood’s three factors are marked for all adjectives in Figs. 7.2 and 7.3; thus the membership of adjectives in factors *E*, *A* or *P* can be seen easily. In addition, the adjectives belonging to one of the three Osgood factors are circled by confidence ellipses. The advantage of these ellipses is that they present an estimate of how the three factors *E*, *A* and *P* are positioned in the semantic field. For the factor *A*, the equal association with both “religion” and “spirituality” is obvious for both countries as the ellipse aligns with the diagonal

Fig. 7.2 The Semantic Field for “Spirituality”/ “Religion” Based on Osgood’s Semantic Differential in the US Sample.

Note The confidence ellipses correspond to a 95 % confidence interval for a bivariate normal distribution with the same means and the same covariance matrix as the variables represented in abscissa and ordinates

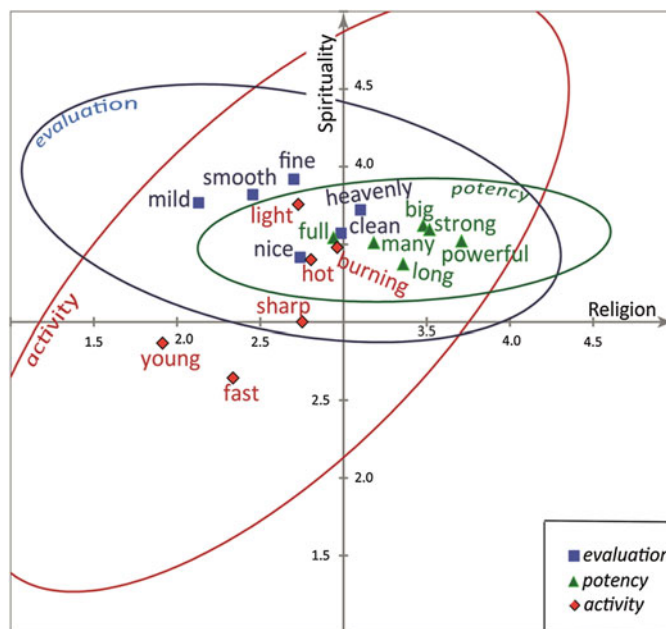


from lower left to upper right; but for the German respondents the A-ellipse has slightly moved to the left, indicating a slightly more positive regard for the activity of “spirituality” for the German respondents. This is similar for the factor P: for the US respondents, all adjectives assemble in

the upper right segment and are more pronounced—meaning that both “religion” and “spirituality” are regarded to have strong potency; in the German sample, the P-adjectives have not only lower ratings, but fall slightly more in the exclusive “spirituality” segment. Most

Fig. 7.3 The Semantic Field for “Spirituality”/ “Religion” Based on Osgood’s Semantic Differential in the German Sample.

Note The confidence ellipses correspond to a 95 % confidence interval for a bivariate normal distribution with the same means and the same covariance matrix as the variables represented in abscissa and ordinates



obvious however is the cultural difference for evaluation: our German respondents appear to evaluate “spirituality” more positively, while for the US respondents, rather both “spirituality” and “religion” receive positive evaluative connotations. These results so far are based on the total US and German samples without any distinction between subgroups. Therefore, as the next step, we present results from the Osgood Semantic Differential differentiated according to the focus groups.

The data we have collected allow for more detailed answers to questions such as the following: Is there a difference in the associations in the semantic differential according to respondents’ “spiritual,” “religious” or “atheist” self-identifications? Thus we have produced line figures such as the one presented in Fig. 7.1 for each of the six focus groups; these figures (Figs. A.1 through A.14) are presented in the Appendix on this volume.

For which groups can we identify the highest difference between the semantics of “spirituality” and “religion”—and thus the unique positioning feature of “spirituality”? To answer these questions, we have calculated the factors for each focus group and compared them. This calculation has been completed by an ANOVA/post-hoc test for the six focus groups and for each country separately. Results are presented in Fig. 7.4. Thereby, we limit presentation to the factor *evaluation*, because for this factor, differences are considerable.

In Fig. 7.4, it is obvious on first sight that the pattern for the US and German respondents is not so much different, while the differences between the focus groups are large. The figure demonstrates that “spirituality” is generally rated far more positively than “religion” throughout the focus groups, except for the “more religious than spiritual” (FG1). By far the highest difference between “spirituality” and “religion” is

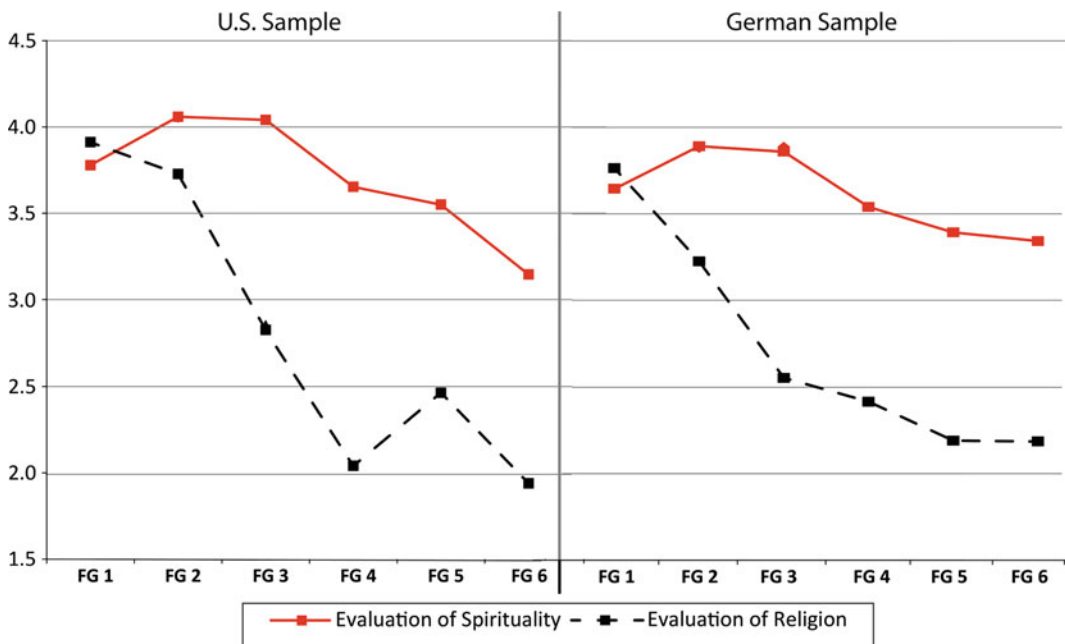


Fig. 7.4 Focus Group Means for the *Evaluation* Factor in Osgood’s Semantic Differential.

Note FG1 = the “more religious than spiritual” focus group; FG2 = the “equally religious and spiritual” focus group; FG3 = the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; FG4 = the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group; FG5 = the “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; FG6 = the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” focus group; Values on y present the means for the factor in a range from 1 (=total agreement with the *negative* adjectives) to 5 (=total agreement with the *positive* adjectives)

documented in the factor *E* (*evaluation*) for the focus groups of the “more spiritual than religious” and the “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents (FG3 through FG6). On top in regard to the difference between “spirituality” and “religion” however are the “more spiritual than religious atheists and non-theist” in the USA (FG4). For respondents in this group, but also for the other “more spiritual” and the “neither-nor” respondents, “spirituality” appears to offer new and positive semantic options that “religion” alone does not provide.

What is it that these groups of respondents associate positively with “spirituality”? On the basis of the Osgood Semantic Differential, we cannot say much about this question for content and context. But this is the special contribution of the Contextual Semantic Differential.

The Semantic Field for “Spirituality”/ “Religion” Resulting From the Contextual Semantic Differential

It is the special potential of Contextual Semantic Differentials to help identify context-related and contextual connotative associations. With the Contextual Semantic Differential that we developed for our study, we are investigating the connotative associations of 30 polar adjective pairs with the respondents’ subjective understandings of “spirituality” and “religion.” For this purpose, the terms in the Contextual Semantic Differential are conceptually selected with the intention of linking the terms under investigation (in our case: “spirituality” and “religion”), on the one hand, with higher-level connotative constructs that are regarded to be contexts on the other hand. In our case such connotative constructs are (to name some of them): experiences of transcendence, sense of connectedness, moral climate, sense of autonomy, personal growth and freedom. Thus, the adjectives in the Contextual Semantic Differential have a two-directional signification and therefore are supposed to allow respondents to indicate how strongly they associate those higher-level connotative constructs with “religion” and “spirituality.”

To give an impression of the polarity between ratings for “religion” and “spirituality” on the adjectives in the Contextual Semantic Differential, we present in Figs. 7.5 and 7.6 the results for the US and German samples. The figures for the focus groups are available in the Appendix (Figs. A.15 through A.28).

Looking at our results, which also are based on paired *t*-tests ($CI = .95$), we also present the positioning of all (positive poles of the) adjective pairs in the semantic field for “spirituality” and “religion.” As Figs. 7.7 and 7.8 show, also for the Contextual Semantic Differential almost all of the adjectives assemble in the upper half of the semantic fields. The strongest and more exclusive associations with spirituality in both the American and German sub-samples are represented by adjectives such as “creative,” “liberating,” “flexible,” “tolerant” and “individual.” For “religion,” there are no exclusive associations; the lower-right segment is empty. For both the American and German sub-samples, it seems that religion per se is barely visible. In both samples, adjectives such as “strong,” “moral,” and “sacred” are indicators for both “spirituality” and “religion.” Adjectives that are least associated with both “religion” and “spirituality” assemble in the lower-left segment; to these belong “new,” “modern,” “lonely” and, for the German sample, also “laissez-faire” and “rational”—displaying the Germans’ more critical view.

Obvious also is—again—the cultural difference between the US and the German sample: the cloud of adjectives in the German field is clearly positioned almost exclusively in the upper left segment—which indicates the more positive regard for “spirituality” in the German group. Further: While in the American sample both “religion” and “spirituality” are characterized by adjectives like “achieving,” “mature,” “fascinating,” “healing,” and “positive,” these adjectives fall on the “spiritual”-only side in the upper-left segment for the German sub-sample.

These are results for the total US and German samples without further differentiation between sub-groups. The next and final step of presenting results implements two additional criteria: first, the division of the samples according to the focus

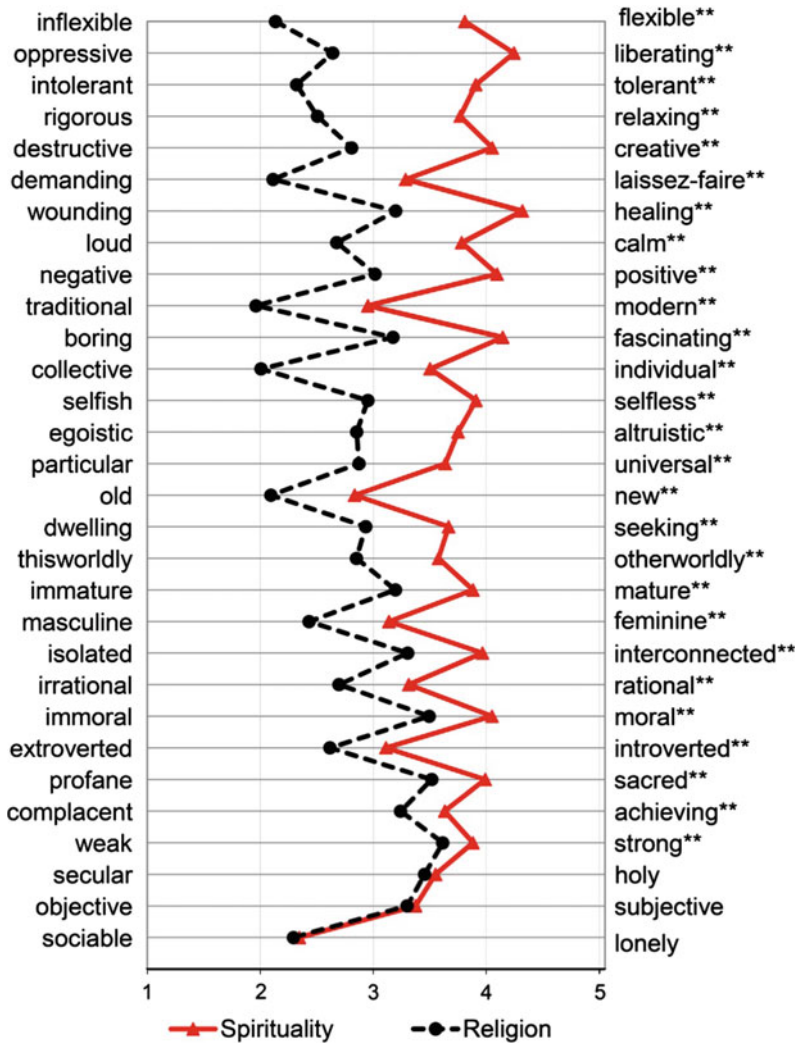


Fig. 7.5 Ratings of All Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 1,082$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential.

Note * = difference between the means for “religion” and “spirituality” is significant on the $p < .05$ level; ** = significant on the $p < .001$ level

groups; second, a focus on higher-level connotative constructs. For the latter, we selected two connotative constructs: experiences of freedom and morality. The reasons for our focus on these two constructs are these: both represent a central dimension of religion (experiential and moral dimensions), both display considerable differences between associations with “spirituality” and associations with “religion,” when focus groups are examined separately.

Experiences of Freedom as Connotations to “Spirituality” and “Religion”

From the 30 polar adjective pairs, two were selected that (a) can be interpreted to coherently connote with experience of freedom and (b) are on top of the list sorted according to the difference between the adjectives’ association with “spirituality” and with “religion.” Criterion b is

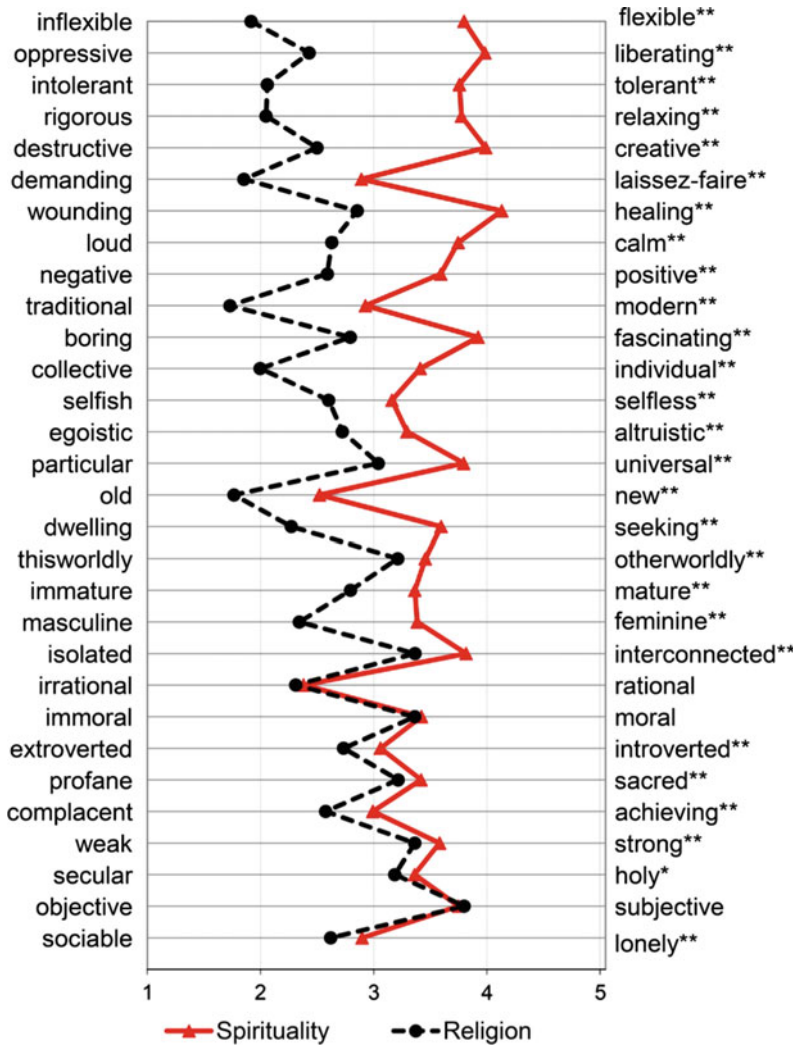


Fig. 7.6 Ratings of All Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 703$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential.

Note * = difference between the means for “religion” and “spirituality” is significant on the $p < .05$ level; ** = significant on the $p < .001$ level

justified with respect to the question for the surplus of “spirituality.” These adjectives are “liberating” and “creative.” From their focus group membership, we should then be able to determine the group differences, resp. identify the characteristics of those groups of respondents, who associate “liberating” and “creative” exclusively with “spirituality.”

Figures 7.9 and 7.10 display the focus group specific location of the two adjectives in the semantic field. Additional information about the difference between the focus group specific

ratings for these adjectives is given by the values at the arrows, which are estimates of incremental change from one focus group to the next of the distance between an adjective’s association with “spirituality” and its association with “religion” (calculated as subtraction of adjective rating for “spirituality” minus adjective rating for “religion”); these estimates are the result of an ANOVA/post-hoc test.

What do the figures present? For Focus Group 1 of the “more religious than spiritual” self-identifying respondents in both countries,

Fig. 7.7 The Semantic Field for “Spirituality”/ “Religion” Based on the Contextual Semantic Differential in the US Sample

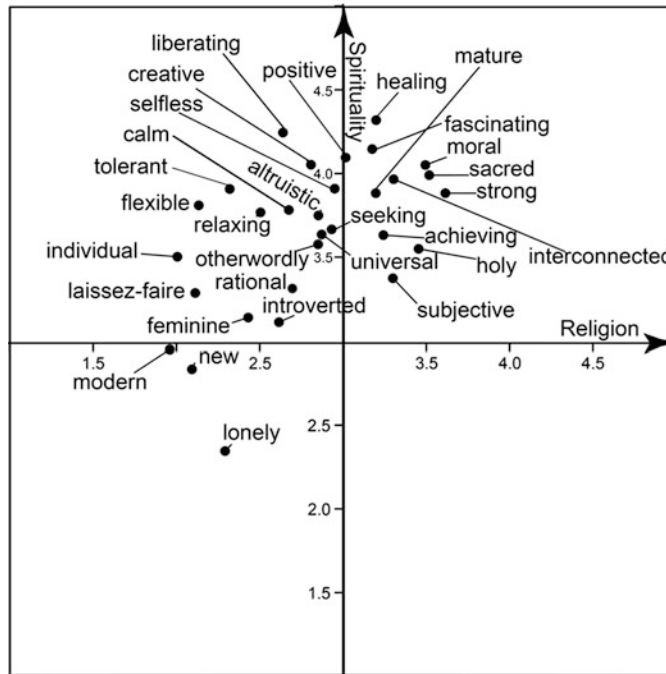
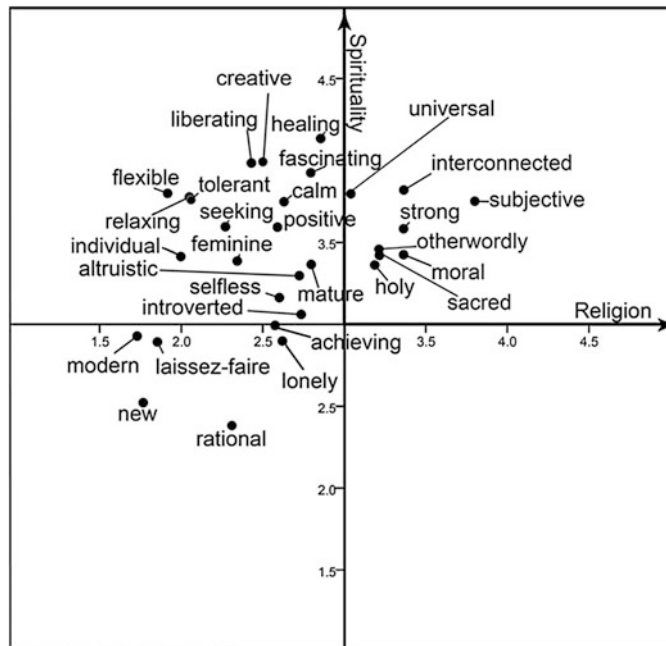


Fig. 7.8 The Semantic Field for “Spirituality”/ “Religion” Based on the Contextual Semantic Differential in the German Sample



“liberating” and “creative” have clear and equal associations with both “religion” and “spirituality.” This indicates that for the “more religious” respondents—less surprisingly—“religion” is associated with experiences and expectations of

creativity and liberation; it is more surprising for these focus groups (FG1) that “spirituality” has the same strength of associations.

A similar picture emerges for Focus Group 2 of the “equally religious and spiritual”

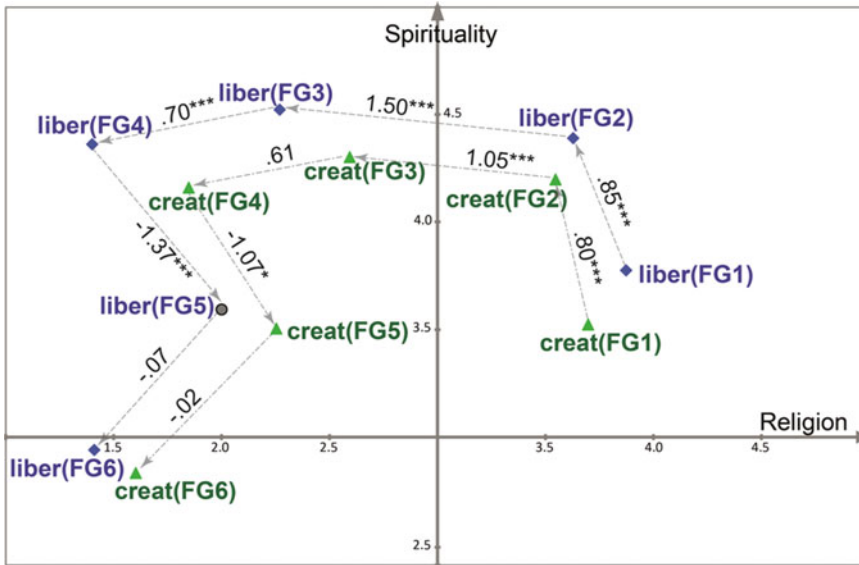


Fig. 7.9 Focus Group Differences for Adjectives Indicating Freedom in the Semantic Field for “Spirituality” and “Religion” for the US Sample.

Note for Figs. 7.9 and 7.10 liber liberating, creat creative; FG Focus Group (see focus group description in note for Fig. 7.4), values at arrows are estimates of incremental change in distance between the association with spirituality and religion with significance levels: *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$

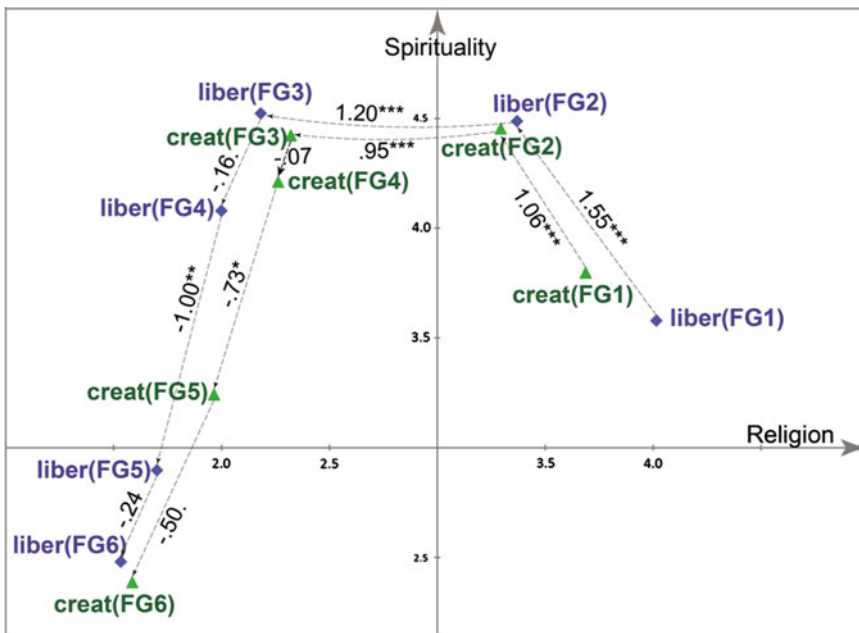


Fig. 7.10 Focus Group Differences for Adjectives Indicating Freedom in the Semantic Field for “Spirituality” and “Religion” for the German Sample

Note liber liberating, creat creative; FG Focus Group (see focus group description in note for Fig. 7.4), values at arrows are estimates of incremental change in distance between the association with spirituality and religion with significance levels: *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$

respondents, with the exception that for them “spirituality” has stronger association with the two adjectives. The incremental change of difference between ratings for “spirituality” and “religion” is considerably large: for the US sample 0.80 and 0.85, for the German sample even 1.06 and 1.55.

For Focus Group 3, the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theist” respondents, the two adjectives move into the upper left field segment, indicating a more exclusive association with “spirituality.” The incremental changes indicate high increase of the difference between associations with “spirituality” and with “religion” (in a range of 1.05–1.50 for the US, and 0.95–1.20 for the German focus groups)—indicating a clear profile of the “more spiritual” respondents in both countries in regard to the association of freedom and “spirituality.”

Focus Groups 4 of the “more spiritual than religious atheists and non-theists” in both countries are very interesting. These respondents have low regard for traditional “religion,” relating to a God does not belong to their preferred vocabulary; and correspondingly “liberating” and “creative” have *negative* associations with “religion”—put another way: “religion” is highly associated with the opposite poles “oppressive” and “destructive.” Nevertheless this group of respondents indicates a positive connotative relation of liberation and creativity in the religious/spiritual semantic field: they associate these adjectives with “spirituality.” This is more pronounced for Focus Group 4 in the US sample. For these groups of “more spiritual than religious atheists or non-theists,” it is obvious that “spirituality” offers a surplus, namely the option to locate experiences and expectations of liberation and creativity in the spiritual/religious semantic field.

In a certain way, the position of the respondents in Focus Group 5 (“neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist or non-theist”) and Focus Group 6 (“neither religious nor spiritual atheists or non-theists”) confirms and profiles results for Focus Group 4; the position of our two adjectives is close to the neutral line for “spirituality,” but still, or even more, in the negative range for “religion”—which indicates that, for these

respondents, liberation and creativity is definitely *not*, or rather *negatively* associated with “religion,” but *neither* positively associated with “spirituality” either.

This scatter plot of the religious/spiritual semantic field also profiles the difference between the two groups of self-identified “atheists”/“non-theists”: Atheists or non-theists who self-identify as “spiritual” use the option to associate creativity and liberation with “spirituality,” while for the “neither religious nor spiritual” atheists/non-theists this is not a semantic option.

Moral Connotations to “Spirituality” and “Religion”

The other higher-level connotative construct which we chose for presenting the difference of focus groups in the religious/spiritual semantic field is morality. Also here three adjectives have been chosen to represent this construct, namely “moral,” “altruistic” and “selfless.” Figures 7.11 and 7.12 present the focus group specific location of these adjectives in the religious/spiritual semantic fields for the US and the German sample.

Rather than going through all of the focus groups, as we did for the freedom adjectives, we highlight interesting findings. Compared to the freedom adjectives (Figs. 7.9 and 7.10), we observe generally lower ratings, i.e. lower association with “spirituality,” for the morality adjectives in both the German and the US focus groups (Figs. 7.11 and 7.12). This is interesting because it points to differences between both higher-level connotative constructs for “spirituality”: “Spirituality” appears to be more clearly associated with and characterized by freedom dimensions such as liberation and creativity, while morality dimensions appear to be of secondary impact for characterizing “spirituality.”

Also cultural difference is more obvious for morality: Different from the US respondents, the low associations of moral adjectives with “spirituality” appear to be stronger for the German sample; ratings for some focus groups reach into the negative field segments below the neutral line (which is 3.0 in our 5-point rating). This is especially obvious for “selfless” for the “more religious than spiritual” group, but even more for

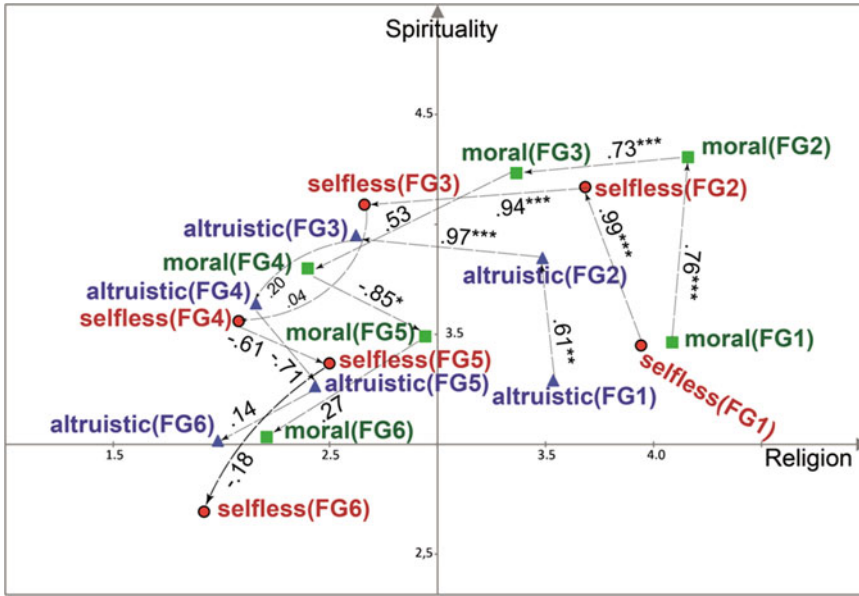


Fig. 7.11 Focus Group Differences for Three Adjectives Indicating Morality in the Semantic Field for “Spirituality” and “Religion” for the US Sample.

Note FG Focus Group (see focus group description in note for Fig. 7.4), values at arrows are estimates of incremental change in distance between the association with spirituality and religion with significance levels: *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$

the group of the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists and non-theists” for all three adjectives. This indicates a more critical standpoint of German non-religious/non-spiritual persons toward “spirituality,” which is rated here as “selfish” by both highly “religious” and low “religious.”

Differences between the Focus Groups 2, 3 and 4, which are characterized by “spiritual” or “more spiritual than religious” self-identification, are less strong in regard to their association with “spirituality” than in regard to their association with “religion.” This indicates that association of the adjectives with “religion” has much more effect on the “spirituality”/“religion” difference and thus on the incremental changes.

Nevertheless, a clear tendency is obvious also for morality adjectives: the adjectives representing the higher-level construct of morality for the “more spiritual than religious” respondents in both countries assemble in the upper left field segment for the exclusive “spiritual”

associations. This can be interpreted that, also for morality, “spirituality” offers a semantic surplus for those people who are reluctant to self-identify as “religious,” but are not inclined either to reject both “religious” and “spiritual” at the same time (as in Focus Groups 5 and 6).

It should be noted that this kind of focus group specific spread of adjective ratings does not occur in all higher-level connotative constructs. For example, what could be termed ‘transcendence’ and certainly belongs to the core connotative constructs for “religion” and eventually for “spirituality” and is represented by adjectives such as “holy,” “sacred” and “otherworldly,” displays a very different pattern: all adjectives for all focus groups assemble in a cloud along a line from lower left to upper right. This indicates that “holy,” “sacred” and “otherworldly” are connotative with approximately equal strength for both “religion” and “spirituality”—and are not associated exclusively with only one of both terms.

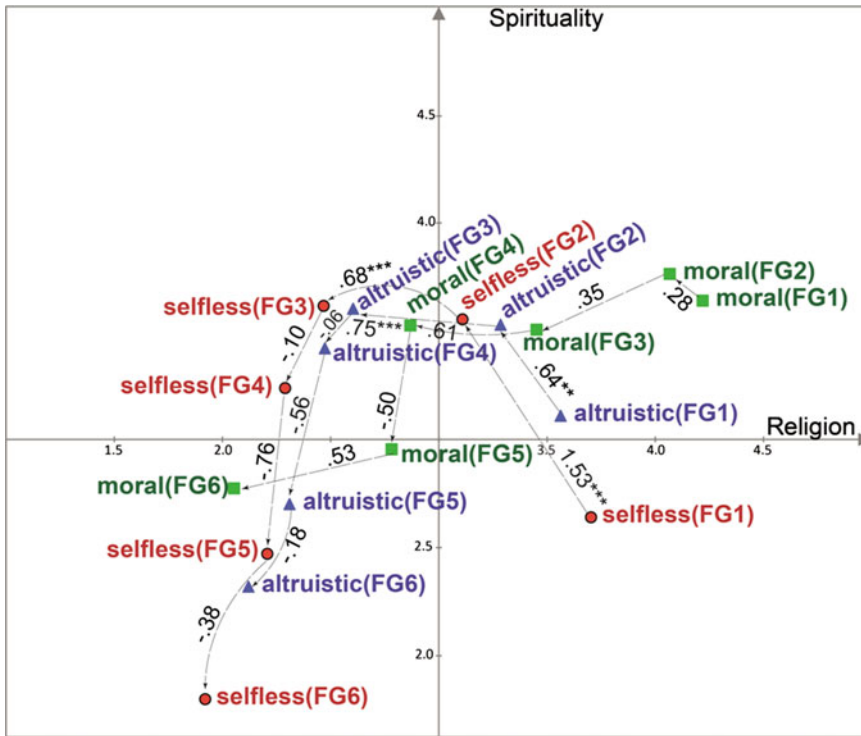


Fig. 7.12 Focus Group Differences for Three Adjectives Indicating Morality in the Semantic Field for “Spirituality” and “Religion” for the German Sample.

Note FG Focus Group (see focus group description in note for Fig. 7.4), values at arrows are estimates of incremental change in distance between the association with spirituality and religion with significance levels: *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$

Discussion

The results reported in this chapter rest on semantic differentials which offered common standards for the quantitative exploration of connotations and denotations of the terms “spirituality” and “religion.” This methodological approach has provided the opportunity to demonstrate for the respondents in our US and German samples (a) generally highly positive denotations for “spirituality” and, connected with this, low evaluative ratings for “religion”—as if the positive evaluation had moved from “religion” to “spirituality”; (b) that “spirituality” has a variety of semantic connotations, which greatly differ according to cultural and focus group membership and (c) that the difference in associations with “spirituality” and “religion”

accounts for the semantic surplus that “spirituality” has for specific focus groups.

As reported elsewhere (Keller et al., 2013), the results with Osgood’s and our own Contextual Semantic Differentials suggest that the concept of “religion only” appears to fade away from discourse. While there appears to be not much left for “religion only,” which is indicated by the fact that the lower right field segments are empty in almost all figures presented above, “spirituality” seems to have attracted semantic associations much more strongly. These findings correspond to the observation that the percentage of people who identify themselves as “more religious than spiritual” is decreasing, particularly in the USA, while, at the same time, the number of those who identify as either “more spiritual than religious” or “equally religious and spiritual” is increasing (Fuller, 2001; Hood, 2003; Streib, 2008).

Along with changes in frequencies of self-identifications, the semantic connotations of the terms “religion” and “spirituality” appear to have changed. This is indicated by our results with the Osgood Semantic Differential, in which the adjectives, especially those for the factor *evaluation*, have clear tendency for assembling in the “exclusively spiritual” upper left field segments. This tendency is the same in the Contextual Semantic Differential, where “spirituality” is associated with “flexible,” “liberating” and “creative,” while “religion” is associated with “oppressive,” “intolerant” and “rigorous.” In these connotations to “spirituality,” we may see a reflection of Zinnbauer et al.’s (1997) findings for the USA about a distinction between the terms spirituality and religiousness, which has, for the “spiritual not religious” respondents in their study, a pejorative tone. Identifying with “spirituality only” seems to imply taking a stance against religion. We may see this also resonating with the results and perspectives for England presented by Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, and Tusting (2005), which appear to speak for a tendency from “life-as religion” to “subjective life spirituality.” Further, for The Netherlands as another European country, results from Berghuijs et al. (2013, p. 392) document that “only a minority links spirituality with religion, and an even smaller minority uses explicitly ‘Christian’ expressions.”

Our study with the semantic differentials however has its particular strengths in focusing on the question “who speaks?” Group differences play a decisive role in our evaluation—which therefore can be seen to respond to Zinnbauer et al.’s (1997, p. 562) suggestion that “further researchers ... recognize the many meanings attributed to religiousness and spirituality by different religious and cultural groups, and the different ways in which these groups consider themselves religious and/or spiritual.” We have therefore used our focus group distinctions in evaluation of the semantic differentials.

It is less surprising that “more religious than spiritual” respondents do not much differentiate between “religion” and “spirituality”; substantive differences can be seen neither in *evaluation*, nor

in the other Osgood factors. We may be rather surprised that these focus group members do not have more negative regard for “spirituality.” Also for the higher-level connotative constructs freedom and morality, the “more religious than spiritual” respondents do not indicate much of a difference between the association with “spirituality” and “religion.”

This becomes different when “spirituality” as self-identification is valued equally or higher: Especially for the “more spiritual than religious” focus groups, the difference between associations of evaluative adjectives with “spirituality” and “religion” differ (see factor *E* in Fig. 7.4). Also on the basis of the Contextual Semantic Differential, the “more spiritual than religious” and the “more spiritual than religious atheists and non-theists” focus groups show greatest differences in associations between “spirituality” and “religion.” This pronounced profile of semantic connotations can be elaborated more concretely and precisely by focusing on the higher-level connotative constructs of freedom (adjectives “liberating” and “creative”) and morality (adjectives: “moral,” “altruistic” and “selfless”). These connotative constructs reflect the results of La Cour et al.’s (2012) and of Berghuijs et al.’s (2013) studies: Freedom and also morality could be identified as connotatives for “spirituality” by factor analyses in these studies; however, these studies could only tentatively contrast these to “religion” and could not finally determine which groups prefer such semantic connotations. It is one of the advantages of our $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 6$ design (including the six focus groups in each country) that we can be more specific. And in our results it is freedom and, to a lesser degree, morality which fall in the upper left segment of “spiritual only” semantic connotations for both “more spiritual” focus groups. Here the surplus of “spirituality” as semantic option is clearly visible, especially for the “more spiritual than religious atheists and non-theist.”

The “neither spiritual nor religious” focus groups show more critical views of both “religion” and “spirituality,” with “spirituality” looking less negative on both the Osgood and the contextual profile (see Figs. 7.7, 7.8, 7.9 and

7.10). But evaluation is more negative in the German “neither religious nor spiritual” focus groups. This is plausible when we take into account that critical views on religion are more usual and in line with the cultural mainstream in Germany than in the USA. German respondents who identify themselves as “neither religious nor spiritual” do not digress so much from the social standards of their cultural context and may thus afford more critical views not only on religion but also on spirituality.

While generally for the “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents and particular for the “neither religious nor spiritual atheist and non-theists,” “spirituality” does not appear to have any semantic surplus, it is the more interesting that, for the “more spiritual than religious” respondents and particularly for the smaller groups of “more spiritual than religious atheists and non-theists” in both countries, the semantic surplus is considerable. This regards especially the semantic higher level connotative construct of freedom and to a lesser degree morality. Here, we may assume that the semantics of “spirituality” offers a language to express experiences of and expectations for freedom—options that did not exist without “spirituality.”

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“Spirituality” and “Religion”— Corpus Analysis of Subjective Definitions in the Questionnaire

8

Stefan Altmeyer and Constantin Klein

Abstract

The chapter examines free text entries in the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality” written in response to the questions: “How would you define the term spirituality?” and “How would you define the term religion?” The aim is to explore subjective understandings by paying attention to the language use of participants, following the assumption that the language use of people writing texts about what they would call “spirituality” or “religion” will provide new insight in subjective and cultural meaning of both terms. Therefore, the chapter opts for a decisive bottom-up perspective on semantics which is realized by a corpus linguistic approach looking for linguistic patterns with a particular focus on key word analysis and semantic classification. In detail, the chapter addresses the following questions: Can we identify linguistic patterns in subjective definitions of “spirituality” and “religion” that differ (1) by cultural-linguistic context, (2) by semantic context, and (3) by personal context (“spiritual”/“religious” self-identifications). Main results related to these questions are: (1) “Spirituality” and “religion” compete in the same semantic field being more similar than expected; the cultural-linguistic difference between the German and the US sample is rather low. (2) Directly compared to “spirituality,” the semantic profile of “religion” is quite reduced to systemic aspects, while “spirituality” attracts a wide range of possible meanings in the field of contrasting poles like “body and soul,” “knowing and feeling,” “spirit and nature,” “connectedness and openness.” (3) Language use differs significantly according to “spiritual”/

A comprehensive version and all results of this chapter have been first published in Altmeyer et al. (2015).

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“religious” self-identification so that a specific set of key words for each group of participants can be identified: words that are both typically chosen and avoided while speaking about “spirituality” or “religion.”

The recent years have seen a wide spread of the term “spirituality” and an increasing number of people describing themselves as “spiritual, not religious” or at least “more spiritual than religious” (Utsch & Klein, 2011). This process has been described as ‘spiritual turn’ (Houtman & Aupers, 2007) or ‘spiritual revolution’ (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Trusting, 2005) by social scientists. Labels like these do not only reflect the surprising popularity in everyday language which the term “spirituality” and speaking of oneself as being “spiritual” have gained during the last decades, especially in the United States of America, but they do also signify important developments in the scientific debates about the study of religious phenomena. There have been quite spirited debates among scholars about whether “spirituality” should complement or even embrace “religion” as scientific concept, and which concept would provide the better theoretical construct for empirical research in the fields of sociology and psychology. Concerning the latter, Streib and Hood (2011) argued against understanding and using the term “spirituality” on the conceptual level as a scientific category replacing “religion,” while at the same time urging that the empirically observable self-description “spiritual” should be taken very seriously by social scientists because it mirrors an on-going transformational change in language use and subjective semantics in the religious field. Studying this transformation process comprehensively could then not stop with the mere observation that there are people describing themselves as “spiritual,” but must discover the subjective understandings of what “spirituality”—in contrast to “religion”—may express. As Ammerman (2013), p. 258 has put it: What do people mean when they describe themselves as spiritual, religious or neither?

It is the aim of this chapter to shed light on this simple but far-reaching question by carefully paying attention to the language use in the

emerging and transforming field of “spirituality.” After a detailed reasoning of our research question on the basis of recent studies on semantics of “spirituality” in contrast to “religion,” we will propose a new form of methodological triangulation by introducing a corpus linguistic approach. Subsequently, we will present the results of our study exploring the language use of people in Germany and the USA who responded to the invitation to write texts about their understanding of “religion” and “spirituality” in our online-questionnaire. Finally, these results will be discussed with regard to their contributions to research on “spirituality” and “religion.”

The Language Use of People Defining “Spirituality” and “Religion”: Current State of Research

As reported elsewhere (Keller et al., 2013; Chaps. 6 and 7, this volume), the question of subjective meaning of “spirituality” in contrast to “religion” has recently received some attention in the field of psychology of religion. Studies in the USA and Europe have focused on people’s self-description as “spiritual” or “religious” (see e.g. Greenwald & Harder, 2003; Keller et al., 2013; La Cour, Ausker, & Hvidt, 2012; Schlehofer, Omoto, & Adelman, 2008). But the picture is far from homogenous since different meanings and connotations vary according to the subjects’ own perspectives, as well as to their cultural background. Thus, we need to be specific about what the concepts “spirituality” or “religion” mean for both individuals and groups in a particular cultural context (Ammerman, 2013, p. 276).

It is difficult to compare the few already existing studies about the semantic fields of “religion” and “spirituality,” because they differ with respect to sample characteristics and the measures they used. For the US context,

Zinnbauer et al. (1997) carried out one of the first studies asking 346 persons (32 % male; age range: 15–85 years) to identify as religious, spiritual or neither and to give their own definitions of “religiousness” and “spirituality.” While the research participants who identified as both “religious and spiritual” highlighted the belief in a higher power in their definitions of “religiousness,” those who described themselves as “spiritual and not religious” had a more narrow notion of “religion” which they perceived as commitment to institutionally based belief systems claiming superiority to other worldviews. Greenwald and Harder (2003) focused on the associations of 147 US Americans (70 % female; age range: 17–59 years) who rated 122 adjectives on a 5-point scale from “definitely not spiritual” to “definitely spiritual.” Afterwards, the researchers identified four factors by use of a principal component analysis: (1) Loving Connection to Others, (2) Self-Effacing Altruism, (3) Blissful Transcendence, and (4) Religiosity/Sacredness. Schlehofer et al. (2008) studied responses that 64 older adults (mean age = 78.7 years) formulated in response to open-ended questions about their understanding and their biographical meaning of “spirituality” and “religion.” Among this sample, a stronger overlap between “spirituality” and “religion” turned out.

European studies used similar methods by meanwhile equally divergent samples. Büssing (2006) used a sentence completion format to explore meanings and expressions ascribed to “spirituality” by 38 German professionals in the context of healthcare institutions. In Denmark, La Cour et al. (2012) asked 514 adults (67 % female; mean age = 39 years, SD = 15.6; range: 18–78 years) to rate 115 attributes whether they indicated their understanding of “spirituality” or not. On the basis of these data they performed a factor analysis and found six factors describing diverse dimensions of the respondents’ notions of “spirituality”: (1) positive dimensions in human life and well-being; (2) New Age-ideology; (3) an integrated part of established religious life; (4) a vague striving, opposed to religion; (5) selfishness and greediness; (6) ordinary inspiration in human activities. A first cross-cultural analysis of the

contextual meaning of “spirituality” and “religion” has been presented by Streib and Keller (2007) using the qualitative data from the Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study on Deconversion (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). They conducted interviews among adults (110 Americans and 136 Germans) and explored the subjective understandings of “spirituality” and “religiosity” by evaluating answers to the question: “Do you consider yourself a religious or spiritual person?” Interviewees who preferred the self-description as “spiritual” understood the term as a reference to a non-material sphere of existence which is rooted in personal experience and characterized by openness and flexibility.

Keller et al. (2013) and Chap. 7 in this volume present analyses of the semantics of spirituality, which engages a more systematic cross-cultural comparison using a common standard to assess meanings and connotations in a both semantically sensitive and systematically quantifiable manner. This study used the method of semantic differentials, offering Osgood’s (Osgood, 1962; Snider & Osgood, 1969) 18 opposite pairs of connotative adjectives and a self-constructed list of further 30 contextual adjective pairs that are more closely related to the semantic fields of “religion” and “spirituality.” Research participants in the USA and Germany were asked to indicate their association with “spirituality” and “religion” on a 5-point-scale between opposite adjectives. This procedure allowed the juxtaposition of the semantic associations to “religion” and “spirituality” on the same adjective polarities. By this, cross-cultural comparisons as well as associations with self-identifications as “highly religious,” “highly spiritual, low religious” or “neither spiritual nor religious” became possible and revealed stronger differences between self-identifications than between cultural contexts.

Research Questions

With the exception of Keller et al. (2013), previous quantitative studies are based on theoretical constructs, especially if they try to enable cross-cultural comparison by looking for a high

degree of standardization. Then, the exploration of subjective meanings of “spirituality” and “religion” is methodologically tied up to a priori definitions of the concepts in question which control the formulation of items, connotation choices and semantic polarities. Here, we propose to relate and possibly correct such top-down approaches to a decisive bottom-up analysis of peoples’ subjective definitions of “spirituality” and “religion” by applying a corpus linguistic approach. We suggest looking for linguistic patterns in texts that respondents have written in order to define their individual understanding of both terms. Our minimal assumption (Mahlberg, 2005, pp. 31–39) is that the language use of people writing about what they would call “spirituality” or “religion” will provide new insights into the subjective and cultural meaning of these terms.

With respect to the methodological challenges outlined in the previous paragraph, we formulate three research questions: Can we identify linguistic patterns in subjective definitions of “spirituality” and “religion” that differ (1) by *cultural-linguistic context*, (2) by *semantic context*, and (3) by *personal context* (self-identifying as spiritual, religious, both or neither)—and, if successful, to what extent is it possible to generate hypotheses on subjective meanings of “spirituality” and “religion”?

Methodology

In order to realize the inductive approach of exploring language use, we want to go beyond the established methods in social-empirical research. Corpus linguistics offer a methodology for exploring patterns of language use that can be interpreted not just in terms of an intra-linguistic perspective, but also from extra-linguistic and cross-disciplinary perspectives (for examples see O’Keeffe & McCarthy, 2012, pp. 545–645). Because we are interested in developing inductive hypotheses regarding the structure of the empirical language, i.e. regarding the way meaning is created and transported in everyday language use, we opt for a corpus driven approach (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001).

Corpus Description

The *corpus* for our study is part of the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality” with participants ($n = 1,886$) in the United States and Germany. This study has implemented a comprehensive design combining diverse research instruments such as questionnaires, personal interviews, and a speed reaction task. The survey has included general demographics and several measures which allow detailed profiling of research participants’ self-identifications as “spiritual,” “religious” or “neither religious nor spiritual” (for more details see: Keller et al., 2013). Additionally, the questionnaires offered a space for free text entries where participants could answer the following two questions: ‘How would you define the term “religion”?’ and ‘How would you define the term “spirituality”?’ Because over one thousand respondents in the USA and more than seven hundred in Germany have accepted this invitation, we have a large number of entries, which range from a few words to two or three sentences and sum up to about 40,000 tokens in total for the USA and 30,000 for the German sample (see Table 8.1).

Here, we report the corpus linguistic analyses of the bilingual corpus compiled of these free-text entries. The quantitative data collection was closed in early summer 2011. *Participants* for this study are those who filled out the free-text section either on “religion” or “spirituality.” Since not everybody in the sample gave a definition of each term (only those cases were evaluated which consist at least of one semantically correct token), the sample is somewhat smaller than the entire sample of the study described in Chap. 4. All in all, we have $n = 1,045$ free-text entries in the American sample. Age of the US respondents ranges from 15 to 82 years ($M = 34.7$, $SD = 14.7$); 62.9 % of them are female. In the German sample, there are $n = 742$ participants with an age range from 17 to 90 years ($M = 43.5$, $SD = 14.0$) and 57.5 % being female. Mean per-capita income for the American sample (\$40,616; $SD = 28,272$) is a bit higher than for the Germans (\$38,400; $SD = 25,524$). Comparison with OECD data

Table 8.1 Corpus Statistics: Free-text Entries on “Spirituality” and “Religion” of the Bielefeld-based Cross-Cultural Study on “Spirituality” Split by Self-identification as “Spiritual”

Part of corpus		“More religious than spiritual”	“Equally religious and spiritual”	“More spiritual than religious”	“Neither religious nor spiritual”	Total
Spirituality (US)	N	60	276	545	158	1,039
	Tokens	981	5,361	12,481	2,948	21,771
	Types	353	951	1,624	718	2,211
Spirituality (GER)	N	73	134	364	156	727
	Tokens	1,489	2,798	8,413	2,595	15,295
	Types	652	986	1,936	1,015	3,108
Religion (US)	N	59	279	545	161	1,044
	Tokens	914	4,753	10,618	2,927	19,212
	Types	282	960	1,728	748	2,286
Religion (GER)	N	73	134	363	158	728
	Tokens	1,313	2,768	6,887	2,729	13,697
	Types	537	1,039	2,034	1,091	3,236

Note Tokens = number of running words, types = number of different words

(OECD, 2011, 2012) revealed that, in our sample, there is a much higher percentage of well-educated respondents from both countries: 50.4 % of the American participants have upper secondary, not tertiary education, 49.4 % have tertiary education. 42.8 % of the German respondents have an upper secondary, not tertiary education and 55.9 % have completed tertiary education. Thus, lower-educated people are clearly under-represented.

For the analyses reported in this chapter, data were split according to language. For more detailed analyses, we also divided the two samples further according to the respondents’ self-identification of being “religious” or “spiritual.” Responding to a forced-choice item, the participants could choose between the four options “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual.” Additionally, these self-identifications are also used to create four sub-corpora because we assume that characteristic patterns in language use will correspond with the chosen self-identifications.

In line with our research focus on “spirituality,” the biggest subgroup in both countries is the “more spiritual than religious” group: every

second participant in the US (52.2 %) and the German sample (49.1 %) belongs to this group which therefore is, compared to the general population, strongly over-represented. In contrast, only few of our participants identified as “more religious than spiritual” which is the option least chosen both in the USA (5.9 %) and in Germany (10.2 %). Among the Americans, self-identifying as “equally religious and spiritual” takes the second-largest position (26.7 %) whereas in the German sample those identifying as “neither religious nor spiritual” form the second-largest group (21.6 %).

While the distribution of sexes differs among the four subgroups, distributions within both language-subsamples resemble each other. In the “more spiritual than religious” group, almost two-thirds of the participants are female (US: 64.9 %; GER: 62.9 %). Similarly, the majority of the “religious” groups in both language-subsamples are female. The highest percentage of women can be found in the German “more religious” group (71.1 %). While gender is almost equally distributed in the American “neither religious nor spiritual” subgroup (50.9 % male), in the German “neither nor” group approximately two thirds of the participants are male (65.6 %).

The patterns across the subgroups in both countries mirror the well-known observation that women express greater interest in “religious” or “spiritual” issues (Francis, 1997; Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009; Woodhead, 2007; see for details Chap. 5). Differences in age, income, and education depending on self-identifications have been explored with one-way ANOVAs and post hoc tests using Scheffé’s procedure. While there are no significant differences between the groups with respect to age, income or education in the American subsample, among the Germans the “neither religious nor spiritual” group was found to be significantly younger ($F_{(3)} = 6.36, p < .001$) and better educated ($F_{(3)} = 4.71, p = .003$).

Corpus Linguistic Analysis

The main focus in this chapter is on linguistic patterns reflecting lexical differences. For the corpus investigation we thus focus on key word analysis to identify these differences and to enable semantic interpretation (Altmeyer, 2015; Bondi & Scott, 2010; Scott & Tribble, 2006, pp. 55–72; Wynne, 2008, pp. 730–733). Starting from the quantitative statistical procedure, different qualitative analyses and visualizations are carried out to illustrate linguistic characteristics of the relevant findings in their contexts and to compare the different parts of the corpus as defined by self-identification or cultural context. The key word procedure offers a solid way to look for contrasting profiles in language use, especially in regard to typical expressions and words that characterize both content and style of the texts (Baker, 2010, pp. 133–141; Stubbs, 2010, pp. 25–28; Wynne, 2008, p. 733). By using different reference corpora, we formulate our threefold research aims as follows: first, comparing our research corpora to reference corpora of standard German and American language, we can attend to cultural specifics; second, comparison of the corpus texts on “spirituality” to those on “religion” yield contextual profiles; and third, comparing the different corpora compiled for the

groups of participants, we can profile different semantic concepts according to spiritual or religious self-identification.

Before presenting our results, we would like to give some short descriptions of corpus linguistic terms: A *key word* is a typical word within a corpus which is statistically calculated by comparing and rating relative word frequencies in two different corpora, one of which serves as norm (Scott, 2012, p. 178). The degree of typicality is expressed by a measure of significance called *keyness* which is calculated on the basis of a Log-likelihood test (Dunning, 1993). Essentially, this procedure estimates the probability of a word being more frequent than would be expected by chance. The comparative norm is represented by a so-called *reference corpus*. For the visualization of key word findings we use the form of word clouds (Scott, 2012, pp. 100–102) wherein the font size reflects the key word’s statistical estimate of keyness.

Linguistic Patterns in Subjective Definitions of “Spirituality” and “Religion”

Looking for subjective meaning of “spirituality” and “religion,” we set our particular focus on three main context areas: (1) To explore the cultural-linguistic context we address the research question: Are there any major differences in definitions of “spirituality” and “religion” according to language (English/German) or cultural specifics (USA/Germany)? (2) To investigate the semantic context we look for possible conceptual differences within the language use related to “spirituality” on the one hand, and to “religion” on the other. (3) To explore the personal context, we raise the research question: Do subjective definitions of “religion” and “spirituality” differ depending on the participants’ self-identification as “more spiritual than religious,” “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual” or “neither religious nor spiritual”?

The Cultural-Linguistic Context: Key Words for “Spirituality” and “Religion” Compared to American/German Standard Language

Are there any significant differences between the definitions of “spirituality” and “religion” which can be traced back to different cultural and linguistic contexts? To answer this first question we look for key words for both terms in both language-samples using standard language as comparison norm. For the American corpora we used the written part of the “American National Corpus” (ANC) as reference corpus, while we compare the German corpora to the core corpus of the “Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache” (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities). Table 8.2 shows the most significant key words (only nouns, $n \geq 10$, sorted by keyness) in both languages and identifies the intersection between both terms.

The list of key words provides a kind of satellite picture of the linguistic landscape in question. Comparing the key word lists of both languages, surprisingly many similarities can be found. 40 out of 66 key words (60.6 %) can be read as direct translations from one language into

the other. This indicates a quite low level of cultural-linguistic difference. Compared to standard language, the semantic field for “spirituality” and “religion” in Germany and the USA seems to be astonishingly similar. Looking at the key word intersection further shows: There are many shared key words showing that “spirituality” and “religion” are located within the same subject area, notwithstanding different weightings in detail.

In order to refine our picture, the key words are additionally classified using a general heuristic (Baker, 2010, pp. 133–141; Wynne, 2008, pp. 722–724). To this end, we refer to the theory of communicative action according to Habermas (1984, 1987) and distinguish between five general dimensions of communication: the *subjective* (‘I communicate’), *objective-material* (‘about something’), *inter-subjective* (‘with others’), *contextual* (‘under contextual conditions’), and *aesthetic-formal* (‘by using a specific form’) dimension. In a first step, we have classified all key words ($n \geq 10$, $p \leq .000001$) by either assigning them to one of the five dimensions or labelling them as “other.” Second, we computed the cumulative keyness for these classes using a Log-likelihood procedure (compared again to

Table 8.2 Most Significant Key Words for “Spirituality” and “Religion” (US and GER) Compared to Standard Language

Spirituality only		Both		Religion only	
US	GER	US	GER	US	GER
Spirit	Geist	Belief/s	Gott	Set	Dogmen
Connection	Meditation	God	Glaube	Rules	Regeln
Feeling	Esoterik	Worship	Leben	Rituals	Rituale
Self	Suche	Being/s	Religionen	Group	Glaubensgemeinschaft
Soul	Jenseits	Relationship	Menschen	system	Gemeinschaft
Reality	Verbundenheit	Power	Welt	People	Götter
Connectedness	Bewusstsein	Life	Sinn	Dogma	Riten
Individual	Universum	Faith	Wesen	Practice/s	Rückverbindung
Meaning	Achtsamkeit	Existence	Verbindung	Doctrine/s	Kirche
Understanding	Dinge	Person	Existenz	Gods	Religionsgemeinschaft
Awareness	Realität	Christ	Erfahrung	Church	Macht
Prayer	Spirit	Deity	Wissen	Community	Rückbindung

Note Columns list the 12 most significant key words (nouns, $p \leq .000001$) for each category

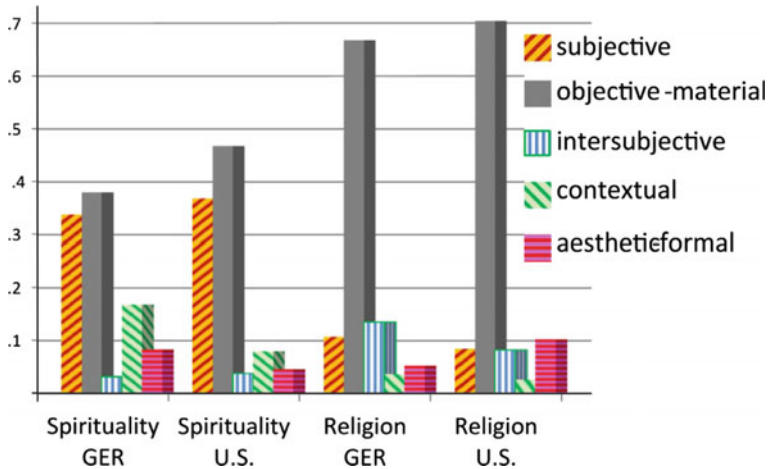


Fig. 8.1 Proportions of Cumulative Keyness for Semantic Classes, Split by Sub-corpora (“Spirituality” GER/USA, “Religion” GER/USA).

Note Keyness calculated per semantic class, $n \geq 10$, $p < .000001$ (reference corpus: DWDS core corpus respectively ANC written); visualization of cumulative keyness proportions ($\sum = 1.0$)

standard language). Finally, we depicted normalized proportions in a vertical-bar chart for each term in both languages to visualize our results (Fig. 8.1).

The results, as indicated in Fig. 8.1, are quite clear: Attending to concepts, language dealing with “religion” appears to be strongly dominated by the objective-material dimension. All other dimensions are clearly less relevant; none of the other four dimensions seems to be of particular importance. Although “spirituality,” too, is primarily portrayed by content, here the subjective factor appears to be of similar relevance. It is striking that the patterns for the American and the German sample are nearly identical. This finding corroborates the impression that the semantic fields of both terms strongly resemble each other in both cultures. The only exception is that the contextual dimension of “spirituality” is twice as important among the Germans than among the Americans. Nevertheless, in comparison to the objective-material and the subjective dimension, the contextual factor clearly is of minor importance.

In sum, our first conclusion is this: Compared to standard language, the concepts of “spirituality” and “religion” seem to be more similar than one might have expected; they appear to compete in the same semantic field. The cultural linguistic

difference between the German and the US sample is rather low.

The Semantic Context: Contrasting Profiles of “Spirituality” and “Religion”

When looking on the language use in subject definitions of “spirituality” and “religion” from a bird’s eye view as in the previous section, the overlap of the semantic fields of both concepts was striking. To focus on existing contrasts and attend to differences in more detail, it is possible to adjust the lens more sharply by using another reference for comparison from the nearer semantic context. For this purpose, we now compare the two parts of our corpora by calculating key words for “spirituality” with reference to “religion” and vice versa. With this procedure it is possible to document that, from within the context in question, indeed both concepts differ characteristically.

To present the contrasting profiles for “spirituality” and “religion,” we visualize the key words (selection: nouns) for each term as word clouds. Looking on the clouds for “religion” of the American and German samples (Figs. 8.2 and 8.3), a clear association is immediately apparent in both

Fig. 8.2 Key Word Cloud (Nouns, $n \geq 5$, $p \leq .0025$) for “Religion” Versus “Spirituality” (Reference Corpus) in the US Sample



languages: When compared to “spirituality” as reference, “religion” is characterized by ‘rules’/‘Regeln.’¹ In general, “religion” is primarily associated with its systemic aspect as further highly significant key words such as ‘system,’ ‘Church’/‘Kirche,’ ‘organization’/‘Organisation’ and ‘regulations’ indicate. This finding suits a second observation that “religion” also appears to be strongly related to doctrinal aspects, e.g. ‘belief’/‘Glaube,’ ‘traditions’/‘Traditionen,’ or ‘doctrines’/‘Glaubenssätze.’

In order to realize a more differentiated analysis sensitive for the specific semantic sphere of “religion”/“spirituality,” the key words have been classified by means of a heuristics employing Smart’s (1998) dimensional model of religion. From a standpoint theoretically well-grounded in philosophy of religion, Smart distinguishes between seven dimensions of “religion”: *ritual, narrative and mythic, experiential and emotional, social and institutional, ethical and legal, doctrinal and philosophical, and material dimension of “religion.”*

Both the American and the German corpora are dominated by the dogmatic-philosophical and social-institutional dimensions. These two dimensions are represented by 9, respectively 11 key

words (out of 44) in the US and by 14, respectively 11 key words (out of 36) in the German corpus. Thus, together they comprise 61 % (GER) and 50 % (USA) of the whole keyness. It is striking that the key words assigned to these two dimensions are largely identical in both languages (e.g. ‘beliefs,’ ‘traditions,’ ‘doctrines,’ ‘Church,’ ‘community,’ etc.). There is only one important exception: While ‘Gott’ (God) is a key word for the German definitions, meaning that, for the German participants, ‘God’ belongs to the semantics of “religion,” but not of “spirituality,” ‘God’ does not occur among the key words for “religion” among the Americans (although the plural ‘Gods’/‘Götter’ appears as key word for both corpora).

Among Smart’s other dimensions, the ethical and legal dimension (rules and commandments for human behaviour) is present both in the American and the German corpora. It is indicated by highly significant key words such as ‘rules’/‘Regeln’ and occurs even more diversified in the American corpus, represented for instance by words such as ‘system,’ ‘regulations,’ ‘guidelines,’ ‘order,’ etc. Smart’s ritual dimension is also clearly addressed (‘rituals,’ ‘worship,’ etc.) with a high degree of congruence in both countries. Furthermore, the experiential-emotional dimension is of particular interest since it sheds some light on the differences how “religion” is evaluated in contrast to “spirituality.” Both among the Americans and among the Germans

¹We mark direct quotations of key words by using inverted commas. If the same key word occurs in both languages, we use a slash to reflect the translations.

Fig. 8.3 Key Word Cloud
(Nouns, $n \geq 5$, $p \leq .0025$)
“Religion” Versus
“Spirituality” (Reference
Corpus) in German Sample



‘fear’/‘Angst’ appears as a significant key word. In the German corpus, we find even more expressions of negativity like ‘Intoleranz’ (intolerance) and ‘Dogmatismus’ (dogmatism), but also positive psychosocial functions like ‘Halt’ (footing) and ‘Rückbindung’ (bonding). Similar negative evaluations can also be observed among the Americans, e.g. in adjectives such as ‘rigid,’ ‘ritualistic’ or ‘man-made.’

The remaining dimensions are only marginally or even not present. The narrative dimension is only addressed by the Americans (‘texts,’ ‘stories’) while, in both corpora, the material dimension—which would encompass religious objects, places, buildings, etc.—is not present at all.

The key word clouds for “spirituality” in Figs. 8.4 and 8.5 illustrate the contrasting context profiles and reveal obvious differences emerging from direct comparison to the “religion” corpora. The doctrinal, institutional and legal aspects which have dominated the semantic field of “religion” are missing completely. Instead, there is a variety of shimmering anthropological polarities like ‘spirit’/‘Geist’ and matter/‘Materie,’ ‘body’/‘Körper’ and ‘soul’/‘Seele,’ ‘knowing’ and ‘feeling,’ or ‘connectedness’/‘Verbundenheit’ and openness/‘Offenheit.’ Thus, as first impression, there seems to be more variety in the definitions of “spirituality” than of “religion.”

In order to structure this variegated picture, we looked for relations between key words (Scott, 2012, pp. 199–201). We computed co-occurrences of key words within a collocational span of eight words and estimated the relational strength by means of Log-likelihood test. Following this algorithm ($\log L \geq 30$), we were able to detect three major and one smaller group of key words for the American corpus which can be semantically interpreted as four different conceptions of “spirituality”:

- Conception “spirit and soul”: The English key words ‘spirit’ and ‘soul’ co-occur most often significantly ($\log L = 91.32$) and are furthermore linked with the key words ‘mind’ and ‘relationship.’ This grouping of words indicates that, within in our American corpus, there exists a first conception of “spirituality” focussing on mental processes in the transcendental realm highlighting the inner dimension of being “spiritual.”
- Conception “connection”: There is a second network of key words in the American corpus which is built around the term ‘connection.’ It comprises nearly ten mutually related key words (e.g. ‘feeling’ and ‘sense,’ ‘self,’ ‘world,’ ‘nature,’ and ‘things’), thus linking the inner dimension of “spirituality” with an external reality which is primarily described

Fig. 8.4 Key Word Cloud (Nouns, $n \geq 5, p \leq .0025$) for “Spirituality” Versus “Religion” (Reference Corpus) for the US Sample

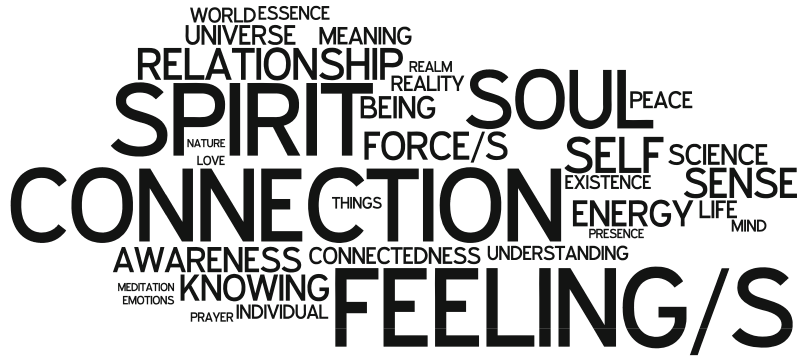


Fig. 8.5 Key Word Cloud (Nouns, $n \geq 5, p \leq .0025$) for “Spirituality” Versus “Religion” (Reference Corpus) in the German Sample



as ‘world’ or ‘nature.’ Therefore, this conception of “spirituality” expresses the subjective feeling of being connected with something greater than oneself, described mostly in immanent terms.

- Conception “meaning and life”: The third group of key words in the American corpus includes terms such as ‘life,’ ‘meaning’ and ‘understanding.’ Thus, it stresses the significance of “spirituality” as a term which is not solely used in a descriptive way, but also as expression of a personal life orientation.
- Conception “practice”: At least, there is a small group of key words among the Americans which consists only of two, but strongly related key words ($\log L = 118.43$): ‘meditation’ and ‘prayer.’ This conception of

“spirituality” clearly expresses the practical, ritual dimension of being “spiritual.”

For the German corpus, there are only three groups of key words which are significantly related to each other ($\log L \geq 20$). They, too, can be interpreted as three major conceptions of “spirituality” which are described in the following:

- Conception “body and soul”: The German key words ‘Körper’ (body) and ‘Seele’ (soul) are most strongly linked with each other ($\log L = 77.25$); furthermore, they share the relationship with the key words ‘Einklang’ (harmony) and ‘spirit’ (Geist). This first network of key words represents a conception of “spirituality” as a holistic way of life

integrating the physical and mental dimensions of human life.

- Conception “life”: The key word ‘Leben’ (life) is related to seven other key words building a semantic network, comprising ‘Liebe’ (love), ‘Kraft’ (power), ‘Bewusstsein’ (awareness), ‘Realität’ (reality), and ‘Natur’ (nature). This list of key words can be understood as indicators of a conception which describes “spirituality” as a specific footing of life. “Spirituality,” in this sense, is connected to elementary values of life.
- Conception “things”: The third semantic network in the German corpus is grouped around the key word ‘Dinge’ (things), comprising ‘Suche’ (search), ‘Beschäftigung’ (addressing), ‘Wahrnehmung’ (perception), ‘Erde’ (earth), and ‘Jenseits’ (afterlife). Within this context, “spirituality” seems to be connected to a specific area or to phenomena of life which need particular attention or ways of addressing.

Taking the findings detailed above together, we can conclude that the terms “spirituality” and “religion” compete in the same semantic field, but that they are profiled contrastingly. While “religion” is primarily perceived in its dogmatic, social and legal aspects and associated with rather negative evaluations such as being rigid, ritualistic, or human-made, “spirituality” appears to be more embedded in positively connoted subjective experiential aspects. The semantics of dogma, rules, and institution disappear for the benefit of a variegated picture of different conceptions of “spirituality.” Among our respondents, “spirituality” may stand for (1) a holistic lifestyle, (2) the addressing of specific phenomena or specific practices, (3) mental processes typically labelled with “spirit and soul”; additionally, the term refers to (4) a meaningful life orientation and (5) the feeling of living in connection with something or someone. Again, the strong similarities of the semantics of both terms in the USA and Germany are striking. Thus, we find our observation of only low cultural-linguistic differences confirmed.

The Personal Context: Language Use and “Spiritual/Religious” Self-identification

Because we want to explore additionally whether definitions of “religion” and “spirituality” differ depending on “religious” or “spiritual” self-identification, we use the self-identifications of the participants as “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual,” and “neither religious nor spiritual” to split up the corpus material into sub-corpora according to their membership in one of the four groups. We performed a key word analysis for each group and use the definitions of the other groups as reference corpus. Additionally, we performed reversed procedures in order to look for words which have characteristically been avoided. For the following description, we focus mostly on nouns (thereby, key words frequencies could be quite low, because group sizes vary considerably; cf. Table 8.1).

In the group of the “more religious than spiritual,” “spirituality” and “religion” seem to be very close to each other and associated with religious core vocabulary such as ‘God’ and ‘Bible,’ and, additionally, with ‘Jesus’ in the German corpus (see Table 8.3). Especially in the German texts, the key words mirror two main alternatives: Either “spirituality” is integrated into the concept of “religion,” e.g. ‘der Bibel entsprechend, sein Leben ausrichten’ (to live according to the Bible), or it is constructed as the very opposite: as ‘Esoterik’ (esotericism). Corresponding to this, “more religious than spiritual” persons from Germany avoid thinking of “spirituality” in naturalistic and universalistic terms. The second observation can also be found in the US corpus. There are “more religious people” tending to separate “spirituality” and “religion” because “spirituality” means ‘believing in spirits’ and not attending ‘Church.’

The group of the “equally religious and spiritual” is more profiled in both countries (see Table 8.4). In the US sample, we see many similarities between “religion” and “spirituality.” Both concepts are strongly connected to ‘God’

Table 8.3 Key Words (Nouns) for the “More Religious than Spiritual” Group Compared to Residual Texts ($n \geq 3$, $p < .05$)

	Religion		Spirituality	
	US	GER	US	GER
Positive key words	God	Leben	Spirits	Bibel
	Power	Gott	Church	Gott
	Belief	Glaube		Esoterik
	Relationship	Jesus		
	Conduct	Hilfe		
	Bible	Gottes		
	Right	Sinne		
Negative key words	World	n.s.	Beliefs	Natur
			Living	Menschen
				Verbundenheit
				Existenz
				Körper
			Bewusstsein	

and ‘faith.’ Nevertheless, “religion” is more located in institutional settings (‘church,’ ‘practices,’ and, as verb: ‘organize’) and “spirituality” fits more to thematic aspects of Christian religiosity (‘father,’ ‘son,’ ‘Jesus’). In the German sample, the difference line can be located between “religion” as a practice [‘Praxis’ (practice), ‘Lebensweise’ (way of living)] and “spirituality” as a dimension of awareness [key verb: ‘spüren’ (feel)]. One may conclude that people who describe themselves as “equally religious and spiritual” are able to distinguish between the concepts. They use them to speak about different aspects of life. Comparing the languages, we see a strong presence of Christian core vocabulary among the American “equally religious and spiritual,” while it is less visible among the German “equally religious and spiritual.” In Germany, rather the “more religious than spiritual” seem to make use of core Christian terms. This may reflect the fact that the more traditional and perhaps conservative Christians assemble in the American “equally religious and spiritual” group (Streib et al., 2009).

Within the group of the “more spiritual than religious,” we find the concepts most differentiated (it is, of course, the largest group in our sample): Overall, “spirituality” seems to work as a

distinguishing label to establish a border to the “religious” territory (see Table 8.5). “Religion” is associated with negative and restrictive features such as ‘Unterdrückung’ (oppression), ‘set of rules’/‘Regeln,’ ‘laws,’ and ‘dogma’/‘Dogmen’ while positive factors are avoided [see negative key words such as ‘power,’ ‘need,’ ‘Hilfe’ (help), or ‘Beziehung’ (relationship)]. Looking on adjectives, this observation can be confirmed: “religion” is ‘man-made’ and ‘rigid.’ On the other hand, we find very positive connotations in the definitions of “spirituality” such as ‘desire,’ ‘heaven,’ ‘happiness’/‘Freude,’ ‘love’/‘Liebe,’ ‘help,’ ‘morality’ or ‘Quelle’ (resource), ‘Einheit’ (unity), and ‘Wahrheit’ (truth). Looking on negative key words, we see that “more spiritual than religious” persons write mostly outside traditional religious language, regardless of which of both concepts they are considering: They don’t speak about ‘God’ or ‘Christ,’ ‘worship’ or ‘faith’ and ‘believing.’

If people choose to describe themselves as “neither religious nor spiritual,” they simultaneously show a strongly negatively connoted linguistic concept of both “religion” and “spirituality” (see Table 8.6). We conclude that the self-concept is mirrored in the language chosen to define the terms. One can see this negative view in key words like ‘mythology’ or ‘fear’ as

Table 8.4 Key Words (Nouns) for the “Equally Religious and Spiritual” Group Compared to Residual Texts ($n \geq 4$, $p < .05$)

	Religion		Spirituality		
	US	GER	US	GER	
Positive key words	God	Lebensweise	God	Spiritus	
	Study	Liebe	Faith	Spirit	
	Faith	Christus	Spirit	Dimension	
	Act	Praxis	Worship	Alltag	
	Church	Jesus	Relationship	Verbindung	
	Being	Glaubens	Life	Gottes	
	Beliefs		Side		
	Practices		Father		
	Worshipping		Son		
	Teachings		Jesus		
	Believing		Thoughts		
	Negative key words	Rules	Götter	Control	Universum
		Fear	Tradition	State	Teil
		Conduct	Wahrheit	Things	Beschäftigung
Use		Wissen	Individual	Form	
Systems		Vorstellungen	Universe	Erkenntnis	
Behavior		Vertrauen	Pursuit	Tod	
Stories		Organisation	Existence	Einheit	
Idea			People	Kräfte	
Salvation			Mankind		
Term			Thinking		
Ethics			Sort		
Control			Morals		
Groups			Time		
			Principles		
			God's		
		Wonder			
		Affect			
		Interest			
		World			
		Humans			

connected to “religion,” and ‘nonsense’ linked to “spirituality” in the US corpus, and ‘Erfindung’ (fiction), ‘Märchen’ (fairy tale), or ‘Aberglauben’ (superstition) as key words for “religion,” and ‘Blah,’ or ‘Esoterik’ (esotericism) for “spirituality” in the German corpus. Corresponding to these findings we can identify many positive values as negative key words meaning that they

are avoided while writing about “religion” and “spirituality.” Additionally, the “neither nor” group does not use any religious core vocabulary: in both languages ‘Bible,’ ‘Jesus,’ ‘God’ are negatively key. Instead, they tend to use terms that are more routed in the philosophy of religion (including religious criticism): ‘gods,’ ‘deities,’ ‘powers,’ ‘force,’ etc.

Table 8.5 Key Words (Nouns) for the “More Spiritual than Religious” Group Compared to Residual Texts ($n \geq 5$, $p < .05$)

	Religion		Spirituality	
	US	GER	US	GER
Positive key words	Group	Regeln	Desire	Liebe
	Rules	Konstrukt	Morals	Quelle
	Self	Unterdrückung	Principles	Freude
	Lead	Dogmen	Laws	Sein
	Attempt	Lehren	Flow	Einheit
	Methods	Vorstellung	Heaven	Wahrheit
	Act	Glaubenssystem	Experience	Gedanken
	Expectations		View	Wissen
	Business		Respect	Teil
	Excuse		Happiness	Wissenschaft
	Laws		Help	Bewusstsein
	Dogma		Ethics	Erde
	Human		Love	Suche
	Stories		Earth	Verantwortung
	Negative key words			Universe
			Pursuit	
			Morality	
			Humans	
God		Christus	term	Esoterik
Life		Jesus	Powers	Energien
Being		Leben	God’s	Glauben
Believe		Glaube	Belief	Kontakt
Day		Beziehung	Worship	Glaube
Study		Hilfe	Gods	Bezug
Power		Phänomene	Spirits	Geistes
Faith		Fragen	Idea	
Beings		Gott	Thoughts	
Worshipping			Sense	
Beliefs			Force	
Help		Faith		
Believing				
Need				
Act				

In sum, the linguistic portraits of the groups of participants presented above show: Language use differs significantly according to “spiritual” or “religious” self-identification. With this finding we were able to identify specific sets of key words for each group of participants: words that

are both typically chosen and typically avoided while speaking about “spirituality” or “religion.” Comparing the concepts, we may conclude: People who describe themselves as “neither religious nor spiritual” show only limited capacity or interest to distinguish between

Table 8.6 Key Words (Nouns) for the “Neither Religious nor Spiritual” Group Compared to Residual Texts ($n \geq 3$, $p < .05$, but $* n \geq 4$)

	Religion		Spirituality	
	US	GER	US	GER*
Positive key words	World	Götter	Belief	Glaube
	Life	Einfluss	Nonsense	Blah
	Mythology	Erfindung	Term	Esoterik
	Belief	Märchen	Force	Glauben
	Group	Aberglauben	Gods	Bedeutung
	Deities	Verhaltensregeln	Existence	Begriff
	Beings	Weltvorstellung	Deity	Mächte
	Meaning	Wesen	Body	Übernatürliches
	Leader	Phänomene	Things	Versuch
	Cause	Antworten	Nature	Sinne
	Person's	Mittel	Events	Kräfte
	Need		Environment	Vorstellung
	Powers		Idea	Religionen
	Fear			
	Action			
	Leaders			
	Morality			
Negative key words	Church	Gemeinschaft	God	Gott
	Structure	Tun	Spirit	Suche
	Religions	Liebe	Jesus	Liebe
	Bible	Mensch	Christ	Wissen
	God	Rahmen	Relationship	Erde
	Laws	Bibel	Love	Gottes
	Relationship	Gott	Life	Vertrauen
	Going	Gottheit	Awareness	Offenheit
	Attempt	Vertrauen	Being	Inneren
	Jesus	Rückverbindung	Bible	Gedanken
	Denomination	Rückbindung	Need	Sein
			Creator	Spirit
			Seeking	Wahrnehmen
		Desire	Achtsamkeit	
		Knowing		

“religion” and “spirituality” while these features are more developed in the other groups. Here the question is rather how the difference line is constructed: either as opposition between competing concepts (especially among the “more

spiritual than religious” group, but in parts also among the “more religious than spiritual” group) or as a polarity of complementary realities (among the “equally religious and spiritual” group).

Discussion

It was the aim of this chapter to explore subjective understandings of “spirituality” and “religion” by paying attention to the language use of participants, following the assumption that the language use of people writing texts about their personal view of “spirituality” and “religion” will provide new knowledge about subjective and cultural meaning of both terms. Starting with the last paragraph, our findings can be summarized as follows: As the findings about different language use within the groups of the “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual,” and “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents show, subjective understandings of “spirituality” and “religion” depend strongly on how someone speaks about oneself. Whether people describe themselves as “religious,” “spiritual,” or “neither religious nor spiritual” predetermines their preferred and avoided language when defining both terms.

Differences between “spirituality” and “religion” are most significant among those who identify themselves as “more spiritual than religious,” in both the American and German sample. Here, “spirituality” and “religion” are most likely to be used as opposites, whereby the difference line runs between experiential “spirituality” (positive connotation with emphasis on internal authority), on the one hand, and organizational “religion” (negative connotation with emphasis on external authority), on the other hand, (cf. Heelas et al., 2005; Keller et al., 2013; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

In contrast, definitions of participants who identified as “neither religious nor spiritual” show very little differences, but share a pronounced critical view of both concepts. Unlike to the evaluation of our participants’ semantic differentials (see Chap. 7), also on the basis of a comparison between the corpora of the American and German free text entries there is no clear difference visible regarding language use. However, here as there, both concepts are perceived as irrational.

This negative evaluation disappears among the group of the “equally spiritual and religious.”

These people show the capacity to distinguish between both concepts and to set their own accents (cf. Ammerman, 2013). According to our results, “equally spiritual and religious” Germans are more likely to state a difference between both terms: While “religion” appears to be linked more directly to Christianity, “spirituality” tends to be more independent from the Christian sphere. Among our American participants, however, both concepts seem to be positioned closer to each other. This finding mirrors a finding which Keller et al. (2013) already observed when examining the same sample, namely that Germans seem to be less likely to use the terms “religion” and “spirituality” synonymously, whereas this seems to be the most common notion within the USA.

For “more religious than spiritual” participants, the two concepts are closely related in both languages, too. Nevertheless, there seem to be two alternatives which can be distinguished: Either “spirituality” is understood as integrated part of established religious life, or it represents something strange one is sceptical about, like esotericism.

Summing up, our linguistic analyses corroborate several findings reported by previous studies. Additionally, new findings are revealed which complete the picture in a fruitful way: First and foremost, the analysis of subjective language use shows that the concepts “spirituality” and “religion” are currently defined in a very similar way in both languages and cultures—much more similar, anyway, than might be expected with respect to the very different religious landscapes in the USA and Germany, and from the partially divergent history of concepts. Furthermore, it is possible to identify particular key words which characterize the language use of the different groups, namely those which they typically employ when talking about “religion” and “spirituality,” and those which they typically avoid. The clearest findings are:

- *Religious or Christian core vocabulary* (God, Christ, Bible etc.) is positively employed by “religious” people (“more religious than spiritual” and “equally religious and

spiritual”) and avoided by the other groups. A slight difference is visible here between the German and the American sample: While the focus of the religious vocabulary in the American sample lies more in the group of the “equally religious and spiritual,” in the German sample, it lies in the group of the “more religious than spiritual” respondents. This finding supports the thesis that the terms are used less interchangeably in Germany, and that “religion” and “spirituality” are separated more clearly here.

- *Legal and institutional vocabulary* (rules, dogma, organization etc.) is employed primarily by the “more spiritual than religious” group in order to describe “religion” negatively and to separate it from “spirituality.”
- *Experiential vocabulary* (love, desire, feeling, fear etc.), too, serves especially the “more spiritual than religious” as a distinguishing characteristic, but now to positively separate “spirituality” from “religion.” The negative emotion of fear, however, is used in both languages to describe negative experiential consequences of “religion.”
- *Vocabulary expressing irrationality* (nonsense, mythology etc.) is used primarily by “neither religious nor spiritual” participants to critically characterize both “religion” and “spirituality.” A similar phenomenon can be found in the German subsample of the “more religious than spiritual” respondents, who connect “spirituality” with esotericism.

To hypothesize overall semantic tendencies in the transforming and pluralizing field of “religion” and “spirituality,” we conclude from our findings: Compared to “spirituality,” the semantic profile of “religion” appears to be quite reduced to systemic aspects with a pejorative note, while “spirituality” seems to attract a wide range of possible meanings in the field of contrasting poles like “body and soul,” “knowing and feeling,” “spirit and nature,” as well as “connectedness and openness.” Thus, “spirituality” emerges as the clearly richer concept insofar as it is able to cover more positively connoted meanings than “religion.” Beyond this, there are

scarcely any other positive aspects left which could be expressed solely by “religion” instead of “spirituality.”

However, we need to be careful and must not draw too far reaching conclusions since we have to be aware of the fact that, due to the sampling procedure, the “more spiritual than religious group” is strongly over-represented in our sample. Thus, although “spirituality” appears to be semantically the clearly richer concept than “religion,” this impression might at least partly be a result of the high number of definitions preferring “spirituality” in comparison to “religion.”

Taking this limitation into account, we nevertheless find the hypothesis confirmed that “religion” and “spirituality” compete in the same semantic field. In the American as well as in the German sample, definitions of both concepts share very similar key words. Where they are different, an institutional tenet-bound notion shifts to the foreground for “religion”; for “spirituality,” however, a subjective experience-oriented understanding is gaining in importance. On the basis of our results, we may speculate: Competing on the same semantic field, “spirituality” seems to have much better chances to succeed than “religion”—at least under the conditions of religiously individualized societies.

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Dimensions of “Spirituality”: The Semantics of Subjective Definitions

9

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Abstract

As part of the semantic analyses in the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality,” this chapter presents the analysis of 1039 English and 740 German subjective free-text-entry definitions of “spirituality” in response to the question: “How would you define the term ‘spirituality’?” The entire corpus of 1779 cases was rated using 44 categories which have been inductively developed from the material, leaning on Content analysis, Ethnosemantics and Grounded Theory methodology, and validated inter-subjectively in group sessions. Besides testing frequency distributions with the χ^2 -Test, Principal Component Analyses were performed for dimension reduction, from which we regard the solution with 10 components explaining 42.11 % of the variance as optimal. Thus 10 semantic dimensions of “spirituality” emerge from this analysis. Results from a second-order PCA suggest three components of the semantics of “spirituality”: *mystical vs. humanistic transcending, theistic versus non-theistic transcendence, and individual “lived” religion versus dogmatism*. Thus this chapter demonstrates that a wide range as well as clear differences in understanding “spirituality” emerge when analysed in a decisively idiographic approach.

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“Spirituality” has come to the forefront of scientific studies of religion. “Spiritual turn” (Houtman & Aupers, 2007), “Easternization” (Campbell, 2007), “spiritual revolution” (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Trusting, 2005), “spiritual society” (Knoblauch, 2009), to mention some of the prominent headlines, are pointing to a major shift in the religious field in which more and more people consider themselves to be “more spiritual than religious” or at

least “equally spiritual and religious” (Fuller, 2001; Hood, 2003; Streib, 2008; Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). The Religion Monitor data from the Bertelsmann Foundation (2009) show that 31.3 % people in the USA self-identify as “more spiritual” and 45.5 % as “equally spiritual and religious.” While the numbers in Germany, with 9.7 % (more) and 17.5 % (equally), are significantly smaller, the self-description as spiritual is increasing there, too (cf. Utsch & Klein, 2011; see also Chap. 3, this volume). Applying a semantic differential approach (see also Chap. 7, this volume) to explore the notion of “spirituality” in the USA and Germany, Keller et al. (2013, p. 94) note: “As frequencies of self-identifications in the general population change, both content and range of meanings of the terms ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ also appear to undergo changes.”

This development, however, is empirically still underexplored, so that we are not “knowing what this means to those who identify themselves as such” (Barker, 2007, p. iii) or as Chaves (2011, p. 41) notes, it is “difficult to know what people mean when they say they are spiritual but not religious” (cf. also Ammerman, 2013; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). This chapter therefore focuses on the exploration of meanings and symbolizations people ascribe when asked to define the term “spirituality.” Before turning to methods and empirical findings, first a short and selected overview of approaches to and studies of “spirituality” shall be given as an introduction into this area of research (for a more detailed description, see Chap. 1, this volume).

Already in a historical perspective, two distinct trajectories with different and overlapping meanings of the term can be identified, as is shown by Bochinger (1994). The first is a Romanic Catholic tradition prominent already in the 17th century (in particular the use of the French “spiritualité”) which referred mainly to personal religiousness. This notion of “spirituality” was re-introduced in Germany in the 1940s and more widely used also within Protestantism from the 1960s after the Catholic theologian von Balthasar (1965) had reconceptualized “spirituality” as an anthropological category. This wider

concept was already anticipated in the second trajectory which is a liberal Anglo-Saxon tradition that can be traced back already to Vivekananda’s speech at the world parliament of religion in 1893. In the 1960s and 1970s, this notion of “spirituality” became popular in the context of new religious movements such as New Age and did now highlight individual spiritual experiences and the freedom to develop one’s personal “spirituality,” even in opposition to organized religion and dogma. Among others, for instance popular writers such as Capra (1975, 1982), also representatives of humanistic psychology such as Maslow (1964, 1970) or Fromm (1966) became important promoters of this broadened understanding of an individualized religiousness based on personal spiritual experience. After this brief historical outline it becomes already apparent why definitions of “spirituality” differ largely, whether they are understood as the heart of religion, or as an individualistic opposition to organized religion, pointing to an explanation why people can describe themselves as equally religious and spiritual or as spiritual but not religious.

Therefore, what is called “New Age spirituality,” “alternative-” and “holistic spirituality” mainly focuses on the second trajectory as an alternative approach to religion and thereby on the “spiritual but not religious” group and does not take into account the various ways of how the term “spirituality” is used in contemporary, explicitly religious contexts. In line with the decomposition of the religious field (Bourdieu, 1992), Knoblauch (2012) argues further with the delimitation of the ‘topos spirituality,’ which in mixed positions also transcends the boundaries of church and un-church religiosity. However, Knoblauch introduces central dimensions of “spirituality” (2006) including, next to generalization of charisma, holism and experience-orientation, the opposition to established religions and dogmata of any kind. He also acknowledges that a systematic analysis of the code of “spirituality” as well as an analysis of change of the topoi of transcendence is still pending (Knoblauch, 2009).

The lack of empirical clarity is also reflected in the diverging variety of conceptualizations of

“religiousness” and “spirituality,” which, according to Zinnbauer et al. (1997), have not caught up with the recent changes in religious and spiritual landscapes. Woodhead (2010) observes a tendency which she calls the “inadequacy approach to spirituality.” She shows how “spirituality” is downplayed as fuzzy, meaningless and morally inadequate by being compared to a norm of “real religion”: “This norm, shaped around an implicit commitment to historically influential forms of church Christianity, is unable to accommodate spirituality as ‘real’ religion, and is forced to conclude that it is a ‘fuzzy’ pretender to the title” (p. 31). Contemporary “spirituality” therefore encounters a similar problem, which already in the late sixties had led Luckmann (1967) to a major critique of the church-centeredness of sociology of religion which was unable to access privatized forms of religion and therefore only saw secularization where the religious field actually had been transformed within modern society. In this light, “spirituality” appears to be the successor of “invisible religion” at the shift of the millennium, although not any more restricted to the private sphere, but widely diffused and visible in popular culture (cf. Knoblauch, 2009; Lüddeckens & Walthert, 2010).

Woodhead (2010) also shows how the inadequacy approach to “spirituality” corresponds with a lack of empirical research about the phenomena at hand. Looking at contemporary survey instruments of religion, Houtman, Heelas, & Achterberg, (2012, p. 16) term those as “dinosaurian questionnaires” which “evolved for landscapes of the sacred of the past, ill-calibrated for the landscapes which appear to be in evidence today. They have not given New Age spirituality the opportunity it deserves; the opportunity for those who more or less identify with it to have a reasonably accurate say, if a say at all.” Concerning the “spiritual turn,” they therefore conclude that by using those instruments “we simply do not know where we are.” (ibid.)

Streib and Hood recently (2013; see also Chaps. 1 and 2 in this volume) introduced a framework for understanding the religious field in reference to the dimensions of (horizontal and

vertical) transcendence (Luckmann, 1967), ultimate concern (Tillich, 1957) and organization (Troeltsch, 1912), starting from the individual religiosity and the religious individual as actor in the religious field and their experiences of transcendence. Next to the analytical possibilities for mapping the religious field, they also note that “the way of coming to terms with and communicating experiences of transcendence depends on the variety of symbol systems that are available and alive in a specific culture. And symbol systems are changing—which is perhaps the major factor of change in the religious fields in America and Europe” (Streib & Hood, 2013, p. 143; see also Chap. 1, this volume). Similar to Knoblauch (2006), Streib and Hood argue to understand “spirituality” as a form of religion and therefore against using the term as a scientific concept, while taking “spirituality” as an emic category within the religious field very seriously. In accordance with this claim, instead of dwelling further on conceptual and deductive considerations, the following analysis of free-entry definitions of “spirituality” follows this emic approach.

According to Streib and Hood (2013), the rather challengingly high accounts on contemporary research on “spirituality” call further for an empirically based, bottom-up research to explore the variety of meanings and symbolizations people apply when using the term “spirituality.” Zinnbauer et al. (1997) were the first to perform a content analysis of 329 personal definitions of “religiousness” and “spirituality” from various samples using 13 “content” and four “nature of the sacred” categories, deduced from theoretical considerations. Reporting here only the findings for “spirituality,” 70 % used a “traditional concept of the sacred (God, Christ, Higher Power, Holy, Divine, the Church),” while for 36 % “feeling or experience of connectedness/relationship/oneness” and for 35 % “personal beliefs” were the two main categories. However, over 17 % of their definitions were uncodable (category 14) and eight categories stayed below 1 % (used by zero, or only one or two individuals), leaving only three content categories above 3 % for analysis. Hyman and Handal (2006) asked 32 religious professionals (13 Catholic priests, 11 Protestant

ministers, 3 Muslim imams, and 5 Jewish rabbis) to give their own definitions of “religion” and “spirituality.” The researchers performed a content analysis on 31 pairs of definitions using three overall coding dimensions: subjective vs. objective, internal vs. external, and an overall content dimension including 12 content categories. With respect to the first two coding dimensions, “spirituality” was characterized as clearly subjective (87 %) and internal (77 %). With respect to the content categories, 25 % regarded “spirituality” as an expression of direct relationship with God, and 16 % as an expression of divine experience. 5.4 % of the definition contents were found to be uncodable. Another six categories yielded frequencies of about 5 % or lower (in a sample of 31 definitions). Thus, although both Zinnbauer et al.’s and Hyman and Handal’s study shed some light on common understandings of “spirituality,” working with deductively generated categories or coding dimensions resulted either in extremely high or low category frequencies which do surely not cover the entire breadth of today’s semantics of “spirituality.” Hence, they reflect the already reported limitations of deductively generated categories for researching “spirituality,” finding what one was looking for within a field far too diverse.

Others have decided to employ even more standardized research strategies to discover the semantics of “spirituality.” For instance, Greenwald and Harder (2003) asked 147 college undergraduates from New England with various ethnic and religious backgrounds to rate a list of 122 selected adjectives on a 5-point-scale from “definitely not spiritual” to “definitely spiritual.” Afterwards, they performed a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to identify factors covering the semantics of “spirituality.” According to their study, “spirituality” was characterized by the four components (1) Loving Connection to others, (2) Self-Effacing Altruism, (3) Blissful Transcendence, and (4) Religiosity/Sacredness. La Cour, Ausker and Hvidt (2012) collected a list of 115 words and invited 514 respondents in Denmark (predominantly students of diverse

faculties and church connected staff from the Lutheran Church of Denmark) to evaluate which of these words indicated “spirituality.” Then La Cour and colleagues calculated a PCA with quartimax rotation and identified six substantial components referring to common understandings of “spirituality”: (1) Positive Dimensions in Human Life and Well-being, (2) New Age Ideology, (3) Integrated Part of Established Religious Life, (4) Vague Striving, Opposed to Religion, (5) Selfishness and Greediness, and (6) Ordinary Inspiration in Human Activities. Thus, both factor-analytic studies worked with previously defined word lists. Again, their results give an impression of some important dimensions of present-day understandings of “spirituality.” Yet their scope is clearly limited by the deductively generated indicators of “spirituality” and their standardized assessment. Exploring the extended semantics of “spirituality” instead calls for an open and inductive approach.

Further, considering the global differences of contemporary religious landscapes, as well as the already noted differences in historical terminology of “spirituality” and its development, such an inductive approach should be based on a broadened scope by ways of cross-cultural comparison. The comparison of Keller et al. (2013), mentioned before, indicated (among other findings) an understanding of “spirituality” closer to traditional religion in the USA and therefore indicates that such an approach needs to be culturally sensitive.

Thus, for working with 1779 free-entry subjective definitions of “spirituality,” an open, inductive and culturally sensitive approach needs to be employed that may shed light on the semantics of “spirituality” in Germany and United States. The following analysis of the American and German free-text-entry definitions of “spirituality” follows such an emic approach. Its aim is to scrutinize the codes and symbol systems of “spirituality” as well as the topoi of transcendence to explore the taxonomies, aiming at exploring the entire range of dimensions included in subjective definitions of “spirituality” in our entire sample.

Methods

Data

The Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality” with participants in the United States and Germany ($n = 1,886$) included, among various other measures, the open question: “How would you define the term ‘spirituality’?,” offering a space for free text entry, thus for the respondents’ subjective definitions. The question was presented in the first part of the questionnaire after the demographics section so that participants would not be influenced by other measures related to “spirituality” or “religion” that were included later in the questionnaire. Free-entry space was technically limited by 250 digits in the online questionnaire, and by a box taking about a third of a page in the paper version of the questionnaire.

The free entries sum up to more than 21,000 tokens in total for the US and more than 15,000 for the German sample. The data collection was closed in early summer 2011. In the American sample, we have $n = 1,039$ subjective definitions of “spirituality,” in the German sample $n = 740$. Thus, the dataset is identical with the corpus of subjective definitions of “spirituality” which have already been used for the Corpus Analyses presented in Chap. 8 (numbers differ slightly because the sample in Chap. 8 includes also the participants who have given a subjective definition of “religion”). We use the same data for the analysis of the “spirituality” definitions because approaches such as Content analysis provide the opportunity to work more comprehensively by identifying themes or units of meaning consisting of several words, whereas Corpus Analysis is primarily based on the statistical significance of single words. The advantage of Corpus Analysis is the comparability with representative reference corpora of standard language and the opportunity of direct statistical comparison. For these reasons, Corpus Analysis was used in Chap. 8 as strategy for comparing the semantics of “spirituality” and “religion” both in the USA and in Germany. In contrast, for the analyses reported in this chapter, a methodology needed to be

developed, which allowed a more detailed investigation of the semantics of a specific concept in a particular sample and, combined with Factor Analyses, enabled an identification of general components of the semantics of this concept and their interrelations. Therefore we used an algorithm leaning on Content Analysis, Ethnosemantics and Grounded Theory methodology to discover prevalent categories among the definitions of “spirituality” and factor-analyzed these categories afterwards to identify general components of our participants’ notions of “spirituality.”

Age of the participants ranges from 15 to 82 years ($M = 34.8$, $SD = 14.7$) in the US sample, and from 17 to 90 years ($M = 43.5$, $SD = 14.0$) in the German sample. 62.8 % of the US and 57.6 % of the German participants are female. Mean per-capita income for the German sample is \$38,487 ($SD = 23,964$), and for the US sample \$40,620 ($SD = 28,194$). Regarding education, comparison with OECD data (OECD, 2011a, b) indicates that a much higher percentage of well-educated respondents from both countries are found in our data (in the US sample, 50.7 % have upper secondary, not tertiary education, 49.1 % have tertiary education; in the German sample, 43.0 % have an upper secondary, not tertiary education and 55.8 % have completed tertiary education), while lower-educated people are under-represented.

Categorization and Coding Procedure

The data, i.e. idiographic and subjective definitions of “spirituality,” reflect the general research question: How do people define “spirituality” (when directly asked to answer this question in written form and limited space)? Following an emic perspective, the large body of data offers insights in the range of terminology, symbolizations and meanings used for describing “spirituality.” This approach towards the facets of “spirituality” is similar to classic methods of *ethnosemantics* in cognitive anthropology, which were developed in linguistics and cultural anthropology (cf. Goodenough, 1957;

D'Andrade, 1995) and aim at reconstructing “an account of the taxonomic semantics of the language of the culture in question” (Eglin, 1975, p. 31).¹ Working towards such a taxonomy, the methodological approach was further guided by four main aims:

1. to work with an open and inductive approach, in order to avoid the shortcomings of deductive approaches as highlighted in the introduction;
2. to allow as much differentiation and variety as possible, in order to explore the wide range of semantics used in the free-entry definitions;
3. to find a cross-cultural framework adequate to the characteristics and specificities of the German and American sub-samples in question;
4. to re-quantify the findings for further statistical analyses and abstraction of dimensions from the material, considering the large data sample of 1,779 cases and the quantitative possibilities for further statistical comparison.

The analyses presented in this chapter thus engage in the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Thereby, the categorizing and coding the subjective definitions of “spirituality” using Content analysis (Mayring, 2010) is an adequate starting point for analysis,

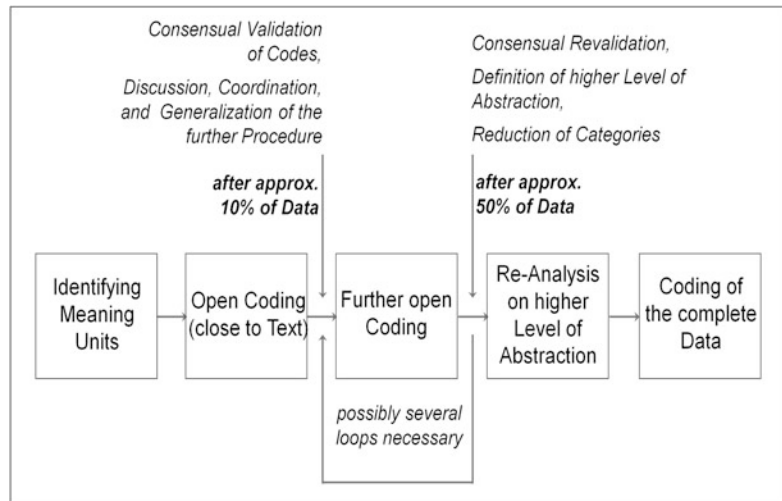
¹Cf. also Frake (1962), Spradley (1970), Maeder (2002). According to Eglin (1975, p. 31), *ethnosemantics* share the assumptions that “members of a culture share classifications of the world; that such classifications are a prerequisite for communication for meaningful behavior, for competent judging of appropriateness [...]; and that these classifications are largely encoded in the semantic system of the language [...]. By investigating the semantics of a language, a culture’s cognitive categories will be revealed. Cognitive categories in systematic form make that culture’s cultural code [...]” While Eglin deconstructs this worldview with the means of ethnomethodology, our approach, although working with a similar understanding of semantics, does not share the theoretical assumptions and implications in relation to culture. We are solely working on a level of emic exploration to highlight relevant symbolizations and dimensions of meanings ascribed to the term in question. This, however, does not allow further assessment of those dimensions in their concrete day-to-day use, respectively their meanings in actual social practice.

because “qualitative content analysis wants to preserve the advantages of quantitative content analysis for a more qualitative text interpretation” (Mayring, 2010, p. 2). Going “beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 308), Qualitative Content analysis enables the researcher to follow (besides deductive approaches) an inductive approach “grounding the examination of topics and themes, as well as the inferences drawn from them, in the data” (ibid.). However, as suggested by Berg (2001) and Jensen (2004), the application of inductive and open coding was complemented by Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) methodology, following the basic guidelines as presented by Strauss (1987) and further inspired by the taxonomic considerations of Ethnosemantics. The algorithm of the coding process is visualized in Fig. 9.1 (following Mayring, 2010) and described in the following.

The coding process started with the German sub-sample and was undertaken by an interdisciplinary research team consisting of scholars of sociology, psychology, theology, biology, religious studies, history, pedagogy, and philosophy. Three data sessions were conducted, splitting the team into three sub-groups coding approximately ten definitions per team and session. After each round of coding the data sessions concluded with group discussions of specific cases, category definitions, coding rules, and so forth. Working within this interdisciplinary group enabled us to question the various deductive hypotheses which each scholar had in mind and already brought to the phenomena, and to ask inter-subjectively whether those categories were actually represented in the data analysed. The aim of inductive and bottom-up coding was thus taken very seriously. Based on the codings of the first 100 cases (over 10 % of the German sample), a first preliminary list of categories was developed.

Within the coding procedure, the first step was to identify ‘meaning units’ or ‘themes’ for analysis which “might be expressed in a single word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire document. When using theme as the coding unit, you are primarily looking for the expressions of

Fig. 9.1 Algorithm of Content Analysis. Adapted from Mayring (2010)



an idea [...]; of relevance to your research question(s)” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 311). The data comprised already very condensed definitions of “spirituality” which implied that a variety of themes could be identified within short sentences. This was a challenge not only for the choosing of ‘meaning units,’ but also for the development of categories because coding was looking for abstractions and definitions of a material which already was a form of abstraction and definition. Further, when we aim at a re-quantification, as Zhang and Wildemuth (2009, p. 309) in reference to Weber (1990) note, “categories need to be mutually exclusive, because confounded variables would violate the assumptions of some statistical procedures [...]. However, in reality, assigning a particular text to a single category can be very difficult.” For instance in our data “believe in,” “connection to,” “feeling the presence of” or “thinking about” describe different approaches which in the data refer to various different subjects, like “God,” “Higher Power,” “something bigger,” “ghosts,” “bullshit,” etc. We therefore decided to fragment the subjective definitions into these small ‘themes’ to separate for instance “believe in” and “god” and to rate those ‘themes’ individually within dichotomized categories which could be used as dummy variables in the subsequent statistical analyses. This allowed us to completely re-quantify our categories and further to search

for components and patterns in secondary statistical analysis. However, this also meant that believe was rated whether it was a convinced belief in God or a critical rejection as in “believe in bullshit.” But “God” and “critical distance” were also rated as independent categories. This procedure led to a very detailed and fine-tuned approach, aiming at conserving and representing the variety of dimensions used in the definitions of “spirituality” in the data.

The preliminary list of categories were then used as a starting point for further open inductively coding of another 100 cases in two steps (à 50 cases) independently, by three of the corresponding authors (summing to a total 25 % of sample) with comparison and mainly discussing coding rules and coding consistency after each step. Already in this second step, a high degree of coding consistency was reached and a preliminary categorical system could be developed, although this needed to be continuously supplemented, refined and discussed within the team. Finally, the fully developed categorical system was applied to all German definitions by C. Eisenmann.

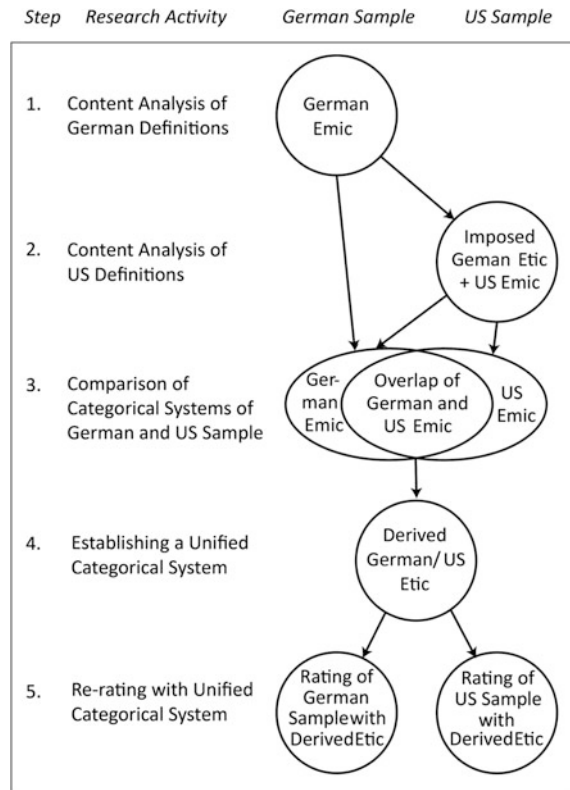
Following Berry’s (1989) considerations for cross-cultural comparison, we started a very similar open procedure with the definitions of the US sample, following the same guidelines. After open coding of approximately 50 % of the cases, a new categorical system within the American

sample was developed and validated for inter-subjective consistency. Instead of imposing the etics from the first coding process, this enabled a comparison of the German and US samples based on the inductively generated categories of each case. Previously, we had considered rating the American sample completely and independently; however, we realized that the comparison showed a high degree of similarity in the categories concerning “spirituality,” which was also partly due to similar nature of the data (being abstracted definitions), as well as to the fine-grained rating procedure, separating the essential themes of the definitions in each sample. While many categories were one-to-one translations, we found for the US sample also a few new categories, while a few of the German categories were lacking. Taking a closer look at those categories, we found that they were also applicable and identifiable within the German

sample and vice versa. The cross-cultural comparison therefore served as further corrective of the subjective coding procedure, enabling to see more facets and differentiations in both samples, although not as frequently used in the independent samples. The entire cross-cultural coding procedure is visualized in Fig. 9.2.

Therefore a unified categorical system was developed based on the categories of both samples, tested with 100 German and English cases and, after detailed comparison, was presented and discussed within the larger research team. In the discussion, a final categorical system was established, which consists of 44 categories and reflects the entire spectrum of facets of “spirituality” that were inductively developed from the data by the research team. In the last step of the coding procedure, final coding was conducted by the first author C. Eisenmann by re-rating both samples entirely.

Fig. 9.2 Algorithm of the Cross-Cultural Coding Procedure. Adapted from Berry (1989)



Factor Analyses

In a next step of analysis, the 44 categories have been included in the quantitative data base as dummy variables (category given/not given; 1/0). Then, in order to reduce complexity, these variables were factor-analysed with a PCA with Varimax rotation and Kaiser-Normalization as non-dependent procedure. Thereby, categories with frequencies <5 % were excluded from the analysis to avoid variance minimization (Gorsuch, 1983). Additionally, a category labeled “Rest,” which was assigned to all meaning units that could not be assigned to one of the other categories, was excluded from the PCA due to its vague and unclear content (this category, however, was present only in 8.4 % of the definitions; cf. Table 9.1).

All in all, 13 components met the Kaiser criterion of an Eigenvalue >1.00. The Scree-Test allowed for several solutions, therefore we compared 5-, 6-, 9-, 10-, 11-, 12-, and 13-component solutions with respect to the clarity of the resulting components and their interpretability. Among the solutions with lower number of components, several categories were found to have no substantial loadings on any of the components. Since we were interested in the full semantic breadth of subjective understandings of “spirituality,” we wanted to preserve as many of the original categories as possible. Thus, we focused on the solutions with higher number of components. But here still a couple of categories showed only low factor loading <.500 or loaded similarly on two or more components. Because of the generally reduced variation due to the binary structure of the category variables, we decided to accept factor loadings >.300 as significant contributors to a component (the same criterion has been used by La Cour et al. (2012, p. 68) in their factor-analytic study on understandings of the term “spirituality”). Applying these adjusted criteria, a 10-component solution offered the clearest solution for interpretation.

Because PCAs based on dichotomized variables sometimes tend to result in factor solutions with reduced clarity and stability, it is

recommended to additionally perform a second-order PCA based on the regression factor scores of the first-order PCA to establish more valid components (Gorsuch, 1983). We followed this recommendation not only to assure our results, but also to discover the relations between the 10 components of our primary PCA and to detect more general dimensions of subjective definitions of “spirituality.” Therefore, we calculated a second-order PCA with Varimax rotation and Kaiser-Normalization on the basis of our 10 primary components. Again, several solutions up to four components have been possible. In terms of interpretability, however, the 3-component solution provided the clearest result because two components of the 4-component solution showed considerable overlap and fell in one when three components have been requested in the PCA. Thus, in the following paragraphs we present the 44 categories as first result, the 10 components of the primary PCA as second finding, both also in cross-cultural comparison between US and German sample, and the three components of the second-order PCA as third result.

Results

Forty-Four Categories for Free-Text-Entries About “Spirituality”

The 44 categories, inductively developed from the material, already offer in themselves an interesting first result. It can be seen that there is a broad diversity and plurality of terminology, symbolizations and meanings, associated with “spirituality.” The diverging variety of definitions and attempts to conceptually grasp “spirituality” finds an empirical reflection here. Looking at the general frequency distribution (Table 9.1), five of the 44 categories are used in over 20 % free-text-entries; they refer to individual beliefs, connectedness, everyday values and morals. Another 13 categories are found in over 10 % definitions, while the majority of

Table 9.1 Names, Frequencies and Distribution Differences of the 44 Inductively Developed Categories of “Spirituality”

Category	<i>n</i>	%	% USA	% GER	χ^2
(13) Faith and belief, believing, belief system	589	33.1	43.0	19.2	110.85
(14) Connectedness, relationship, in touch with, harmony	447	25.1	28.8	20.0	17.70
(25) Individual, personal, private, subjective	432	24.3	27.0	20.4	10.36
(38) Everyday, daily life, way of life, to act	425	23.8	22.7	25.4	1.72
(11) Values, (higher) order, morals, karma	398	22.4	21.1	24.2	2.41
(3) God (also the Father, Lord, Creator, the Divine)	333	18.7	19.9	17.0	2.38
(9) Unspecified transcendent: something bigger, beyond, greater; “may be”	319	17.9	21.5	13.0	21.17
(15) Feeling, emotion, intuition, empathy, heart, love	301	16.9	17.5	16.1	0.63
(6) Within, self, higher Self, inner core, essence	293	16.5	16.7	16.1	0.14
(23) Seeking, path, journey, reaching, to evolve, to achieve	268	15.1	11.8	19.6	20.32
(17) Awareness, consciousness, sense of, feeling a presence, in tune	264	14.8	12.6	18.0	9.84
(36) Supernatural, non-material, cannot see or touch	246	13.8	12.3	15.9	4.77
(2) Transcendental higher power/forces/energy	235	13.2	16.3	8.9	20.35
(16) Thinking about, to understand, to reflect, contemplation	236	13.3	11.6	15.5	5.70
(30) Relation to the world, nature, environment, universe	235	13.2	13.4	13.0	0.06
(35) Cannot be explained or scientifically proven, beyond understanding	223	12.5	10.6	15.3	8.65
(34) Higher/beyond/greater/other than oneself/humans/this life	202	11.4	16.8	3.6	74.75
(12) Relation to others, community, all humanity, humankind	194	10.9	11.0	10.8	0.01
(18) Experience, sensory perception	183	10.3	4.7	18.1	83.99
(7) Spirit and mind	175	9.8	5.8	15.5	46.47
(31) Rest	150	8.4	5.6	12.4	26.27
(24) Practices, to practice (one’s faith), music, prayer, worship, meditation	148	8.3	6.3	11.2	13.94
(5) (Inner) peace, enlightenment and other attitudes and states of being	144	8.1	8.6	7.4	0.75
(28) Guided, destined, controlled, saved, healed, dependent	142	8.0	10.4	4.6	19.79
(37) Part of religion, Christian, biblical	139	7.8	8.2	7.3	0.47
(42) All-connectedness, part of something bigger	136	7.6	5.3	10.9	19.56
(10) Meaning and (higher) purpose, questions and answers	134	7.5	7.2	8.0	0.35
(1) Transcendental absolute, “unity of existence,” omnipresent and indiscriminate, the one	127	7.1	2.6	13.5	77.67
(33) Otherworldly, beyond this world, “spiritual” realms	126	7.1	6.6	7.7	0.74
(32) Acknowledge, to recognize, to accept, to realize	123	6.9	7.5	6.1	1.37
(29) Vague, unclear, unsure; bullshit, fantasy, hocus pocus	121	6.8	4.0	10.7	30.00
(20) Without rules, tradition, norms, dogma, structure, directions	114	6.4	5.1	8.2	7.12
(21) Something else than religion, without worship	102	5.7	5.5	6.1	0.28
(26) Energies, vital principle, ghosts, angels and demons, spirits	100	5.6	4.5	7.2	5.67

(continued)

Table 9.1 (continued)

Category	<i>n</i>	%	% USA	% GER	χ^2
(40) The truth, true nature of existence, wisdom, reality	100	5.6	3.6	8.5	19.98
(4) Jesus, Christ, Holy Spirit, the Son	92	5.2	6.3	3.6	5.99
(19) Greater being/person, deities, gods	90	5.1	8.0	0.9	44.63
(8) Soul	88	4.9	5.3	4.5	0.64
(43) Universal category, basis of mankind	83	4.7	4.0	5.5	2.18
(27) Esoteric, occultism, spiritism, mystic, magic	79	4.4	1.5	8.5	49.53
(39) Deal with, interest in, engagement, focus	79	4.4	2.5	7.2	22.11
(44) Part and beyond religion	58	3.3	4.1	2.0	6.11
(22) Obedience and devotion	54	3.0	4.5	0.9	18.80
(41) Life after death	52	2.9	3.0	2.8	0.03

Note Significances of differing distributions between American and German sample on the $p < .05$ level in *italics*; significances on the $p \leq .001$ level in **bold italics**

categories are represented in less than 10 % of the cases, with a frequency of around 5 % for about 10 categories. This already shows the diversity of semantic connotations to “spirituality” as used by individuals in Germany and the USA when asked to define the term, opening a multitude of meanings and a plurality of relevant facets and aspects. “Spirituality” refers to a broad semantic spectrum.

Comparing frequency distributions of the two cultures in question applying χ^2 statistics, a range of significant differences are notable. Most prominently, *faith and belief* (13) is used more than twice as often in the American than in the German sub-sample (43.0 % USA vs. 19.2 % GER). This “belief” is thereby far more likely to be related to a *transcendental* or *higher power* (category 2; 16.3 vs. 8.9 %) and in *something bigger, greater, or beyond* (category 9; 21.5 vs. 13.0 %) which appears to be *beyond, greater, or higher than oneself, humans, or this life* (category 34; 16.8 vs. 3.6 %). More than a third of all American definitions therefore include phrases like “belief in a higher power (...)”, “belief in something greater than myself (...)” and/or “belief in God (...)”. While “God” (category 3) is only used slightly more in the USA (19.9 vs. 17.0 %), there is significant more reference to *Jesus* and the *Holy Spirit* (category 4; 6.3 vs. 3.6 %) as well as to generalized *greater being(s)*

(category 19; 8.0 vs. 0.9 %) implying—in comparison to Germany—a more personified understanding of transcendence concerning “spirituality.” Also the categories *guided, destined, and controlled* (category 28; 10.4 vs. 4.6 %) and *obedience and devotion* (category 22; 4.5 vs. 0.9 %) are mainly American definitions, pointing together with personified transcendence to an more frequent understanding of “spirituality” closer to ‘traditional’ religion.

A similar tendency can be observed when looking at the categories predominately used in the German sample, where three major groups can be identified. The first group consists of criticism of the term “spirituality” as *vague, unclear, unsure* or even *bullshit* (category 29; 10.7 GER vs. 4.0 % USA), its description as *without rules, tradition, norms, or dogma* (category 20; 8.2 vs. 5.1 %) and an association of “spirituality” with *esotericism, occultism, spiritism, or magic* (category 27; 8.5 vs. 1.5 %). Here, a personal and critical distance to “spirituality” is often combined with the mentioning of esoteric practices, like talking to the dead, astrology, crystal healing, and so forth. This criticism is not found as much in the US sample where “spirituality” seems to be more associated with established and ‘recognized’ religion, whereas in Germany a stronger opposition to the term is recognizable.

Further, a second group consisting of *seeking, path, journey, reaching* (category 23; 19.6 vs. 11.8 %), *experience* and *sensory perception* (category 18; 18.1 vs. 4.7 %), *awareness, consciousness, sense of, feeling a presence* (category 17; 18.0 vs. 12.4 %), and *thinking about, to understand, to reflect* (category 16; 15.5 vs. 11.6 %) can be identified with preference in the German sample. This refers to different ways of accessing and relating to transcendence and “spirituality.” This experience-orientation of seekers has been described as a central element of “spirituality” in the literature (cf. Knoblauch, 2006; Roof, 2000). In our sample, we find this facet of “spirituality” more often in the German sample whereas the predominantly access to “spirituality” in the USA seems to be, as shown before, belief.

A third group of categories concerns the form of transcendence. In the German sample, a tendency towards *Transcendental Absolutes*, a “unity of existence,” *omnipresent and indiscriminate*, or *the one* (category 1; 13.5 vs. 2.6 %), *truth, the true nature of existence, wisdom*, and *reality* (category 40; 8.5 vs. 3.6 %), and towards *all-connectedness, part of something bigger* (category 42; 10.9 vs. 5.3 %) can be seen, representing perhaps more Eastern (Yoga and Buddhism) and New Age influences of “alternative spirituality,” which are in line with the observations of experience-orientation and seeking reported before. In the USA, on the contrary, higher power, personified transcendence, something beyond and an obedience and devotion were reported as distinctive features.

In terms of negative definitions, *beyond oneself* (category 34) was a relevant distinction between the USA and Germany, where there seems to be a tendency to use a demarcation from science (*cannot be explained or scientifically proven, beyond understanding*; category 35; 15.3 vs. 10.6 %) and materialism (*supernatural, non-material, cannot see or touch*; category 36; 15.9 vs. 12.3 %). This group of categories also hints to a group in the German subsample with a stronger alternative understanding of “spirituality,” defining itself in opposition to an “assumed” scientific rational materialism of the West.

These reported significant differences (see Table 9.1 for χ^2) of around half of the categories point to a closer similarity of “spirituality” and “religion” in the USA and a more diverse demarcation to the term in Germany, referring to criticism as well as more frequent use of alternative (New Age) spiritualities. However, one should keep in mind: All 44 categories can be identified in each sample. Considering the fine-grained approach to “spirituality” presented here, the cultural language differences, not to speak of the different religious landscapes within the USA and Germany, it can also be argued that the convergence of “spirituality” is far higher than could be expected. Not only was it possible to identify one cross-cultural unified schema for interpretation, but also more than half of the categories were used with very similar frequency within the samples. These convergences will be even more apparent when moving from singular categories to more generalized dimensions of “spirituality” in the following.

Ten Components of the Semantics of “Spirituality”

Already at the outset of open analysis of inductive categories of “spirituality,” one central aim was re-quantification of the material for further statistical analysis and standardized cross-cultural comparison. Therefore, PCAs with Varimax rotation and Kaiser-Normalization have been performed to reduce the number of categories by detecting main structural features and relationships between variables in the data set. As described above, a 10-component solution offered the clearest solution for interpretation. Altogether, the 10 components explain 42.11 % of the variance. Table 9.2 shows the rotated principal component matrix and key words for our interpretation of the 10 components (detailed descriptions of the 10 components are presented subsequently).

In order to give a more comprehensive impression of the 10 components, in the following paragraphs they are described and illustrated by prototypical definitions which include

Table 9.2 Rotated Principal Component Matrix and Keywords for the Interpretation of Components for the Subjective Definitions or “Spirituality”

	Component									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(42) All-connectedness, part of something bigger	.694									
(30) Relation to the world, nature, environment, universe	.549			.245						
(1) Transcendental absolute, “unity of existence,” omnipresent & indiscriminate, the one	.528									
(14) Connectedness, relationship, in touch with, harmony	.452	.335								.405
I. Connectedness										
(4) Jesus, Christ, Holy Spirit, the Son	.665									
(3) God (also the Father, Lord, Creator, the Divine)	.634									
(28) Guided, destined, controlled, saved, healed, dependent	.507				.383					-.271
(37) Part of religion, Christian, biblical	.417	-.278			-.283					
II. Part of Religion										
(6) Within, self, higher Self, inner core, essence			.630							
(23) Seeking, path, journey, reaching, to evolve, to achieve			.597					.302		
(5) (Inner) peace, enlightenment and other attitudes and states of being			.545							
III. Higher Self										
(11) Values, (higher) order, morals, karma				.756						
(38) Everyday, daily life, way of life, to act				.646						
(12) Relation to others, community, all humanity, mankind	.423			.481						
IV. Ethics, Values										
(2) Transcendental higher power, forces, energy					.696					
(13) Faith and belief, believing, belief system	-.248				.549					
(19) Greater being/person, deities, gods					[.265]					
V. Higher Power(s)										
(9) Unspecified transcendent: something bigger, beyond, greater; “may be”						.779				
(34) Higher/beyond/greater/other than oneself/ humans/ this life						.747				
(15) Feeling, emotion, intuition, empathy, heart, love							[.251]			
VI. Something Beyond										

(continued)

Table 9.2 (continued)

		Component									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(40)	The truth, true nature of existence, wisdom, reality							.554			
(35)	Cannot be explained or scientifically proven, beyond understanding							.465			
(18)	Experience, sensory perception					VII. Existential Truth	-.261	.406			
(16)	Thinking about, to understand, to reflect, contemplation			.247				.394			
(10)	Meaning and (higher) purpose, questions and answers			.244				.331			
(33)	Otherworldly, beyond this world, "spiritual" realms								.661		
(36)	Supernatural, non-material, cannot see or touch								.637		
(26)	Energies, vital principle, ghosts, angels and demons, spirits					VIII. Esotericism		.346		.345	
(29)	Vague, unclear, unsure, bullshit, fantasy, hocus pocus			-.256			-.270	-.331			
(17)	Awareness, consciousness, sense of, feeling a presence, in tune							[.242]			
(21)	Something else than religion, without worship					IX. Opposition to Religion				.733	
(20)	Without rules, tradition, norms, dogma, structure, directions									.714	
(25)	Individual, personal, private, subjective			.379							.474
(7)	Spirit and mind										-.426
(24)	Practices, to practice (one's faith), music, prayer, worship, meditation					X. Individual Religious Praxis					.359
(32)	Acknowledge, to recognize, to accept, to realize										-.325

Note Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 22 iterations. Variance explained: 42.11 %. Categories 8, 22, 27, 39, 41, 43, and 44 have been excluded because of frequencies >5 %; Category 31 ("Rest") has been excluded due to its vague content. Keywords for component interpretation are in bold print

all or most of the categories involved in the particular component:

(All)Connectedness and Harmony with the Universe, Nature and the Whole [Connectedness] (I) This component refers to connectedness, relationship and harmony with the universe, nature and the world, as well as with the whole and transcendental absolutes, perhaps in a kind of monistic world view. The following cases illustrate this dimension:

Spirituality is feeling connected to something greater than yourself. It is enjoying the world and its people. It is being a part of something bigger.

Realizing that we are all part of a wonderful whole. Acknowledging the fact that you impact people and people impact you. Knowing that every being, even those that we may not yet know of, is important to the universe.

Spirituality is a feeling of connection to the world, other living beings, the community, a higher power, or a greater whole. It is a sense of being part of something larger and a feeling of being held and loved even when I am alone.

Part of Religion, Christian Beliefs [Part of Religion] (II) “Spirituality” here is a form, a part of, or nothing else than “religion” and mainly expressed by Christian beliefs, referring to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and experiences of guidance, destiny, and salvation attributed to the persons of the Christian trinity.

Actively seeking the guidance of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and feeling them guide you in your life.

I believe in the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. I believe in prayer. I believe God leads and guides me by His indwelling Spirit and that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

Spirituality is believing in God and his Son, Jesus, through faith and living the Christian life. Christianity is not only a belief, but a way of life based on the teachings of the Bible and following the path of our Lord and Saviour.

Inner Search for (Higher) Self, Meaning, Peace and Enlightenment [Higher Self] (III) This component refers to seeking a higher self or essence which is often framed as a path or journey. The factor also encompasses experiences of meaning and purpose, as well as states of being, like inner peace, joy and enlightenment. The following cases from the data are shown to illustrate this dimension:

An inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being.

Discovering the essences of one’s being on a path towards an enlightened dimension or knowing self.

Spirituality is the inner path people take to understand the universe and their place in it.

It our ‘soul’s’ connection and meaning in the universe.

(...) finding/knowing you have a purpose, discovering your inner self /inner peace/inner path.

Ethics, Holding and Everyday Acting according to values and Morality in Relation to Humanity [Ethics, Values] (IV) This factor puts emphasis on integrating values and morality in daily life and acting upon these values, especially in relation to other beings, the community, and mankind in general.

Being purposeful toward the greater good of mankind as well as other living beings—living in harmony and balance.

Spirituality is believing there’s more than ourselves. There are fundamental ideas about what’s good and bad, right and wrong and that we have a responsibility to abide by them by being kind to ourselves, to others and to all things.

Living a life beyond benefitting yourself. Rather living to lift up the spirits of people around you. Live life with kindness and morals.

Belief in Higher Power(s), Higher Beings (Deities, Gods) [Higher Power(s)] (V) This component describes “spirituality” as a belief in higher power(s) or beings such as gods or deities. In many cases, these definitions try to give a generalized, abstract description of transcendental forces or entities, such as belief in a higher power, energy or in any kind of God or personified transcendence.

The belief in greater powers be it God or other deities.

Spirituality is the belief in something outside yourself, a greater being or elemental force that helps guide the universe.

Believing in a higher power, at time possibly not knowing what that higher power is. Believing you have a purpose from that higher power and believing something/someone watches over you.

A belief in the existence of a greater being or beings that have powers beyond those of humanity. Usually involving a worship or recognition of these powers.

Intuition of Something of some Beings(s) that are Unspecified, but Higher than and Beyond Oneself [Something Beyond] (VI) The intuition of something unspecified higher and beyond oneself refers in most cases to a hunch or feeling of unspecified transcendence, which mostly is not further specified. All that can be said is that there is this particular feeling or impression of the mere existence of this transcendent “something,” which transcends the personal self or ego.

Feeling connected to something higher than oneself.

The feeling associated with knowing there is something greater than we are.

The feeling of something beyond oneself...
Feeling and responding to an innate feeling of connection with something larger than myself.

Experience of Truth, Purpose and Wisdom Beyond Rational Understanding [Existential Truth] (VII) This component expresses a deep truth which exceeds reason, rational and scientific understanding but nevertheless is to be cognitively reflected, perceived and experienced, and thus provides meaning, deeper insights, and purpose in life.

An experience which can only be cheapened with words, and which reason will never be enough to explain. Truth in subjective experience.

Recognizing that there is more to life than the visible and physical, and desiring to connect with that dimension of human existence in a meaningful way. An interest in discovering truth in life including aspects that cannot be quantified empirically.

An awareness of aspects of reality beyond scientific explanation and materiality or physicality. Being ‘spiritual’ means attuning

oneself to such aspects of reality in order to find meaning, direction, or fulfillment in life.

Esotericism, Awareness of a Non-material, Invisible World, Supernatural Energies and Beings (Spirits etc.) [Esotericism] (VIII)

“Esotericism” is our term and used in the interpretation, with reference to ‘esotericism’ as scientific concept (cf. Faivre, 1992, 2010), to describe an awareness of a non-material, invisible world and supernatural energies and beings such as spirits, angels or ghosts. The affirmation of such an invisible world and the forces at work in it are the core elements of a component which has therefore been labeled Esotericism. In many cases, the aforementioned elements are combined with an emphasis that perceiving this non-material, spiritual realm requires a particular consciousness or awareness.

I would define spirituality as the beliefs of a person on phenomena that takes place outside the material realm. This definition would include such things as ghosts and mystics, alongside the idea of gods, angels and demons.

Spirituality is the realization that other than the physical world exists outside of scientific explanation and tuning oneself into a non-physical realm by some means, which could solely be a mental exercise.

The belief in some kind of force connecting living things that transcends the physical world, or the belief in entities that transcend the physical world.

An awareness that there is an energy or dimension which includes and is greater than space, matter and time. And, a belief that practice of that awareness is the best way to make informed decisions.

Opposition to Religion, Dogmatic Rules, and Traditions [Opposition to Religion] (IX)

In this component, “spirituality” is defined in demarcation from established forms of religion, as well as from any norms, rules, traditions, and dogmata which are refused. This also points to

the relevance of a private, subjective and personal view on “spirituality.”

Spirituality is a practice of seeking and exploring the mystical world without being bound by dogma or tradition.

A free way to experience god without a dogma, to seek god on one’s own terms without restrictions or limitations or a defined way to do so.

An experience of connectedness, or oneness, with god that exists outside of, or independent of doctrine, worship, and formal teachings.

Spirituality depicts the acknowledgement of a higher power, but does not necessarily require the following of set traditions and rules that organized religions do. The way one reaches spirituality is unique to each individual.

Individual Religious Praxis, Meditation, Prayer, Worship [Individual Religious Praxis]

(X) The last component deals with individual religious practices like prayer or meditation and highlights the performative approach to the spiritual realm which they provide—instead of cognitive reasoning or mere acknowledgment. While some definitions clearly describe established praxis within religious traditions, in particular Christianity, other definitions focus on individual practices which need not necessarily be traditional religious rituals. However, most definitions share an emphasis on the personal character of the performed practices:

I would define spirituality as the personal practices one performs to achieve a connection with the divine.

Spirituality to me is personal prayer or meditation with one’s God to improve the state of being of the person praying or meditating. Being in tune with the spiritual side of life, and being able to determine right from wrong because of this.

Spirituality includes introspection, and the development of an individual’s inner life through practices such as meditation, prayer and contemplation.

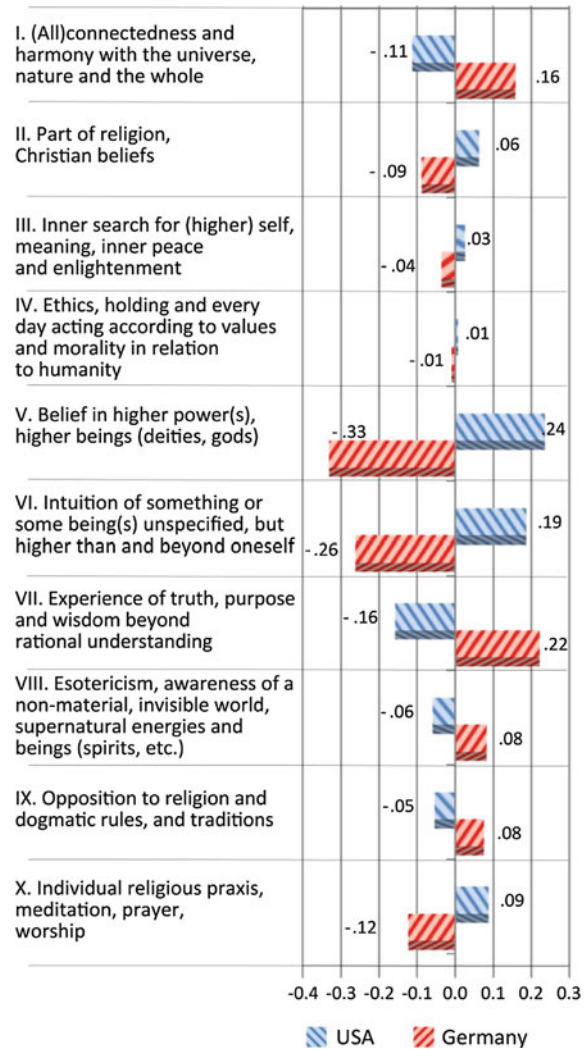
Spirituality consists of reading the bible, personal prayer, and testimony. Mostly intrinsic in nature and vital to beliefs.

One central aim of the PCA was to statistically generate components of subjective understandings of “spirituality” which allow for standardized cross-cultural comparison. Therefore, t-tests have been performed on the basis of the z-standardized regression factor scores to test whether American and German respondents differ in their usage of the 10 components.

In fact, significant differences could be observed for all components ($t_{1777} \geq 2.69$; $p \leq .008$) except for component III (*Higher Self*) and IV (*Ethics, Values*) ($t_{1777} \leq 1.276$; $p \geq .202$ n.s.). Figure 9.3 illustrates the mean differences of the standardized scores for all 10 components. However, although the high number of significant differences between the American and the German sample seems to refer to clear cultural differences at first sight, in most cases the effect size is rather small (Cohen’s d between .13 and .46; cf. Cohen, 1988). This becomes visible already when looking at the scaling in Fig. 9.3 which shows that all scores lie closely around the sample mean and do not even reach the size of a half standard deviation. The only significant difference of medium effect size is on component V (*Higher Power(s)*; Cohen’s $d = .59$) which was clearly used more often by the American respondents than by the Germans.

In general, one gets the impression that components dealing with concepts and experiences of *transcending* (I, VII)—i.e. experiences or concepts which transcend the boundaries of an individual’s ego or of ordinary reality, yet without necessarily postulating the existence of a transcendent sphere or entity in an ontological sense, e.g. concepts like “the cosmos,” “the universe,” or “the truth,” and corresponding experiences—are a bit more common among the German respondents, whereas components dealing with experiences or notions of *transcendence* in an ontological sense (II, V, VI, X)—i.e. experiences or notions which assume the existence of an ontologically “higher” sphere or entity, e.g. concepts like “God,” a divine saviour,

Fig. 9.3 Z-Standardized Means for the Ten Components in the US and German Samples



or other divine figures or powers, and corresponding experiences and practices—are somewhat more common among the Americans. This impression fits to the finding which could already be observed when looking at the category frequencies, namely that, in the USA, the notion of “spirituality” seems to resemble traditional notions of religion with their emphasis on transcendence more strongly than in Germany. However, since there is only one cross-cultural difference of medium effect size while all other differences are insignificant or only of marginal effect size, in general the observation of an astonishing transatlantic convergence in the

understanding of “spirituality” can be corroborated. All in all, the American and the German notions of “spirituality” seem to resemble each other more strongly instead of differing from one another.

Three General Dimensions of the Semantics of “Spirituality”

A second-order PCA with Varimax rotation and Kaiser-Normalization based on the regression factor scores of the primary PCA has been performed in order to overcome possible limitations

of a PCA based solely on dichotomous variables. At the same time, the second-order PCA allows to discover the relations between the 10 components of the primary PCA and thereby of general dimensions of our respondents’ subjective understandings of “spirituality.” As described above, a 3-component solution explaining 30.0 % of the variance provided the best result. Factor loadings and interpretation of the three components of the second-order PCA are shown in Table 9.3.

Mystical Versus Humanistic Transcending is the first of the three components which resulted from the second-order PCA. It deals with distinct ways of how the boundaries of an individual’s

ego or of ordinary reality can be transcended. It is important to note that this transcending does not require a belief in transcendent spheres or beings in an ontological sense. Therefore, we would like to emphasize the distinction between *transcending* as a verb-like anthropological category describing the human experience of crossing the boundaries of one’s ego or ordinary reality on the one hand, and *transcendence* as an ontological category describing the symbolization of such experiences that may include assumptions of the existence of particular higher spheres or beings on the other. *Transcending* in the former sense can, according to our first component, occur either in terms of an universalistic orientation

Table 9.3 Rotated Principal Component Matrix and Interpretation of Second-Order Components for the Subjective Definitions or “Spirituality”

Components from Primary PCA	Components in Second-order PCA			Interpretation of Components in Second-order PCA
	1	2	3	
(IV) Ethics, Holding and everyday acting according to values and morality in relation to humanity [Ethics, Values]	-,511			
(VI) Intuition of something or some being(s) that are unspecified, but higher than and beyond oneself [Something Beyond]	,497			<i>Mystical transcending (toward higher self and beyond oneself) vs. humanistic transcending</i>
(III) Inner search for (higher) self , meaning, peace and enlightenment	,421			<i>[Mystical vs. Humanistic Transcending]</i>
(VII) Experience of truth, purpose and wisdom beyond rational understanding [Existential Truth]	,373		-,325	
(II) Part of religion , Christian beliefs		,598		
(VIII) Esotericism , Awareness of a non-material, invisible world, supernatural energies and beings (spirits etc.)		-,537	-,301	<i>Symbolization of transcendence: theistic vs. non-theistic (in terms of esotericism and all-connectedness)</i>
(V) Belief in higher power(s) , higher beings (deities, gods)		,436		<i>[Theistic vs. Non-theistic Transcendence]</i>
(I) (All) Connectedness and harmony with the universe, nature and the whole		-,372		
(IX) Opposition to religion , dogmatic rules, and traditions			,673	<i>Individual “lived” religion vs. dogmatism</i>
(X) Individual religious praxis , meditation, prayer, worship	,406		,454	

Note Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations. Variance explained: 30.0 %. Keywords for interpretation in primary 10-component PCA solution are in bold print; Interpretation of three second-order components are in italics; interpretation keywords are in bold italics

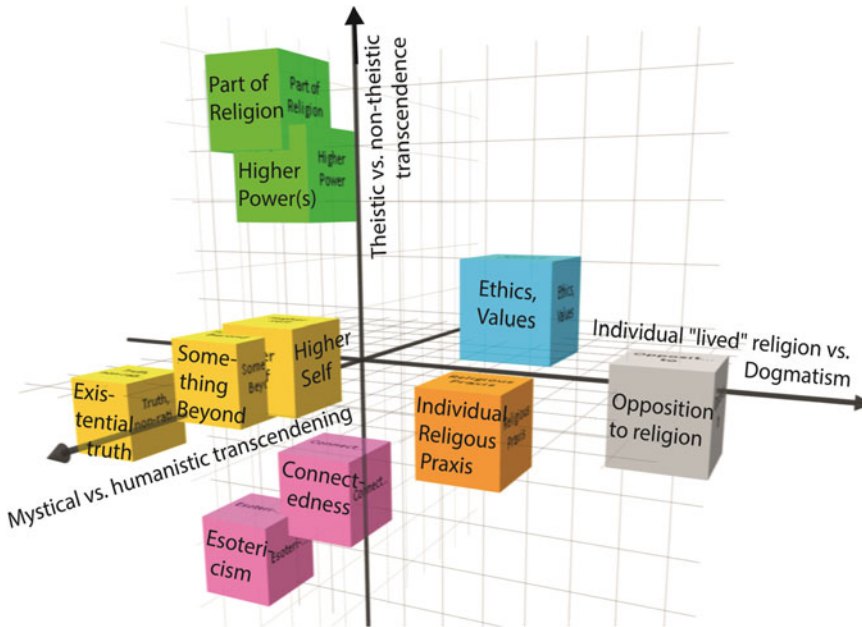


Fig. 9.4 Second-Order Components for the Subjective Definitions of “Spirituality”

towards high moral standards and lead to an ethical life with respect to all other human beings (VI). Here, values regarded as absolute and humanity as a whole represent the concepts which transcend the individual’s boundaries. Or transcending of an individual’s boundaries occurs rather experientially when recognizing one’s higher self or inner core (III), when gaining insight into existential meaning or a deeper, non-rational truth (VII), or when sensing that there must be something higher or beyond—although it is impossible to express it more precisely (VI). Distinct possibilities to name such higher “something” require already some kind of interpretation and hence the assumption of a symbolized transcendence. This is reflected in the second of the three components.

Theistic Versus Non-theistic Transcendence.

We find several symbolical frames of transcendence forming the second component, Theistic vs. Non-theistic Transcendence, which differentiates between four variants how transcendence can be symbolized. This can be either in theistic terms, in form of an affirmation of the Christian belief in a trinitarian God (II), or by speaking more descriptively about belief in higher powers

such as gods or deities (V), on the one hand, or in non-theistic terms such as the belief in an all-connectedness of all beings (I) or the esoteric belief in the existence of an invisible, non-material world, wherein particular energies or supernatural agents are at work (VIII), on the other hand.

Individual “Lived” Religion versus Dogmatism is the third component. The pole of an individual vital, intrinsically lived religion is formed by the two primary components, component IX, *Opposition to religion*, and component X, *Individual religious praxis*. The former highlights the rejection of any set of dogmata or traditional religious rules and gives thereby also an impression of the non-desired pole of the specter of the third component which can be labeled as “dogmatism.” The latter lays emphasis on living one’s “spirituality” by performing individual religious practices. Since such practices are expected to facilitate experiences of transcending (which might be interpreted in terms of transcendence), it is probably no coincidence that the primary component X can be found to also load on *Mystical versus Humanistic Transcending*.

Although methodologically usually not desired, the plausible double loading of component X illustrates that the second-order PCA really reveals relations between the 10 primary components. The three second-order components might thus be understood as general dimensions of subjective understandings of “spirituality” structuring the diverse ways how “spirituality” can be described. To visualize this dimensional structure, in Fig. 9.4 the three second-order components have been used as dimensions to define a three-dimensional space wherein the 10 primary components have been located and depicted as boxes.

Discussion

Our results clearly show that there is no single notion of “spirituality,” but a broad semantic diversity. This is mirrored in particular by our first result, the system of no less than 44 categories which were necessary to capture the various topoi, symbolizations, and meanings of our respondents’ definitions. It is probably this multitude of understandings that causes the often stated “fuzziness” of the term “spirituality.” However, the recent years have seen the identification of several characteristics of today’s “spiritualities,” many of which can be recognized in particular among the 10 components of our primary PCA:

For instance, connectedness with others and a universality of life have been emphasized as important elements of “spirituality” in particular in Piedmont’s (1999, 2001, 2007; Piedmont, Ciarochi, Dy-Liacco, & Williams, 2009) concept of “spiritual transcendence.” Both elements can partly be recognized in our component *Connectedness* (I). Zinnbauer et al. (1997) found a “feeling or experience of connectedness/relationship/oneness” to be the most important content category for the description of “spirituality” in their content analysis on subjective understandings of “spirituality.” In a quantitative, factor-analytic study on adjective-ratings of “spirituality,” Greenwald and Harder (2003) detected a factor which they labeled “Loving

Connection to Others.” Again, there are clear similarities to our component *Connectedness* and, to some degree, also to our component *Ethics, Values* (IV). The element of connectedness might further refer to experiences of unity—be it the rather introvertive experience of an undifferentiated unity through dissolution of the self or the more extrovertive experience of a unity of the multiplicity of the entire world—which have been identified by Hood (1975, 2006) to lie at the core of mysticism. Zinnbauer et al. (1997) found such experiences to correlate significantly with self-rated “spirituality.” Finally, connectedness might even be traced back to the etymology of “religion” which can be read as stemming from the Latin “re-ligare” (binding, reconnecting; cf. Feil, 1986; Platvoet, 1999), thus implying a form of connectedness. In traditional Christian diction, this has been described as the threefold commandment of loving God, oneself, and one’s neighbor. This association might appear too far-fetched at first sight, however, the definition of “spiritual well-being” given by the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (1975, p. 1)—“spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community, and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness”—still resonates the threefold commandment of love. Thus, even today’s understandings of “spirituality” might echo this semantic tradition, when “spirituality” is viewed as part of established religion.

The perception that “spirituality” is rooted in religion is expressed even more explicitly in the second component, *Part of Religion* (II). As Koenig (2008, p. 349) has put it,

the traditional-historical version of spirituality (...) defines it as a subset of deeply religious people who have dedicated their lives to the service of their religion and to their fellow human, and whose lives exemplify the teachings of their faith traditions.

The understanding of “spirituality” as an expression of vital religiousness continues the traditional Romanic Catholic notion of the term, as introduced in our introduction. That this

traditional understanding does still exist is mirrored also by other empirical studies on the semantics of “spirituality”: In their factor-analytic study on adjective-ratings, Greenwald and Harder (2003) identified a component which they called “Religiosity/Sacredness.” La Cour et al. (2012), using a comparable methodology, found a factor which they described as “integrated part of established religious life.”

While the second component clearly refers to a traditional understanding of “spirituality,” the component Higher Self (III) reflects a modern connotation of “spirituality,” framed by societal processes such as individualization and subjectivization (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Csordas, 1994; Knoblauch, 2009; Luckmann, 1967; Taylor, 1989, 2007), which focuses on one’s self as point of reference in “spiritual” matters. This self appears to be something which has to be sought and developed (Maslow, 1970), even despite the notion that as “higher self” it is described to transcend the personal self. The element of searching can be recognized in particular in Roof’s (1993) description of “highly active seekers” among the American Baby Boomers and might partly also be reflected by Batson’s concept of “religion-as-quest” (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). The orientation towards the self as a form of “spirituality” has comprehensibly been described as “subjective-life spirituality” by Heelas et al. (2005). The “celebration of the self” (Heelas, 1996) which becomes apparent from this notion of “spirituality,” however, seems to be regarded as critical sometimes: In their study on understandings of “spirituality,” La Cour et al. (2012) also discovered a factor “Selfishness and Greediness.”

In contrast to such selfishness, however, the component *Ethics, Values (IV)* shows that “spirituality” is often associated with the claim to lead a moral life. In a recently published qualitative study, Ammerman (2013) could illustrate that the self-identification as “spiritual but not religious” can rather be understood as a moral than as an essential category because being “spiritual” was understood as an obligation to

practice higher ethical standards than those who are “merely” or “still” religious. Also the factor “Self-Effacing Altruism” in Greenwald and Harder’s (2003) study mirrors the ethical commitment associated with “spirituality.” In a large-scale sociological study using data from the European Value Study, Siegers (2012) tried to profile value orientations of “alternatively spiritual” persons. He found that “alternative spirituality” corresponded with a value pattern which can be characterized as “pro-life” orientation (high acceptance of homosexuals adopting a child, in vitro-fertilization, and euthanasia), similar to the pattern displayed by atheists and religiously indifferent persons, whereas traditionally religious persons more strongly preferred a “pro-life” orientation. Thus, value orientations might differ depending on subjective understandings of “spirituality” and whether they include traditional religiousness or not.

Belief in *Higher Power(s)* (V) has already been discovered by Zinnbauer et al. (1997) to be the most typical category to describe the notion of “spirituality” of “equally religious and spiritual” people. Similarly, Walker and Pitts (1998) found “belief in a higher power” to be the most characteristic descriptor of both religion and “spirituality.” Belief in *Higher Power(s)* is the only component where the levels of American and German respondents differed not only significantly, but also with a certain effect size. Given that atheism in the USA is socially not desired (Edgel, Gerteis, & Hartmann, 2006), one might reason whether this component represents some kind of American minimal consensus.

The controversially discussed “fuzziness” of “spirituality” seems to find one empirical reflection in particular in the component *Something Beyond* (VI) where people choose not to further define the nature of the transcendent, but acknowledge its mere existence which they experience to be of significance. While most large-scale surveys do not include measures dealing with the intuition of something diffuse beyond (cf. the critique of Houtman et al., 2012), already in the 1990s some smaller European studies have observed the belief in an unspecified form of transcendence (e.g. Jörns, 1999;

Krüggeleler, 1993). In the study of Greenwald and Harder (2003), a factor which the authors called “Blissful Transcendence” could be discovered. Greenwald and Harder’s “Blissful Transcendence” shows some overlap with our component *Something Beyond*, but also with the component *Esotericism* (VIII). Our component *Something Beyond* confirms that, among others, an unspecified intuition of something beyond is part of the expressions of today’s “spirituality.”

The component *Existential Truth* (VII) deals with perceptions and experiences of non-rational truth, purpose, and meaning. La Cour et al. (2012) detected a component in their PCA showing some similarities; their component is described as a “positive dimension in human life and well-being.” That “spirituality” can be an important resource of meaning is stressed in particular in clinical contexts. For instance, “spiritual beliefs” have been integrated prominently as a possible resource for meaning-based coping in the revised transactional stress-coping model by Folkman (1997). Scales trying to measure a “spiritual” dimension of well-being often include subscales dealing with purpose and existential meaning, e.g. the subscale “Existential Well-Being” of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982, 1991) or the subscale “Meaning/Peace” of the FACIT-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Canada, Murphy, Fitchett, Peterman, & Schover, 2008; Peterman, Fitchett, Brady, Hernandez, & Cella, 2002). Although such measures have legitimately been criticized for confounding “spirituality” with facets of mental health from a methodological point of view (Koenig, 2008), phenomenologically they can be regarded as indicators that today “spirituality” is often also associated with positive mental states.

Esotericism (VIII), in a descriptive scientific sense, terms an awareness of a non-material, invisible world and/or supernatural energies or entities. Esoteric beliefs were already appreciated at the end of the 18th century among movements such as spiritism, mesmerism, or occultism. Later, holistic movements such as New Thought, Theosophy or Anthroposophy since the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century

became important promoters of esotericism (Höllinger & Tripold, 2012)—and thus of religious individualization. In recent empirical studies, beliefs as captured by our component *Esotericism* are often summarized as “New-Age religion” or “New-Age spirituality” (e.g. Farias, Claridge, & Lalljee, 2005; Granqvist & Hagekull, 2001), although not strictly limited to the agenda of the New Age movement of the 1960s (Bochinger, 1994; De Michelis, 2004; Hane-graaff, 1996). Similarly, La Cour et al. (2012) found “New Age-Ideology” to be one out of six common understandings of “spirituality.” However, such esoteric or “New Age”-beliefs are covered only by one out of ten components in our analysis. When comparing with concepts like “New Age Spiritualities-of-Life” (Heelas, 2008; Heelas et al., 2005; Houtman et al., 2012) or “alternative spirituality” (Knoblauch, 2006, 2009, 2012), the latter are characterized by the combination of esoteric beliefs with personal experiences of transcending (scientific) rationality (cf. our component VII) as well as with the inner search and path to different states of being like enlightenment, respectively to a higher self (cf. our component III). During the second half of the 20th century, this pattern of beliefs and practices has been stimulated by New Age as well as by other movements such as Transpersonal Psychology and other holistic circles.

According to Knoblauch (2006, 2009, 2012), “alternative spirituality” is additionally characterized by the demarcation to established forms of religion and dogmata of any kind. Our component *Opposition to Religion* (IX) mirrors this observation. Similarly La Cour and colleagues identified one factor as a “vague striving, opposed to religion” in their PCA. These results illustrate the polarizing between “spirituality” on the one hand and religion on the other which can be found in particular in professional psychological, medical, and nursing literature about “spirituality” (Streib & Hood, 2011). According to Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005), “spirituality” is often positively evaluated as subjective, experiential-based, dynamic, and functional while religion is characterized completely opposite, as negative, objective, belief-based, and

static. The components which turned out from La Cour's et al. (2012) and our factor analyses show that an opposition to religion which is assumed to restrict individual freedom by inflexible norms and rigid dogmata seems to have become a stable part of today's semantic field of "spirituality." The last component, *Individual Religious Praxis* (X) with its emphasis on a performative approach to "religion" confirms the characterization of "spirituality" as "experiential-based" (Knoblauch, 2006; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

The three general dimensions of subjective understandings of "spirituality" which derived from the second-order PCA also relate to familiar concepts. Notwithstanding individual features, the three components can be recognized as specifications of the three most basic expressions of religiousness, namely experiences of transcending, their interpretation in terms of transcendence ("myths"), and their facilitation and repetition through the performance of particular practices ("rituals"; cf. Schnell, 2003). While the dimension *Mystical vs. Humanistic Transcending* reflects variants of experiences of transcending, the dimension *Theistic versus Non-theistic Transcendence* includes several forms of mythological symbolizations of transcendence. The dimension *Individual "Lived" Religion versus Dogmatism* is defined by individual ritual practices as its positive pole. In particular this dimension highlights the importance of individuality and might therefore refer to the specific semantics of "spirituality" instead of "religion" as a more collectively determined phenomenon. Altogether, the three dimensions characterize "spirituality" as a privatized experience-oriented form of religion (Streib & Hood, 2011; Chap. 1, this volume).

We might conclude from the discussion that our findings fit to empirically observed facets of "spirituality" and characterizations of related concepts such as individualized "invisible religion" (Luckmann, 1967), "religion-as-quest" (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993), "unspecified belief in transcendence" (Jörns, 1999; Krüggeler, 1993), "New Age Spiritualities-of-Life" (Heelas, 2008; Heelas et al., 2005; Houtman et al., 2012), "popular spirituality" (Knoblauch,

2009), or mysticism (Hood, 1975, 2006). However, two main differences are notable. First the categories, components, and dimensions which we have detected have not been derived from pre-constructed word lists, limited case studies or theoretical deduction, but derived from a large dataset of definitions of "spirituality" which have been given by people who are interested in "spirituality" and vastly self-identifying as "spiritual" and who have tried to put their subjective understanding of the term into words. Such an emic approach allows to give those who are personally concerned the opportunity to characterize "spirituality" in their own words. Therefore, we assume that our results draw a detailed picture of the breadth of the present emics of "spirituality"—which, to our knowledge, have not been sketched so far, neither in such density nor in a comparative cross-cultural perspective. This already implies the second distinction: While there is a significant overlap with previous studies on spirituality, our findings encompasses the entire range including contradictory results, especially in respect to the dichotomy of "alternative" versus "religious" types of "spirituality." In contrast to the "inadequacy approach to spirituality" (Woodhead, 2010) or "dinosaurian questionnaires" (Houtman et al., 2012), as criticized at the outset, the inductive developed taxonomy of this study provides a first comprehensive map and may therefore be used to guide future research in the fields of "spirituality."

Remarkably, both the comparison of category frequencies and the standardized comparison of the 10 regression factor scores for the American and the German subsample, although showing some cultural characteristics—in particular the greater proximity of the semantics of "spirituality" and "religion" among the Americans—revealed striking cultural parallels of the semantics of "spirituality." This impression gains plausibility also from the references to other empirical studies from both the USA and Europe which have been discussed in the previous paragraphs.

To sum up, "spirituality" is described in a broad variety of cross-culturally, nevertheless similar ways which illustrate the diverse usages of the term. While some may interpret this critically as

"fuzzyness," it might, in particular from an emic perspective, however also point to the semantic richness and social diversity of "spirituality," as comprehensively mapped out in this chapter.

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“Fuzziness” or Semantic Diversification? Insights About the Semantics of “Spirituality” in Cross-Cultural Comparison (Conclusion)

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Abstract

Our study of the semantics of spirituality (Chaps. 5–9) employs a variety of methods in an effort to explore the binary spiritual/religious. While some have argued for a distinction between spirituality and religion, largely for a priori theoretical perspectives, our research explores the semantics of spirituality using self-report, semantic differential, implicit, and ideographic methods that cut across the etic/emic distinctions. While we did not directly test explicit hypotheses, we did explore distinctions between religion and spirituality based upon our own view that spirituality is not a concept that can be studied in isolation from religion. The full impact of our investigation supports this claim and sustains the conclusion that studying spirituality divorced from religion is not a meaningful way to advance our knowledge of spirituality which is in essence privatized or implicit religion. Furthermore, we conclude that the concept of spirituality can be meaningfully measured as a multidimensional construct of ten lower order factors or facets and three higher order factors that allow for an assessment both vertical and horizontal transcendence that is differentially located within the binary spiritual/religious.

At this point it seems appropriate to integrate and summarize conclusions based upon our considerable effort to use multiple methods to approach current discussions of religion and spirituality that dominates much of the social scientific

literature on these topics in both America and Europe. In this chapter we will not simply summarize conclusions that have already been made in Chaps. 5–9. Instead, we will reflect on the theoretical significance of the semantics of spirituality. What unites the various methods we have employed is that they seek descriptive differences and similarities between binary choices that Ammerman (2013) suggests have become too limiting. Most of our work is less hypothesis testing, than simply empirically documenting

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what guides much of our effort, the claim that spirituality is worthy of study in both etic and emic procedures as an expression of privatized religion (Streib & Hood, 2011; Chap. 1, this volume). Thus, our strong claim is that divorced from religion there is little substantive to explore about “spirituality” and that has implicitly guided much of our research strategy and is made explicit in the chapters dealing with the semantics of spirituality. Here we will explicate the theoretical issues in terms of the historical relevance of the conceptual and empirical distinction between the binary that likely will not disappear as it has always been integral to discussions of religion appropriately contextualized. However, before we explore this claim further, several cautionary considerations of our multi-methodological exploration of the semantics of spirituality are in order. We present these at the beginning rather than the conclusion of this chapter as our concern is less with carefully randomly selected samples than with purposively selected samples to allow in-depth exploration of the binaries within a limited cross-cultural perspective.

Cross-Cultural Limitations

First, as noted in Chap. 4, we are aware that in both Germany and America our samples are heavily linked to the educated, often college students, and drastically under-represent the less educated. With respect to cross-cultural claims we recognize the seriousness of this limitation. The comparison of data derived from college students or graduates in their own cultures is hardly the strongest basis for cross-cultural comparisons, as Schweder et al. (2006) remind us: “The *Western institution of the university* carries with it many features of an elite cosmopolitan culture wherever it has diffused around the world” (p. 722), and hence University students and those researching them are more like one another than like their respective societies.

Second, we are aware that we have chosen what some cultural psychologists may find offensive, the failure to compare measures indigenous to

each culture. The distinction between emic and etic has come to the forefront in contemporary psychology of religion as issues of multiculturalism are being addressed more seriously (McMinn, Hatahaway, Woods, & Snow, 2009). Of concern is whether spirituality can be viewed as universal capable of etic assessment or is a phenomenon incapable of expression outside of the culture in which it is expressed and thus better explored by emic methodologies. While there is considerable evidence for cross-cultural etic assessments distinguishing religion from spirituality (Saucier & Skrzypińska, 2006), there is also concern that quantitative assessments of spirituality nevertheless is beginning to show cultural limitations. For instance, the most widely used measure of spirituality with different cultural and ethnic groups, Piedmont’s (1999) *Spiritual Transcendence Scale* (STI), has been shown to have limited validity in the Czech Republic (Ričan, Lukavsky, Janošová, & Stochl, 2010) and that attempting to extract a common cross-cultural spirituality core is not impossible, but is fraught with difficulties (Akyalcin, Greenway, & Mine, 2008).

In addition to the suspicion that current etic measures of spirituality may have limited cross-cultural validity, qualitative methodologies in the emic tradition raise even more serious concerns that established measures of personality (and by inference spirituality) may have much more limited validity outside the cultures in which they were created than previously suspected (Gurven, von Rueden, Massenkoff, Kaplan, & Lero Vie, 2012). Thus, we are keenly aware that our samples in both Germany and America are largely highly educated, reasonably wealthy, intelligent Caucasians (white) and living in democratic cultures. Arranging the appropriate anagram we are cautious of the claim by Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) that our exploration of the semantics of spirituality may be a limited cross-cultural comparison among “weird” (white, educated, intelligent, rich, democratic) people.

We mention these concerns here to emphasize that our study is limited in scope, restricting our focus only to purposely selected samples in Germany and the USA. However, what our study lacks in scope it makes up for in depth. We use a variety

of methods, both etic and emic, to explore the semantics of spirituality in purposely selected samples in contemporary Germany and the USA. The empirical measures used in our study are cross-cultural in the limited sense articulated by Berry, Poortings, Segall, and Dasen, (2011), in that procedures established in one culture with known psychometric properties are utilized in a second culture in order to make cross-cultural comparisons (p. 723). We are aware that our cross-cultural comparisons are limited by considerable overlap between German and American cultures. Given that most of our comparisons are between educated individuals in each culture, the overlap via similar educational achievements (e.g., University) that are a singularly unique Western invention (Schweder et al., 2011) and that our research teams are equally influenced by education, many cultural similarities likely follow from this simple confound. Our research teams are well aware of how comparison between less educated participants in any culture reveals major differences between them and more educated participants even in one culture (e.g., Hood & Williamson, 2008). As noted in Chap. 6, this is likely a factor in older German participants rejecting the use of implicit techniques than the younger American participants where age is a factor along with education in perceiving computers as “user friendly.”

We are aware of the problems that could suggest that either German or American “culture” is a homogeneous abstraction. Clearly much of the American team is focused upon samples from the American South (a highly pro-religious geographical area) and results would be different if data were collected from the much less pro-religious geographical area of the North West (Keysar, 2007) or North East (Ammerman, 2013) of the USA. Similarly, we are aware that much of the German data ignores significant differences between what was East and West Germany before its relatively recent historical reunification in 1990. Still, aware of these limitations, we have found that there are significant differences between our American and German samples, some of which suggest genuine cultural differences on measures that we have argued are relevant in both cultures.

We have acknowledged the limitations above here rather than at the end of this chapter to acknowledge that we were aware of these limits as we designed this study. In particular, our focus upon clarification of distinction between “religion” and “spirituality” were not only linked to a rapidly emerging literature common to America and Europe, but was a direct result of the outcome of our earlier work based upon similar samples in both Germany and America (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). While our focus then was upon deconversion, we noted what was an unanticipated finding: In both cultures, deconversion was associated with a strong preference to identify as being “more spiritual than religious” or with being “neither religious nor spiritual” (but to a lesser extent), but in any case with a reluctance to identify as “being religious” (Streib et al., 2009, p. 239). Our effort to explore tentative correlates of self-ratings as “religious” or “spiritual” suggested that an emphasis on self-ratings as “spiritual” was associated with *openness to experience* and higher scores on faith development and negatively associated with fundamentalism and to claims for the absolute truth of one’s own religion. While this might seem to suggest that “spiritual” self-identification is divorced from “religious” self-identification, we noted that in fact “spirituality” was also conceived to be the universal core of all religions. This led us to conclude that “further research is needed about the semantics of spirituality in a cross-cultural comparison” (Streib et al., 2009, p. 240). Within the limitations already noted above, Chaps. 5–9 present a response to this desideratum; and now a summary our findings is in order as they set the stage for the further quantitative and qualitative research in the chapters to follow.

Beyond the Binary?

Social scientists have long bemoaned the difficulty in defining terms central to their discipline. Witness the incessant concern with defining “religion” such that the quip made over forty years ago by Yinger (1967) continues to be

relevant to all disciplines that study religion: “Any definition of religion is likely to be satisfactory only to its author” (1967, p. 18). In her study of Freud’s analysis of religion, Hewett (2014, pp. 1–36) has noted that social scientists’ continual expression of frustration over defining religion is itself worthy of psychoanalytic investigation. We are little better off with the term “spirituality.” While we do not intend to trace the considerable histories of the terms here, we do wish to address the emergence of the binary religious/spiritual which, as Ammerman (2013, p. 258) notes, in popular commentary parallels concern by psychologists and sociologists to create a fourfold classification from this binary that has played a central role in our previous chapters (Chaps. 5–9) on the semantics of spirituality. We can trace the emerge of this binary as a distinctively American phenomena in the work of classic theorists who laid the foundation that has become a central focus of both sociology and psychology in the previous twenty years.

Spiritual but Not Religious: Implicit Religion?

Contemporary concern with spirituality as an oppositional term to religion has independent roots in American sociology and psychology and from there has influenced disciplines focused on the study of religion. Since we have argued that spirituality is best identified as a privatized expression of religion (Streib & Hood, 2011), the emergence of the binary possibilities that inform our study of the semantics of spirituality in previous chapters has a long history within the social scientific study of religion.

As Gorsuch and Miller (1999) note, James would likely have titled his Gifford lectures as “varieties of *spiritual* experiences,” if he were writing today; James remained a seeker placing hope in an experience of mysticism that, he claimed, was the “root and centre” of all personal religion (James, 1902/1985, p. 301)—a mysticism that, while lacking in James’ own life,

would, at least for those who experienced it, be a relief from the fate of those who are, in Schmidt’s (2003, p. 293) terms, “doomed to grope unseeingly” in the diversity of modern religious culture. Other histories of the emergence of mysticism sensitive to social science root in such founding fathers as Weber in sociology and Troeltsch in theology who have both noted that there are two mysticisms, one common to religious tradition (“religion”) and explicitly framed in religious semantics, and the other common to esoteric religion (“spirituality”) seeking hidden meanings freed from the semantics of traditional dogmatic restraints (Hood & Chen, 2013; Streib & Hood, 2011). Of course, sociologically oriented criticisms of James’ individualist definition of religion note that it ignores the relational and institutional aspects of religion, which, for some, are mysticism’s proper home (Taylor, 2002). Yet James readily anticipated such criticisms:

I have outgrown Christianity so much that any expression of mysticism that sits pat in it has to be dislodged from it—I am inevitably repelled by their involvement—before I am able to listen. Call this, if you will, my seed of mysticism. It is a seed of very common occurrence (1920, p. 211).

James’ comment echoes the sentiments of many of our participants who self-identify as “spiritual but not religious.” Fuller (2000, p. 130) has said, “If any one individual ever personified what it means to be ‘spiritual but not religious,’ it was William James.” The distancing from “religion” among these types was supported by our study of focus groups.

As explained in Chap. 5, we deliberately oversampled the “more spiritual than religious” groups in both Germany and the USA, which constitute roughly half our sample for each country (see Table 5.1). Neither this group nor any other, except the “neither religious nor spiritual” participants, rejects some sense of “spiritual” self-identification. However, in reconstructing their change in self-identifications since age 12, interesting cultural differences are suggested. The American respondents tend to move toward being “more spiritual than religious” and thereby a considerable part (11.2 %) moves from

an “equally religious and spiritual” environment at age 12 to become “more spiritual than religious,” while many (14 %) see themselves continuously as “equally religious and spiritual.” In Germany, the pattern seems to be one in which the secular claim suggesting that Germans would move toward being “neither spiritual nor religious” is unsubstantiated; however a considerable part (10.6 %) is continuously “neither religious nor spiritual.” In the German sample, there are 22.9 % who indicate a “spiritual conversion”: they moved from a “neither religious nor spiritual” environment at age 12 to identify with being “spiritual” today. In both cultures, participants recollect their past environment as more committed to mainstream authoritative ideologies, and moving away from religion to self-identify as “spiritual.”

This finding is consistent with longitudinal studies not directly concerned with religion but, like our own, focused heavily upon issues of moral development. One example parallels our own work in using both etic and emic methods; it is known as the Sierra Project. It was specifically designed to advance students’ stages of moral development, beginning with the 1979 class at the Irvine campus of the University of California (Day, 1991; Whiteley & Loxley, 1980). Day wrote up the results of an interview with one participant, “Sandy.” The interview probed Sandy’s views on both religion and spirituality—a tactic based upon researchers’ belated recognition that earlier Sierra participants might have purposefully avoided discussion of religion, especially religious beliefs (Day, 1994, p. 160). Thus questions on religion and spirituality were strategically placed within the schedule on subsequent interviews. Sandy took great care to distinguish religion from spirituality. In her words:

Religion is organized, dogmatic, and social. Spiritual is individual, intimate, personal. Religion tells you what is good or true and tells you who is favored and who is not. It operates in fixed categories. Spirituality is developed. You have to work hard at it and to be conscious about it and take time for it. Sometimes, in order to grow spiritually, *you have to go beyond or even against religious doctrine.* (Day, 1994, p. 163, emphasis added)

Day (1994, p. 165) explains that “[S]he neither identified herself nor wanted others to label her as ‘religious’.”

Sandy’s distinction between religion and spirituality mirrors our finding using the semantic differential indices (Chap. 7). The distinctions worth noting are not between cultures, but rather between focus groups. In both the USA and Germany, those who are more spiritual than religious, whether atheist or not, associate spirituality with such terms as liberating, creative, and freedom. This holds, especially in the USA, for religion *if* it is equally related to spirituality. However, for both atheists and non-atheists, religion is associated with negativity and imposed dogma and authority (Coleman and Arrowood, 2015), while spirituality remains at best a neutral term.

Thus, two independent projects, one of them decades before ours, sustain our concern that spirituality is not a separate concept from religion, and indeed our semantic differential results reported in Chap. 7 indicate there are few exclusive associations with the terms religion in either Germany or the USA. Americans see less difference between the binary terms than Germans, but this is, as we have noted, likely because the majority of Americans identify as equally religious and spiritual. Spirituality is inherently linked to religion. If, as we have argued elsewhere, transcendence and ultimate concern define *both* religion and spirituality (Streib & Hood, 2011; Chap. 1), then it is consistent with our view that transcendence represented by such adjectives such as *holy*, *sacred*, *otherworldly* are associated equally with religion and spirituality in both cultures (Chap. 7, p. 17).

In forthcoming chapters (Part IV) we present in-depth emic research on our participants’ personal narratives associated with their faith development. However, these data are not unrelated to our semantic work on spirituality in Chaps. 5–9. As Yamane (2000) notes, narration is dependent upon a loose relationship between experience and its linguistic representation, so that an experience not initially described as religious may be so described on subsequent reflection. However, as we noted in Chap. 5, our

participants in both the USA and Germany tend to reconstruct their current status compared to that of age 12 as a religious to spiritual turn. Deconversion is rare and religious intensification rarer yet. Again, our view is that this is the move to privatized religion, but religion nevertheless.

The bestselling book in the history of American sociology remains *Habits of the Heart*, first published in 1985 (Bellah, Marsden, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996; Yamane, 2007). In it, the pseudonymous Sheila Larson gave rise to the term “Sheilism” used by Larson to describe her own faith. Yamane has noted if she had today’s language available to her during the interview, she “surely would have offered up the contemporary mantra, ‘I’m spiritual, not religious.’” (2007, p. 183). The authors of *Habits of the Heart* bemoaned Shelia’s apparent narcissism and self-centeredness. However, Wink and his colleagues have shown that “spiritual but not religious persons” have a healthy narcissism that includes an acceptance of others (Dillon & Wink, 2007). Likewise, studies of “New Age” believers revealed that one of the consequences of their spiritual seeking is the realization of a greater capacity of love (Hanegraaff, 1996). Greenwald and Harder (2003) found that self-effacing altruism and a loving connection to others were two of four factors that emerged from ratings of 122 adjectives to described spirituality.

This supports our own work in Chap. 7. As Figs. 7.9 and 7.10 show, the adjectives “moral,” “selfless” and “altruistic” are positively associated with self-rated “spirituality” for the focus groups that identify with “spirituality,” while persons who are “neither religious nor spiritual,” especially if they self-identify at the same time as “atheist/non-theist,” such association is neutral (US sample) or negative (German sample). Likewise, respondents in all focus groups in which self-rating as “religious” is negative, associate the adjectives “moral,” “selfless” and “altruistic” negatively with “religion.” For the focus groups of the “more spiritual than religious” and the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” in both countries, the combination of both of these adjective associations (the adjectives “moral,” “selfless” and “altruistic”

are positively associated with “spirituality,” while negatively with “religion”) is visible.

Among binaries in which religious and spiritual operate in some positive combination, spirituality is positive. This is also congruent with our experimental work using implicit measures (Chap. 6)—here contacting the combined binary with atheism in which it is clear that in both Germany and the USA it is difficult to separate spirituality from religion and this remains even more so when implicit rather than explicit measures are used. Not surprisingly then are survey studies we have noted in which as much as 68 % of common variance is shared by religion and spirituality (Saucier & Skrzypnińska, 2006).

Semantic Analyses Clarify that Spirituality Is Not a “Fuzzy” Concept

An association that has remained associated with spirituality, first in America and then Europe, was first made by Spilka in a presentation at the American Psychological Association in Toronto. It was titled, “Spirituality: Problems and directions in operationalizing a fuzzy concept” (1993). This date can be taken as marking the beginning of the focus on the binary that has occupied so many social scientists. Spilka has been an author on a major textbook in the psychology of religion that he and co-authors are now preparing for a fifth edition. In the first edition, in which Spilka was the senior author, there is no index listing for spirituality and no discussion of the binary (Spilka, Hood, & Gorsuch, 1988). However in the second edition spirituality comes into focus (Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996). In the index, the term is followed by two sub-listings, “definitional ambiguity” and “baby boomers” (Hood et al., 1996, p. 545). With respect to the former claim, the text notes:

Efforts to clarify the concept point vaguely toward a holistic perspective, which appealing as it is, has not proven useful for empirical research ... There is no set of beliefs that characterize this poorly defined collection of ideas and groups. It is composed of a mélange of cliques and individuals that sometime stress nature and environment, the

power of mind and crystals, and extraordinary mental and physical possibilities—even to the point of “out-of-body frequent flier programs.” (Hood et al., 1996, pp. 115–116)

Spilka linked the then emerging concern with spirituality to New Age enthusiasts’ search for meaning and purpose that stand outside and are at variance with mainstream religion and thus gave us the first introduction to the binary that has occupied us in Chaps. 5–9. He also linked this to a specific generation of Americans, widely popularly identified as “baby boomers,” those born in the two decades after World War II.

In a popular book, Roof (1993) identified these “boomers” as a “generation of seekers” who identified with a simpler three-fold system than ours in Chaps. 5. Roof found three groups: those who have stayed with their religious tradition, those who experimented with options before returning to their religious tradition, or those who left their tradition. Among those who left their tradition, some that he identified as “highly active seekers” described themselves in interviews as “spiritual” rather than “religious.” Twenty-four percent of these had no religious affiliation. Thus, we have the binary that clearly indicates more spiritual than religious, or even spiritual but not religious. In a follow-up text Roof (1999) revealed similar findings regarding self-identification. Asking, he actually used a form of the binary. He asked, “Do you consider yourself religious?” and “Do you consider yourself spiritual?” in *nonconsecutive* places in open-ended interviews (but always in that order) revealing an overall weak association between the two identifications ($\gamma = .291$). However, among “strong believers” the association was higher ($\gamma = .439$) than among “highly active seekers” ($\gamma = .196$) (Roof 1999, p. 321).

When asked, “Which is best: to follow the teachings of a church, synagogue or temple, or to think for oneself in matters of religion and trust more one’s own experience?” (Roof 1999, pp. 320–321), those identified as seekers were least likely to rely upon institutional authority or to think that such authority should overrule their own conscience. An Asian American participant

who was no longer active in the Methodist Church captured the semantics of spirituality we noted in Chap. 7:

You can be spiritual without being religious. I think religious ... would be more specific. The faith is more specific, certain doctrines. Spiritual would be general, wider. I think that’s how you can be spiritual without being religious. Maybe even religious without being spiritual. Show up for church and go through the motions. (Roof, 1993, p. 78)

In our chapters on the semantics of spirituality, we have reviewed empirical support for empirical studies that have identified a minority of persons opposed to religion while identifying themselves as spiritual but not religious. Here we need to emphasize two generalizations that we believe our study of the semantics of spirituality clarifies. First, the adoption of Spilka’s claim that spirituality is a “fuzzy” concept is both unfortunate and misleading. For instance, Zinnbauer et al. (1997) attempted to provide empirical data to “unfuzzy the fuzzy” and properly noted that for their American sample only a minority of participants identified as more spiritual than religious. As almost all studies indicate (for survey results, see also Chap. 3), most Americans identify as religious and spiritual. This hardly makes spirituality for most a “fuzzy” concept, but rather indicates an embedding in transcendence in the ontological sense rooted in “religion” as we have emphasized (Chap. 8). Such persons can rightly be seen as seekers in both our American and German samples. Thus, Woodhead (2010) has rightly refuted claims that spirituality is a “fuzzy” concept and we agree based upon our research on the semantics of spirituality—spirituality is best seen as a successor to Luckmann’s (1967) “invisible religion” (Streib & Hood, 2011; see also Chap. 1).

Recognizing spirituality as a form of invisible or implicit religion suggests what Chaps. 8 and 9 document: Spirituality is a multidimensional construct, just as religion is. However, rather than try to construct a scale to measure spirituality based upon a priori theoretical commitments, as the measures already established have done, we choose to allow our participants to articulate in an emic fashion their own

understanding of spirituality. We anticipated some considerable degree of diversity, not because the term is “fuzzy” but rather because it is more nuanced and individual than the term religion. Simple current measures to assess spirituality are likely too restrictive and only few are based upon emic studies. An exception is the study by Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, and Saunders (1988) that identified nine facets of spirituality, more than any current measures in wide use in empirical oriented etic studies.

Based upon the 44 initial inductive classifications of the semantics of spirituality derived from participants’ free responses, we used, as detailed in Chap. 9, standard factor analytic methods to reduce and order these classifications in two ways: First, using factor analytic procedures we identified 10 factors or facets of spirituality that do justice to its complexity and semantic meaningfulness, suggesting that “fuzzy” is an unwarranted description of what must be understood as a complexly nuanced phenomenon. Second, we identified, by further factor analytic means, three higher-order factors that further empirically clarify the semantics of spirituality common to both our German and American samples. Importantly, these three factors not only account for a still considerable portion of the overall variance, but the three higher order factors include the distinctions involved in the binary that remain important, not because spiritual is “fuzzy,” but is diverse and complex semantically—rather like religion to which it remains tied. Of the three higher order factors only “Lived vs. Dogmatic Religion” involves the binary that occupies so much of the current empirical cross-cultural etic research, an oppositional stance to religion among those who are spiritual but not religious. The other two higher factors clarify the semantics of spirituality. “Theistic versus non-theistic Transcendence” allows both for the God of the Abrahamic religions (vertical transcendence) or the more fluid sense of a higher power, but also for a horizontal transcendence where a sense of interconnectedness is expressed by semantics less explicitly “religious.” Our final higher order factor allows for both mystical and humanistic transcending that suggests, as we have noted in

Chap. 9, that part of the semantics of spirituality includes treating transcendence as a verb rather than a noun. This accounts for the semantics of spirituality that includes moral concerns that are hardly ineffable or a loss of ego, that is.

While we have not completed the task, we are in the process of converting results of our factor analytic work based upon our emic research into a scale that should allow additional etic research with the successful operationalization of spirituality modeled after personality measures, where both our higher order factors and our lower order 10 factors or facets should allow empirical research on the semantic diversification that characterizes a concept far from “fuzzy,” but rather is associated with the privatization associated with implicit religion. Thus, while spirituality is the term that is favored by some, especially in America, it need not be confused with something that is inherently in opposition to religion as our study on the semantics of spirituality from a multi-method approach clearly demonstrates.

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Part III

**Measuring Characteristics and Effects
of “Spirituality”**

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Abstract

This chapter explores the relationship between the self-rating as “spiritual” and mysticism as measured by Hood’s Mysticism Scale. The introduction provides an overview of recent attempts to measure “spirituality” psychometrically, of the theoretical and empirical approaches to mysticism and already empirically observed relations between mysticism and “spirituality.” Many scales trying to operationalize “spirituality” lack a solid conceptual background and convincing empirical validity. Citing the work of Stace and James, Hood constructed a scale that provides detailed and measurable descriptions of mystical experiences, the Mysticism Scale. Since the Mysticism Scale measures varieties of personal experiences of unity with some kind of transcendence, it proves to be an excellent measure for what many people today call “spirituality.” This can be shown empirically by utilizing the three factor solution of the M-Scale, identified as *introvertive*, *extrovertive*, and *interpretive mysticism*, in structural equation models exploring the relationships between mysticism and self-rated “spirituality” as well as self-rated “religion.” This chapter concludes by arguing that “spirituality” may be the product of experiences that can be described in terms of mysticism.

The Challenge to Measure “Spirituality”

As many of the chapters in this volume demonstrate, “spirituality” is an emergent phenomenon with a variety of aspects from the nominal to the experiential. It is nominal in that the term communicates a point in space and time for the individual’s ontological identity. As is noted by Belzen (2009), the empirical exploration of

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“spirituality” is the primary focus of many scholars in the field of psychology of religion. So much so, and as has often been stated, that, Division 36 of the American Psychological Association has voted on several occasions, and finally accepted an organizational name change from Psychology of Religion to Psychology of Religion *and* Spirituality. With such a shift in the academic interest regarding belief, “spirituality” is now the forefront of empirical questions as to its precise nature. Nevertheless, what are the particular domains that intersect within this popular yet ambiguous nominal categorization?

“Spirituality” has been termed by Spilka (1993) as being a “fuzzy” concept, and there are many attributions we can place on the term, but unfortunately it appears that no clear agreement can be reached, although excellent attempts at shedding light have occurred. Psychologists of religion as well as other social scientists, religious studies scholars, and theologians, explore and debate the social shift by everyday people who call themselves “spiritual” (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009). Furthermore, it appears that “spirituality” may be a personal experience of the ‘sacred,’ or other such “special things” (Taves, 2009, 2013), well beyond the dogmatic frame of the theological (in whatever form it exists). In other words, it is a social and popular movement in its popularity with diffusion. What is unclear, and as this book attempts to explore, is what constitutes the self-identification with “spirituality,” in particular of those identifying as “spiritual but not religious.”

In the Psychology of Religion, the unclear conceptualization of “spirituality” is also reflected in terms of measurement. In this chapter, we review recent attempts to operationalize “spirituality” by psychometrical scales. Unfortunately, many scales trying to capture “spirituality” empirically lack both a solid conceptual background and convincing validity. Therefore, we propose to use Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood, Morris, & Watson, 1993, Hood et al., 2001) Mysticism Scale (M-Scale) as an alternative measure for self-rated “spirituality.” We introduce the theoretical background and the factorial structure of the M-Scale which has been

empirically proven to be valid in many studies. Then we plot the correlative relationships between mystical experiences as measured with the M-Scale and self-rated “spirituality” and “religion.” The findings corroborate that the M-Scale can be used as an excellent measure for what many people today describe as “spirituality.” At the end of our chapter, we discuss our findings and draw some conclusions for future research.

Is “Spirituality” Fuzzy?

“Spirituality” presents itself as a fairly ambiguous concept. While there is extensive literature review to describe the continued academic dialog regarding the use of the term (e.g. see Chap. 1 of this volume), there is much debate on not only how to theoretically define it. But how does it ‘operate’ psychometrically? Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) have observed the varied definitions of “spirituality.” It is this lack of consensus that is the most troubling, as findings may not be theoretically centered, creating discordant findings across the varied academic studies and literature (e.g. Fuller, 2001; Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Tusting, & Szerszynski, 2005; Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006). While the term is not alien to the religious studies lexicon, only recently has it emerged as a distinct and descriptive construct of use. Moreover, there appears to be some tension present between what is “religious” and what is “spiritual.” In some cases a negative stigma has been placed on the term “religion” when not paired with the term “spirituality.” In other cases, individuals have abandoned the term “religion” altogether (see Chap. 20 of this volume). Here value judgments have been placed on the terms “religion” and “spirituality,” however their unique characteristics are still unclear. What is clear is that for those who identify as both “spiritual” and “religious,” there is an organizational authenticity perceived through membership or association, attendance at services, allegiance to, and implementation of, rituals, or at least a supplication to some type of theological authority (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). But “spirituality”

appears to be a closeness or feelings of interconnectedness without an authority (i.e. religion, religious leader, textual authority) to provide interpretation (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2002). People claim to be “spiritual but not religious” or “spiritual and religious” indicating something about their identity (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). For those who are both “spiritual and religious,” the experience is defined within the context of religion. For the “spiritual but not religious,” “spirituality” is porous, as those who identify as such are not ontologically, or epistemologically bound to theological limits, but rather feel the freedom to explore alternatives including mixing or creating beliefs and practices of their own.

Previous Attempts of Measuring “Spirituality”

The last three decades have seen numerous attempts to construct scales claiming to measure “spirituality.” One of the very first scales dealing with “spirituality” is the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) of Paloutzian and Ellison (1982, 1991). Although the SWBS has originally been conceptualized as a measure for a “spiritual” dimension of well-being and not of general “spirituality” and has been intended by the authors to be rather an outcome measure than a predictor within health research (Paloutzian, Bufford, & Wildman, 2012), against this intention the scale has been widely used within health research to generally assess “spirituality” as a predicting or mediating variable (see Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012, for review). The theoretical concept of the SWBS postulates two dimensions: a vertical dimension dealing with one’s relationship with the Divine and a horizontal dealing with one’s experiences of purpose and satisfaction in the social surrounding. Two subscales, *religious well-being* (RWB) and *existential well-being* (EWB), with ten items each operationalize these theoretical dimensions of the SWBS. Both subscales are internally consistent and reliable; however, not all studies were able to confirm a two-factorial

structure of the SWBS (Ledbetter, Smith, Fischer, Vosler-Hunter, & Chew, 1991; Scott, Agresti, & Fitchett, 1998). The mean correlation of the two subscales RWB and EWB ($r = .32$) is somewhat low to warrant a valid sum score (in secular contexts like Germany or Austria, the correlation is even lower and often insignificant; cf. Möller & Reimann, 2004; Unterrainer, 2006). In general, one might question the implied addition of a “religious” and an “existential” component as “spiritual” (Mytko & Knight, 1999). Thus, it might be more useful to handle the subscales of the SWBS as two separate measures, one for well-being with respect to an individual’s relationship with God and one for well-being in terms of purpose in life.

In particular in clinical contexts, concepts of “spiritual well-being” (SWB) and “spiritual” quality of life have received further attention, and several scales have been developed to measure these various notions of SWB, among them the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire—Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs (WHOQOL-SRPB; The WHOQOL-SRPB Group, 2002), the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy—Spiritual Well-Being Scale (FACIT-Sp.; Peterman, Fitchett, Brady, Hernandez, & Cella, 2002), the European Organisation for Research and Therapy of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire—Module for the Assessment of Spiritual Well-Being (EORTC QLQ-SWB36; Vivat et al., 2013), the Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire (SWBQ; Gomez & Fisher, 2003), or the Spirituality Index of Well-Being (SIWB; Daaleman & Frey, 2004), to name but a few of the most influential. All these scales share with the SWBS the problem that—beside one subscale dealing explicitly with “religion”—they include one or several subscales dealing with positive mental states such as experiences of meaning and purpose, inner peace, or self-efficacy. On the conceptual level, such operationalizations raise the question what concretely makes the “spiritual” quality of such experiences beyond their positive effects. Since everybody sometimes has experiences of positive mental

states, the implicit assumption underlying these concepts of SWB is that everybody is somehow “spiritual.” Neither do such concepts correspond with survey results wherein considerable numbers of people still claim to be not “spiritual,” nor do they serve any clarification of constructs because it remains unclear how such kind of “spirituality” differs from concepts like “worldview” or “meaning-making” (Utsch & Klein, 2011). On the empirical level, such operationalizations are likely to produce biased results because they confound construct (“spirituality”) and criteria (positive mental health) (Koenig, 2008).

What about scales of “spirituality” that do not conceptualize it as a dimension of well-being then? Concerns about conceptual clarity still remain. The most important is the unsolved problem of relating “spirituality” to “religion.” The two most extreme ways to deal with this problem are either to use both terms rather interchangeably, thus avoiding any possibility to distinguish between them, or to separate them completely, claiming that “spirituality” does not necessarily have to do anything with “religion.” These two options can be illustrated by the examples of two of the most prominent “spirituality” scales of the last years, Hall and Edwards’ (1996, 2002; Hall, Reise, & Haviland, 2007) Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) on the one hand and Piedmont’s (1999, 2007) Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS) on the other.

Hall and Edwards’ (1996, 2002; Hall et al., 2007) SAI is theoretically based on psychodynamic assumptions such as Object Relations and Attachment Theory and consists of 49 items belonging to five subscales: *awareness of God*, *realistic acceptance (of God)*, *disappointment (with God)*, *grandiosity*, and *instability (in one’s relationship with God)*. Although the entire instrument is labeled “spiritual,” already these subscale names illustrate that the SAI is a measure for the intensity and quality of one’s relationship with God. Belief in god(s), as theistic concept of transcendence in the ontological sense, however, is traditionally understood to be

one of the clearest definitional markers of “religion” (Platvoet, 1999). Thus, the SAI is in fact a —by the way: an excellent—measure for a deeply “religious” phenomenon, the belief in and the perception of one’s relationship with a divine being. In case of the SAI, the use of the term “spiritual” is due to the authors’ notion of “spirituality” as vital religiousness—in terms of a mature way of relating with the Divine.

While Hall and Edwards speak of “spirituality” when dealing with the center of religious beliefs, Piedmont, on the contrary, explicitly separates “spirituality” from “religion.” While, for him, “religion” is a sentiment, i.e. an “emotional tendency” (Piedmont & Wilkins, 2013, p. 180) which develops out of socialization processes, “spirituality” is understood as a motive, an “affect force” which is universal for human behavior and can therefore be “found in all human cultures” (ibid.). While the universal motive for “spiritual transcendence” encompasses the “capacity of individuals to stand outside of their immediate sense of time and place to view life from a larger, more objective perspective” (Piedmont, 1999, p. 988), the various “religious” sentiments are rooted in specific religious traditions and differ across times and cultures. The STS was developed as a measure for “spirituality” in the aforementioned sense and consists of 24 items which build the three subscales *universality*, *connectedness*, and *prayer fulfillment*. All three subscales are internally consistent, and the entire scale proved its convergent, discriminative, and predictive validity in several studies. Recently, Piedmont (e.g. Piedmont & Wilkins, 2013) has extended his toolkit of measures according to his theoretical assumptions and included the STS as measure for “spirituality” in his Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments (ASPIRES) scales which additionally contain two subscales, *religious involvement* and *religious crisis*, as measures for “religion.” The entire set of scales has been used by Piedmont and colleagues to examine the relationship between “spirituality” and “religion” based on structural equation modeling

(Piedmont, Ciarrochi, Dy-Liacco, & Williams, 2009). They observed a high correlation between the “spirituality” and the “religion” scales, but found “spirituality” rather to be a predictor of “religion” than vice versa which they interpreted as corroboration of Piedmont’s theoretical assumptions. Although charming with respect to its supposed definitional clarity and supporting empirical findings at first sight, one may, however, question the plausibility of Piedmont’s distinction between “spirituality” and “religion.” The STS subscales *prayer fulfillment* and *universality* deal with practices like prayer and meditation and with belief in some kind of post-mortal existence, and they include terms like “transcending” which are commonly associated with “religion.” In other words, experiences and behavior which are traditionally assumed to be core dimensions of “religion” (e.g. Glock, 1962; Huber, 2009; Smart, 1998) shall not be called “religious” anymore in order to establish a separate concept of “spirituality.” Thus, the price for pretended conceptual and empirical clarity in the religion-spirituality-relation is an artificial separation of two concepts which are historically and empirically much stronger interwoven than Piedmont’s approach suggests.

To sum up, scales trying to measure “spirituality” always have to wrestle with the challenge to clarify the relation of the underlying concept of “spirituality” with “religion.” Although they may function well empirically, their content validity is questionable as long as they do not provide convincing solutions to this problem. Or the challenge is simply refused: For instance, Hodge’s (2003) Intrinsic Spirituality scale simply leaves it open to the respondents what they understand as “spirituality.” The highly internally consistent scale consists of six items which ask for the relevance of “spirituality” in one’s life, but do not offer any description of what this “spirituality” might be.

Another, more satisfying possibility could be to use measures which might be related to respondents’ understandings of both “spirituality” and “religion” and test whether they are associated with their self-identification as “religious” or “spiritual,” or with self-rated “religion”

and “spirituality.” This is the way we have trodden when using Hood’s M-Scale as a possible measure for “spirituality.”

Hood’s Mysticism Scale as Measure of “Spirituality”

What is Mysticism?

The M-Scale is one of the most commonly used measures in the study of mysticism (Burriss, 1999). The difficulty in operationally defining mysticism lies in describing what constitutes a mystic, or one who has these experiences. There are some attributional characteristics which can be debated as applicable to the overall paradigm of mysticism. Historically those concepts have been tied to theological language. For example, Baruch Spinoza argued that God was within nature, or in some accounts is nature. To have an experience of awe within nature, is the awe inspiration generated by God, however such awe can be found with a more secular framing as well (Coleman, Silver, & Holcombe, 2013). Similarly to Spinoza, John Locke believed that God invokes a secondary nature of qualities within human sensation providing a meta-awareness of those experiences beyond the natural domain. Perhaps going even further, David Hartley used the term “theopathy” to describe a personality characteristic that connected the individual with “spirituality” and religion (Shiraev, 2011).

James (1902) shifted to more metaphysical language of such profound experiences. Rather than beginning with the subject and shifting to the experience, James discusses the experience as changing the subject, encapsulating them with a loss of selfishness and enveloped by love. James termed such an experience the “theopathic condition.” James further asserted centeredness of experience as common to all religious traditions (James, 1902). While much of this descriptive language is theologically dependent, certainly a common theme is present. It is the “experience” of unity with something greater. Fortunately, James provides some explanation in *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human*

Nature. James argued that mystics use direct experience much like those found within empiricism. Such intellectual inquiries are of similar pattern in form as those of the empirical tradition. Experience describes reality, particularly when informed by formalized process. James accepted two *modi operandi* regarding mystical experiences, the first being the impersonal experience of the *real*, as well as the personal experience of the real, or, and in other words, the impersonal experience as being in the absolute realness while the second or personal God experience is more attuned to one's worldview and cultural frame.

Most pertinent to the discussion here is the philosophical work by Stace (1960, p. 9). Stace defined mysticism as:

By the word "mystic" I shall always mean a person who himself has had mystical experience. Often the word is used in a much wider and looser way. Anyone who is sympathetic to mysticism is apt to be labeled a mystic. But I shall use the word always in a stricter sense. However sympathetic toward mysticism a man may be, however deeply interested, involved, enthusiastic, or learned in the subject, he will not be called a mystic unless he has, or has had, mystical experience.

Stace argued mystical experience is one that is central, special, and different from other types of experiences. Mysticism is central as it provides a deeper meaning in the mystic's life. They continue to have the experiences and attempt to connect with these experiences either assertively or passively. The centrality is what Stace terms, and in borrowing from Wittgenstein (Beardmore, 1992; Gupta, 1970), a "family resemblance," meaning they are similar in structure and form. While the theory certainly has its detractors (e.g. Belzen, 2009; Katz, 1978) they are descriptively similar as these experiences are also common across religious and cultural lines. They appear to have attributional components of the experience further exemplified by similarity of description while geographically distant from each other.

Stace's (1960) phenomenological approach to mysticism identified aspects later identified by Hood as factors in a series of later studies (e.g. Hood et al., 2001). Referring to Thorner (1966), mystics assert unity within the world. Not one object within one's gaze is the primary focus but

rather all objects are unified into a complete totality. Stace referred to this type of mysticism as *extrovertive mysticism*. Borrowing from Stace, Hood also proposes *introvertive mysticism*. Within introvertive mysticism, unity is achieved without the need for external or perceptual objects. Since all things are inherently dependent on each other, they lack in kind of inherent and individual reality. Introvertive mysticism becomes "pure consciousness" where the ego loses its boundaries. Both of these types of mysticism fit well within Stace's phenomenological approach. Finally another form of mysticism which emerges is the *interpretative*. Here the interpretation of the experience is rooted in the language used to describe it. However, when speaking with mysticism, the ineffability component of interpretation is finding the appropriate words to explain something that lacks the appropriate language to support its description, therefore metaphor may be used where the initiated recognize the pattern of thought but the uninitiated may see confusion. Equipped with Stace's work as a theoretical template, and the rich description of James, Hood (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001) designed the M-Scale as a measure of mysticism which describes one's own experiences without relying on the dogmatic or theological structure of religious language.

The Common Core Thesis of Mysticism

Before we introduce the M-Scale in more detail as a psychological measure of mystical experiences phenomenologically described by Stace (1960), it is necessary to briefly discuss a further theoretical building block on which the M-Scale is grounded. For Hood, mystical experiences are important in their own right. He leaves open the ontological question of the reality of those experiences to those who have them. But, leaning again on Stace's (1960) work, Hood assumes that there is a common core among all kinds of mystical experiences regardless of their particular cultural or religious interpretative frames (*Common Core Thesis*). At the heart of the common core thesis adapted from Stace, six basic characteristics are

postulated. The first is that mysticism and the mystic states that people experience are inherent to the human narrative. Most religious traditions speak to these experiences and such experiences are confirming of the authenticity of those beliefs and practices. In the second and connected to the first characteristic, theology attempts to define and explain such experiences in terms of syntax of the theology. This is a term Hood (2013) calls orthodoxies. The second characteristic assumes that these theologies interpret and redefine the experiences rather than accepting the experiences within their own right. Here Hood looks to Stace (1960) to argue that mystical experiences are ineffable in their very nature leading to the next characteristic: The third assumption of the common core thesis is that such experiences are difficult to define even though people attempt to do so. Volumes are written on the topic utilizing a variety of adjectives in their description. Yet such descriptions are not literal but rather indicative. Those who have had such experiences recognize the indicative while those who have not cannot speak to or recognize those experiences. The fourth characteristic is cautionary, as mystical experiences cannot be reduced to affective or emotional states of being nor can they be cognitively organized recollections of events. Mystical states are of an ultimate reality hence the experience aspect. They are the intersection of the personal and impersonal with questions that can be explored within the ontological frame regarding the nature of the ultimate. Here the ultimate could be theologically described, but such a description is not required. Therefore one can speak to the ultimate as God as the personal or the oneness of the universe as the impersonal. A fifth assumption of the common core thesis is that there is a phenomenological component in understanding mysticism. In other words, one must experience to know (Eliade, 1959). Such methodological sophistication requires introspection, not simply objective and disparate variables. One could call this the participant observer perspective. The sixth and most controversial characteristic to the common core thesis is understanding the triggers of the experience as part of the whole. Here we say controversial, as the triggers might also be

entheogens, or psychoactive substances. Hood (2006) also cautions the reader here, as many may turn to a trigger as a point of causation, however this loses the overall whole of the experience. These are the overall characteristics of the common core thesis. The M-Scale is expected to measure experiences which relate to the common core of mysticism as well as a first, rudimentary appraisal of these experiences (interpretive frame).

Structure and Properties of the M-Scale

As noted in the previous paragraph, the M-Scale was derived from Stace’s (1960) common core aspects providing interpretive characteristics for those experiences. Stace provided eight potential criteria of the common core of mystical experiences which Hood (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001) operationalized in the M-Scale. Hood utilized descriptions taken from James’ varieties of religious experience in forming the items for the M-Scale through the theoretical common core criteria taken from Stace. In the following, the eight aspects are described and illustrated by sample items: The first aspect is *timelessness/spacelessness*, the temporal and spatial quality where the linearity of time and space are lost (sample item: “I have had an experience in which I had no sense of time or space”). The second is *ego loss* or the loss of self, while still conscious (sample item: “I have had an experience in which something greater than myself seemed to absorb me”). The third aspect is *ineffability*, which refers to limitations of language to express mystical experiences (sample item “I have had an experience which cannot be expressed in words”). The fourth aspect is *inner subjectivity*, where the perception of an inner subjectivity is projected on all things, including purely material forms (sample item: “I have had an experience in which all things seemed to be conscious”). The fifth aspect is *unity* of diversity and encompasses the impression that regardless of the diversity and multiplicity of objects they are perceived as one (sample item: “I have had an

experience in which I realized the oneness of myself with all things”). The sixth characteristic is *positive affect*, meaning that the participant feels bliss and joy as a product of the experience (sample item: “I have experienced profound joy”). The seventh aspect is *sacredness*, expressing that the experience is associated with feelings of mystery, reverence, and awe (sample item: “I have had an experience which I knew to be sacred”). The eighth and final characteristic is the *noetic quality* of the experience which is perceived as full of knowledge objectively beyond the perceiver’s subjective reason (sample item: “I have had an experience in which a new view of reality was revealed to me”) (Hood, 1975, 1993, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001). The entire M-Scale consists of 32 items, two positively worded and two negatively worded items for each of the eight criteria. When considering Hood’s six characteristics of the common core, one recognizes that the M-Scale is inherently descriptive of the personal experience while also recognizing that the language is not necessarily dependent on theology or culture as a mediator.

The initial analysis by Hood (1975) discovered two factors related to mystical experiences. The first identified as minimally phenomenological including the unity criteria either introvertive or extrovertive. The second was interpretative in that they were variables based on the person’s own experience. Here participants may have similar experiences but utilize different language in expressing those experiences.

Further confirmatory factor analysis has shown that a three factor solution appears to fit Hood’s theoretical model (Hood et al., 1993). The three-factor model includes a first factor identified as *introvertive mysticism*, which consists of items related to the aspects *timelessness and spacelessness, ego loss, and ineffability*. The second factor termed *extrovertive mysticism* consists of items of *inner subjectivity* as well as *unity of diversity*. The third and final factor has been identified as *interpretation* and consists of items associated with the three aspects which do already express a first, rudimentary kind of

(religious) interpretation: *positive affect, sacredness, and noetic quality*. The three factors can be used to group the items of the M-Scale into three subscales which yield sufficient Cronbach’s Alphas to be internally consistent. Hood et al. (1993) report internal consistencies between Cronbach’s $\alpha = .69$ and $.76$. Among US Christians and Iranian Muslims, Hood et al. (2001) detected internal consistencies between $\alpha = .64$ and $.85$.

Drawing on the Common Core Thesis, the three factor model appears to be applicable within not only the American context as seen in Hood et al. (1993) and Hood and Williamson’s (2000) work but in other cultural and geographic contexts as well. For example the three factor solution has been replicated in Iranian samples (Hood et al., 2001), Jewish samples in Israel (Lazar & Kravetz, 2005) and China with Christian and non-Christian samples (Chen, Qi, Hood, & Watson, 2011; Chen, Zhang, Hood, & Watson, 2012). These cross-cultural findings show empirical support for the three-factor model beyond the sub-dimensions originally proposed by Hood in his original work (Hood, 2006).

Previous Findings About “Spirituality” Using the M-Scale

The idea that mystical experiences as measured with the M-Scale might be related to the self-identification as “spiritual” is not new. Yamane (1998) has argued that an important root of the actual distinction between “spirituality” and “religion” can be found in William James’ “Varieties.” James’ focus on personal, extraordinary experiences of transcendence clearly refers to the kind of experiences many people today tend to call “spiritual,” and it is surely no coincidence that James’ definition of “religion”—“the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine” (James, 1902, p. 42)—today is often assumed to be a description of “spirituality” (Utsch & Klein,

2011; Westerink, 2012). However, as we have seen above, when talking about varieties of religious experience, James concentrated on mystical experiences which he assumed to lie at the core of all kinds of religious experience. James’ understanding of mysticism as an experience of unity with “something greater” fits perfectly to findings about prevalent notions of “spirituality” as being experientially-centered and dealing with experiences of unity and of something “higher” or “beyond” (cf. the findings reported in Chap. 9, this volume). Therefore, it can be expected that the M-Scale as a measure of mystical experiences in the tradition of James will show significant correlations with people’s self-description as “spiritual.”

A number of previous studies support this assumption. Already in the 1970s, Hood observed that people more committed to religious experience than to church showed higher levels of mysticism than people committed more strongly to church (Hood, 1973), and that people attending church frequently and those attending seldom or never did not differ in their levels of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* as measured with the M-Scale, but only in the degree of religious *interpretation* of their experiences (Hood, 1976). Similarly, Chen et al. (2012) noticed only small mean differences of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism*, but a stronger difference of *interpretation* between Chinese Christians and non-Christians. Morris and Hood (1980) found that Baptists and ‘Nones’ did not differ in their levels of unity experiences, but only in their levels of religious interpretation. More important than religious membership, however, was whether the participants of the study were sure that they had already had a mystical experience. Although not explicitly dealing with “spirituality,” these findings already indicate that mystical experiences occur outside established religious communities and beside explicit religious activities. People reporting mystical states of consciousness without being committed to a church or member of a denomination might be assumed to identify as “spiritual” rather than as “religious.”

More recent studies working with the M-Scale have explicitly included measures of “spiritual”

self-identifications or self-ratings. Zinnbauer et al. (1997) used a short version of the M-Scale consisting of items about ego-loss and unity experiences together with two 5-point Likert-type single items asking whether the participants of their study considered themselves to be “spiritual” or “religious.” While mystical experiences did not correlate significantly with self-rated “religion” ($r = .04$), the correlation between mystical experiences and self-rated “spirituality” was found to be significant ($r = .27$). This finding confirms that mystical experiences are not necessarily associated with “religion,” but are affine to the self-identification as being “spiritual.”

In a study reported by Hood (2003) using the entire M-Scale, participants were sorted into four groups according to their self-identifications as either “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual,” or “neither religious nor spiritual.” The highest levels of mystical experiences were expressed by the group of the “more spiritual than religious,” however, the important difference was between the two groups which included “spirituality” in their self-identifications (“more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual”) in comparison to the two groups which excluded “spirituality” (“more religious than spiritual,” “neither religious nor spiritual”). This finding illustrates that mysticism is associated with “spirituality” both within and outside traditional religiousness.

Taking these findings together, mystical experiences as measured with the M-Scale can be expected to correlate significantly with self-rated “spirituality.” Whether mysticism is also related to “religion” might depend on how people relate “spirituality” and “religion.” In the following section, these expectations will be formulated more precisely as hypotheses for our own study.

Hypotheses

Our overall research question is: Does mysticism as measured with the M-Scale predict “spirituality” in some capacity? In our hypothetical model for the entire project, we assumed that the M-Scale

may predict and may reveal as strong correlate for “spirituality.” In line with the reported findings of Hood and colleagues (1973, 1976, 2003; Chen et al., 2012; Morris & Hood, 1980) and Zinnbauer et al., (1997), we can now specify our expectations further. Since Zinnbauer et al. (1997) correlated a short version of the M-Scale with self-rated “spirituality” while Hood reported mean differences of the M-Scale depending on “spiritual” or “religious” self-identification, we formulate our hypotheses both in terms of associations (hypotheses “a”) and differences (hypotheses “b”). Our concrete assumptions are the following:

- H₁: Both introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences seem to occur inside and outside established religious traditions (Chen et al., 2012; Hood, 1976; Morris & Hood, 1980) and seem to be associated with the self-description as “spiritual” (Hood, 2003; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).
- H_{1a}: Therefore, we expect that the subscales *introvertive mysticism* and *extrovertive mysticism* of the M-Scale both will be significantly associated with self-rated “spirituality.”
- H_{1b}: People self-identifying as “spiritual” (“more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual”) are expected to express greater levels of introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences than people who do not (“more religious than spiritual,” “neither religious nor spiritual”).
- H₂: Mystical experiences might be interpreted religiously, but do not necessarily need to go along with religious affiliation, commitment, or self-description (Chen et al., 2012; Hood, 1973, 1976, 2003; Morris & Hood, 1980; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).
- H_{2a}: Therefore, we expect less clear associations between the subscales *introvertive mysticism* and *extrovertive mysticism* and self-rated “religion.”
- H_{2b}: People self-identifying as “more religious than spiritual” are expected to express less introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences than those who describe themselves as “spiritual” (“more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual”), but more mystical experiences than “neither religious nor spiritual” people.
- H₃: Hood (2003) observed that people describing themselves as “more spiritual than religious” or as “equally religious and spiritual” scored significantly higher on the subscale *interpretation* of the M-Scale than people refusing to call themselves “spiritual.” Thus, “spirituality” seems also to be associated with the interpretation of mystical experiences as positive, sacred, and offering new and deeper insights. On the other hand, since religiously affiliated persons and people frequently attending church showed higher levels of *interpretation* than non-affiliated and non-attending (Chen et al., 2012; Hood, 1976; Morris & Hood, 1980), such an interpretation might also be considered to relate mystical experiences to “religion.”
- H_{3a}: Therefore, we expect a significant correlation between the subscale *interpretation* and both self-rated “spirituality” and “religion.”
- H_{3b}: People self-identifying as “spiritual” and “religious” (“more spiritual than religious,” “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual”) are expected to score higher on the subscale *interpretation* than “neither religious nor spiritual” persons.

In order to examine the network of possible relations between *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* and their interpretation with the self-identification as “spiritual” or “religious” and with self-rated “spirituality” and “religion”

more differentially and cross-culturally, we used structural equation modeling (SEM) in addition to classic correlation analyses and mean comparisons. In continuation of our postulated hypotheses, we expect the three factors of the M-Scale, defined as subscales, to predict self-rated “spirituality” and, to a somewhat lower extent, self-rated “religion.” The hypothesized structure of the SEM is presented in Fig. 11.1, where circles represent latent constructs, and rectangles represent measured variables. Self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” are directly measured by single items. The measured variables of the M-Scale represent the eight aspects of mysticism according to Stace (1960) which are each operationalized by four items and are structured according to Hood’s (2006; Hood et al., 2009) three-factor model of mysticism. This model has been empirically validated by confirmatory factor analyses (Hood et al., 2001) in which the same 4-item packages have been used.

To discover the effects of “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification and differential cross-cultural patterns, a multi-group-analysis is

performed for the four groups identifying as “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” and “neither religious nor spiritual” both in the US and the German subsample. Thus, we have a 4×2 (self-identification x country) design. With respect to the SEM, we formulate the following hypotheses:

- H₄: All three subscales of the M-Scale are expected to significantly predict self-rated “spirituality,” in particular among groups which self-identify as “spiritual” (“more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual”).
- H₅: In contrast, only the subscale *interpretation* is expected to significantly predict self-rated “religion,” in particular among groups which self-identify as “religious” (“more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual”).

To include also the association between self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” in our model, a regression path from self-rated “religion”

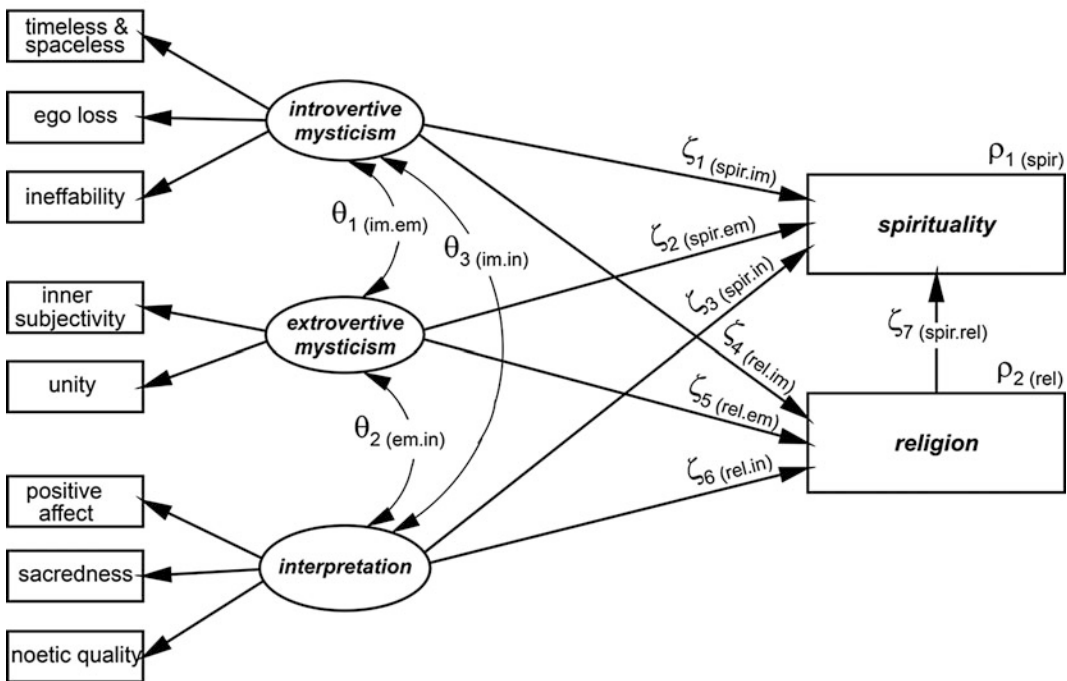


Fig. 11.1 Effects of Mysticism on “Spirituality” and “Religion” (Hypothesized Model)

to self-rated “spirituality” has been added. With respect to the association between “spirituality” and “religion,” we hypothesize a differential pattern depending on “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification:

H₆: While we expect significant positive associations between self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” among the groups which express their “spirituality” and “religion” in continuity (“equally religious and spiritual,” “neither religious nor spiritual”), we expect lower, probably insignificant and maybe even negative associations between self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” among the groups which are in favor of one of the two terms (“more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious”).

Method

Participants

As detailed in Chap. 4, the total data set of our study contains responses from $N = 1,886$ participants. For the analyses presented in this chapter, however, 17 cases (7 Americans, 10 Germans) had to be excluded from the analyses because of missing data for self-rated “religion” and/or “spirituality.” Thus $n = 1,869$ cases remained for the following analyses. With respect to the distribution of age, sex, education, and income, there are no significant deviations compared to the entire sample.

Measures

Mysticism was measured with the 32 items of Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001) M-Scale consisting of the three subscales *introvertive mysticism* (*timelessness and spacelessness, ego loss, ineffability*), *extrovertive mysticism*

(*inner subjectivity, unity*), and *interpretation* (*positive affect, sacredness, noetic quality*). The M-Scale has been translated (B. Keller), re-translated (K. Hauck) and validated in the German language.

The M-Scale yielded satisfying internal consistencies of Cronbach’s $\alpha = .88$ (*introvertive mysticism, extrovertive mysticism*) and $.87$ (*interpretation*) in the US sample and $\alpha = .92$ (*introvertive mysticism, extrovertive mysticism*) and $.90$ (*interpretation*) in the German sample. Self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” have been measured with two single items asking “How would you describe yourself?,” offering a 5-point Likert-type scale from “not religious” to “religious” resp. from “not spiritual” to “spiritual.” “Spiritual” and “religious” self-identification has been measured with a forced-choice categorical item asking whether participants preferred to identify themselves as “more religious than spiritual” (US sample: $n = 71$, German sample: $n = 78$), “equally religious and spiritual” (US sample: $n = 304$, German sample: $n = 143$), “more spiritual than religious” (US sample: $n = 559$, German sample: $n = 373$), or “neither religious nor spiritual” (US sample: $n = 172$, German sample: $n = 169$).

Statistics

Correlation analyses and mean comparisons via One-way ANOVAs have been performed with SPSS 22 software. In the ANOVAs, effects of age (in three groups: 15–30, 31–50, 51–90), sex, educational level according to OECD (2011, 2012), and income have been controlled. For our SEMs, we used AMOS 22 and performed a multi-group analysis for the eight groups emerging from “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification and cultural background. As indices of model fit, we report χ^2 , χ^2/df , comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Hu & Bentler, 1995, 1999).

Results

Correlations Between the M-Scale and Self-rated “Spirituality” and “Religion”

Table 11.1 presents the inter-correlations of the three subscales of the M-Scale and their correlations with self-rated “spirituality” and “religion.” In both samples the subscales of the M-Scale are highly correlated with each other. Correlation coefficients range from $r = .65$ to $r = .75$ among the US respondents and from $r = .76$ to $r = .79$ among the German participants. Additionally, in both samples the M-Scale subscales are also significantly associated with self-rated “spirituality.” Here, the correlation coefficients range from $r = .34$ (*extrovertive mysticism*) to $r = .54$ (*interpretation*) among the US participants, and from $r = .57$ (*introvertive mysticism*) to $r = .66$ (*interpretation*) among the German respondents. Although the highest correlations can be found for *interpretation* in both samples, the correlations between *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* with self-rated “spirituality” can be regarded as substantial, too. Thus, H_{1a} could be corroborated: In our sample, reported mystical experiences are strongly correlated with self-rated “spirituality.”

Correlations between the M-Scale subscales and self-rated “religion,” however, appear to be clearly lower, although still significant, except for the correlation between *extrovertive mysticism* and self-rated “religion” in the US sample. In both samples, the correlations of *introvertive*

mysticism and *extrovertive mysticism* with self-rated “religion” are recognizably lower ($r \leq .10$ in the US sample and $r \leq .17$ in the German sample) than the correlations of *interpretation* with self-rated “religion” ($r = .28$ in the US sample and $r = .32$ in the German sample). Although the correlations appear to be somewhat higher among the German participants, the general pattern is very parallel in both samples. Thus, H_{2a} and H_{3a} can be affirmed, too. While interpretations of mystical experiences are associated both with self-rated “spirituality” and “religion,” “religion” is not related as clearly to introvertive or extrovertive mystical states of consciousness as is “spirituality.”

Mean Differences of the M-Scale Depending on Self-identification as “Spiritual” or “Religious”

To test the parallel hypotheses H_{1b} to H_{3b}, One-way ANOVAs have been performed to test the effects of “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification and cultural background on *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* and *interpretation*. To control for effects of age, sex, education and income, these variables are included as covariates in the ANOVAs. As evidenced in Table 11.2, there are strong effects of forced-choice “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification on all three subscales of the M-Scale. Although there are significant effects of country, of the interaction between country and self-identification, and of some of the covariates,

Table 11.1 Inter-Correlations of the Three M-Scale Subscales and Correlations with Self-rated “Spirituality” and “Religion”

	US sample			German sample		
	im	em	in	im	em	in
Introvertive mysticism (im)	1			1		
Extrovertive mysticism (em)	.75**	1		.78**	1	
Interpretation (in)	.71**	.65**	1	.76**	.79**	1
Self-rated “spirituality”	.43**	.34**	.54**	.57**	.60**	.66**
Self-rated “religion”	.10**	.03	.28**	.16**	.17**	.32**

Note * = correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); ** = correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 11.2 Effects of “Spiritual” and “Religious” Self-identification and Cultural Background on M-Scale Subscales

	Introvertive mysticism			Extrovertive mysticism			Interpretation		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Self-identification	169.61	≤.001	.215	148.06	.008	.193	214.03	≤.001	.257
Country	8.55	.003	.005	6.99	≤.001	.004	1.66	.198	.001
Interaction self-identification × country	5.42	.001	.009	14.97	≤.001	.024	3.51	.015	.006
Age	.17	.682	.000	4.80	.029	.003	38.79	≤.001	.020
Sex	3.51	.061	.002	18.14	≤.001	.010	13.75	≤.001	.007
Education	.01	.916	.000	2.31	.129	.001	1.49	.222	.001
Income	4.43	.036	.002	3.31	.069	.002	4.82	.032	.002
Adjusted R^2	.229			.232			.296		

too, the effects of “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification are considerably stronger (effect size between $\eta^2 = .193$ for *extrovertive mysticism* and $\eta^2 = .257$ for *interpretation*) whereas all other effects are rather negligible ($\eta^2 \leq .020$). Hence, “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification accounts for the majority of explained variance (adjusted R^2 between .229 for *introvertive mysticism* and .296 for *interpretation*).

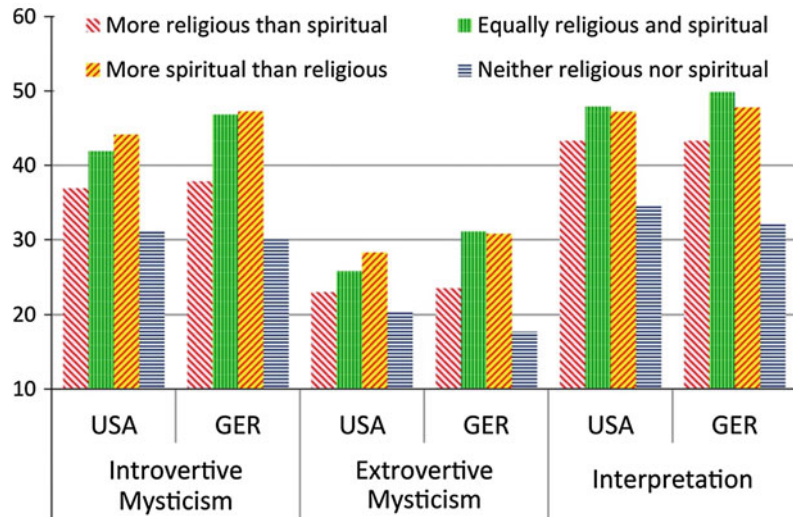
For a direct comparison of the four self-identifications as “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” or “neither religious nor spiritual,” post hoc tests using Scheffé’s procedure have been calculated. The levels of mystical experiences of the four categorical groups are plotted in Fig. 11.2 (for better comparability with the results of Hood, 2003, we present sum scores).

While the “more spiritual than religious” group scored significantly higher than all other groups on *introvertive* ($p \leq .026$) and *extrovertive mysticism* (always $p \leq .001$) in the US sample, in the German sample, both “more spiritual than religious” and “equally religious and spiritual” groups displayed the highest levels of *introvertive* (always $p \leq .001$) and *extrovertive mysticism* (always $p \leq .001$), but did not differ significantly from another ($p = .984$ and $p = .983$, respectively). The US “equally religious and spiritual” group expressed the second highest levels of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* in comparison to the “more religious” ($p = .003$ and $p = .061$, respectively) and the

“neither religious nor spiritual” group ($p \leq .001$ for both *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism*). The US “more religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual” groups differ with respect to *introvertive mysticism* ($p = .002$), but not *extrovertive mysticism* ($p = .105$). In the German sample, “more religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual” groups differ in their levels of both *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* ($p \leq .001$ for both). Thus, H_{1b} and H_{2b} can largely be confirmed (except for the supposed difference in *extrovertive mysticism* between “more religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual” in the US sample). People who describe themselves as “spiritual” (and “religious”) report more mystical experiences than people describing themselves merely as “religious.” The latter, however, report more mystical experiences than persons who see themselves neither as “religious” nor as “spiritual.”

Figure 11.2 also presents the levels of *interpretation* of the four categorical groups in the US and the German sample. Both among the Americans and the Germans, “more spiritual” and “equally religious and spiritual” groups do not differ ($p = .752$ and $p = .123$, respectively), but differ significantly from the other two groups ($p \leq .005$). The “more religious” group also displays higher levels of *interpretation* than the “neither religious nor spiritual” group ($p \leq .001$ in both samples). Therefore, also H_{3b} can be corroborated. Both “spiritual” and “religious”

Fig. 11.2 Patterns of the M-Scale Subscales According to “Spiritual” and “Religious” Self-identification



self-identifications correspond with readiness to evaluate mystical experiences as positive, sacred, and noetic.

Relating Factors of Mysticism, Self-rated “Spirituality,” and “Spiritual” Self-identification—Results From Structural Equation Modelling

In order to discover the relations of mystical experiences with self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” as well as with the self-identification as “spiritual” or “religious,” the hypothesized associations of the three factors of the M-Scale with self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” (cf. Figure 11.1) have been empirically tested with an SEM including a multi-group analysis for the four categorical groups of “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification in both samples. The estimation for the initial (not yet respecified) SEM resulted in satisfying model fit indices: $\chi^2 = 669.663$, $df = 230$, $\chi^2/df = 2.91$, CFI = .948, RMSEA = .032 (lower bound = .029, higher bound = .035). While the RMSEA was below .05 indicating a close fit of the model (cf. Browne & Cudeck, 1992) and the CFI was around the level of .95 for an excellent model fit (Bentler, 1990), the problem with this initial solution was that it

included a not-positive definite covariance matrix of the three latent mysticism variables for one group (the German equally religious and spiritual group). This not-positive definite covariance matrix reflects another observation: very high standardized covariances between the three mysticism variables for some groups. Non-positive definite covariance matrices are, however, according to Wothke (1993), not admissible, and too high covariances may indicate problems with the model.

Therefore, we have considered the respecification of the model by fixing the variance of the error terms for *ego loss* and *unity* to a value of 1.0. The selection of these variables seems to be justifiable by the conceptual proximity of these aspects of mysticism; confirmation for this choice of variables derives also from Hood and colleagues (2001), who have described the facet that is now labeled *ego loss* as “a loss of the self in a greater unity,” while *unity* was interpreted as “unity in diversity.” Confirmation that this was a considerable improvement of the model can be derived from the absence of any non-positive definite covariance matrices, even though the model fit indices were slightly lower now, but still convincing: $\chi^2 = 1049.660$; $df = 232$; $\chi^2/df = 4.524$, CFI = .903, RMSEA = .044 (lower bound = .041, upper bound = .046). Thus, our hypothesized model fits the data acceptably.

The results for the regression weights and multiple squared correlations for the four groups in both countries are presented in Table 11.3. All in all, they support our assumption that mysticism as measured by Hood's (1975) M-Scale can be regarded as an indicator for self-rated "spirituality," in particular among the two categorical groups in both countries which self-identify as "spiritual" ("more spiritual than religious," "equally religious and spiritual"). As can be seen in the squared multiple correlations, self-rated "spirituality" is highly explained by the M-Scale; at least among these two groups. The high estimates for explained variance are especially noteworthy for the US group of the "equally religious and spiritual" ($R^2 = .42$) and the "more spiritual than religious" Germans ($R^2 = .34$). The extent is somewhat smaller among the German "equally religious and spiritual" ($R^2 = .27$) and the US "more spiritual than religious" ($R^2 = .20$), but still considerable. Interestingly, there are also recognizable effects of mysticism on self-rated "spirituality" for the German "neither religious nor spiritual" group ($R^2 = .43$), whereas the effects for the "more religious than spiritual" groups in both samples did not reach a substantial level.

Can we suppose our H_4 to be corroborated then? Well, not completely since we expected, in accordance with the findings of Zinnbauer et al. (1997) and Hood (2003), all factors of the M-Scale to be associated significantly with self-rated "spirituality." But, in fact, the regression weights of *introvertive mysticism* are insignificant in most cases, while *extrovertive mysticism* has rather negative regression weights which reach significance among the "more spiritual than religious" in both samples ($\beta_{USA} = -.25, p = .003$; $\beta_{GER} = -.31, p = .009$) and the US "equally religious and spiritual" ($\beta = -.24, p = .004$). Only *interpretation* appears to be a positive predictor of self-rated "spirituality" for the "more spiritual than religious" ($\beta_{USA} = .54, p \leq .001$; $\beta_{GER} = .92, p \leq .001$) and the "equally religious and spiritual" ($\beta_{USA} = .40, p \leq .001$; $\beta_{GER} = .38, p = .080$) in both samples and for the German "neither religious nor spiritual" ($\beta = .79, p \leq .001$). These findings are, at first sight, somewhat astonishing since the simple

bivariate correlations reported above (cf. Table 11.1) showed positive associations of all three subscales of the M-Scale with self-rated "spirituality."

However, we have to be aware of the fact that the regression weights in an SEM represent partial covariances. The correlations between the three factors of the M-Scale in our SEMs (the covariance paths θ_1 to θ_3 in Fig. 11.1) are highly significant ($p \leq .001$). They range from $r = .60$ to $r = .84$. Since all three factors of the M-Scale are highly correlated with each other, it seems that the positive association between mysticism and self-rated "spirituality" culminates in the effects of *interpretation* which mediate the effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism*. Beyond their shared variance with *interpretation* which is expressed in their high inter-correlations, *introvertive* and, even more so, *extrovertive mysticism* are not positively associated with "spirituality" anymore. To put it less methodologically: Introvertive and extrovertive mystical states of consciousness which are not interpreted as emotionally beneficial (*positive affect*), sacred, and of noetic quality, are not perceived as "spiritual" anymore.

Empirically, this relationship could also be revealed if *interpretation* was removed from the SEM. The regression weights of *introvertive mysticism* would become positive then, while the regression weights of *extrovertive mysticism* would turn from negative to neutral. If *introvertive mysticism* would be deleted, too, even some regression weights of *extrovertive mysticism* would become positive. However, removing entire subscales from the model would result in insufficient model fit indices and would also be questionable with respect to the theoretical background of the M-Scale.

Hence, because only the subscale *interpretation* is positively associated with self-rated "spirituality" while the positive effects of the other two subscales are mediated by *interpretation* with remaining neutral direct effects of *introvertive* and negative direct effects of *extrovertive mysticism*, we can only partially affirm H_4 .

The same is true for H_5 because we find a rather similar pattern for the relations between

Table 11.3 Standardized Regression Weights of Mysticism Factors on Self-rated “Spirituality” and “Religion” Among the Four Groups of Categorical “Spiritual” and “Religious” Self-identification

	em. im (θ_1)	in. em (θ_2)	in. im (θ_3)	spir. im (ζ_1)	spir. em (ζ_2)	spir. in (ζ_3)	rel. im (ζ_4)	rel. em (ζ_5)	rel. in (ζ_6)	spir. rel (ζ_7)	R ² rel (ρ_2)	R ² spir (ρ_1)
USA	.73 ^{****}	.69 ^{****}	.68 ^{****}	-.22	.09	-.01	.03	-.11	.13	.16	.01	.05
More religious than spiritual (n = 71)												
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 304)	.75 ^{****}	.62 ^{****}	.63 ^{****}	.07	-.24 ^{**}	.40 ^{****}	.00	-.16	.37 ^{****}	.46 ^{****}	.09	.42
More spiritual than religious (n = 559)	.76 ^{****}	.78 ^{****}	.79 ^{****}	-.03	-.25 ^{****}	.54 ^{****}	-.01	-.27 ^{**}	.26 ^{**}	.22 ^{****}	.03	.20
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 172)	.76 ^{****}	.82 ^{****}	.77 ^{****}	.13	.03	.17	.14	-.15	.15	.45 ^{****}	.03	.33
Germany												
More religious than spiritual (n = 78)	.60 ^{****}	.68 ^{****}	.62 ^{****}	.04	.03	-.12	-.04	.04	.22	.20 [*]	.05	.04
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 143)	.78 ^{****}	.69 ^{****}	.84 ^{****}	.00	-.09	.38 [*]	-.40 [*]	-.27 [*]	.81 ^{****}	.31 ^{**}	.21	.27
More spiritual than religious (n = 373)	.74 ^{****}	.83 ^{****}	.84 ^{****}	-.17	-.31 ^{**}	.92 ^{****}	-.18	-.19	.42 ^{**}	.10 ^{**}	.04	.34
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 169)	.73 ^{****}	.77 ^{****}	.77 ^{****}	-.34 ^{**}	-.15	.79 ^{****}	-.29 ^{**}	-.36 ^{**}	.89 ^{****}	.26 ^{**}	.27	.43

Note Variances for error terms of *unity* and *ego loss* were fixed to 1.0 to correct the non-positive definite covariance matrix of the three latent variables; Model Fit Indices: $\chi^2 = 1049.660$, $df = 232$, $\chi^2/df = 4.524$, CFI = .903, RMSEA = .044 (lower bound = .041, upper bound = .046.); **** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$; im = introverted mysticism (Factor 1), em = extroverted mysticism (Factor 2), in = interpretation of mysticism (Factor 3), spir = self-rated “spirituality”, rel = self-rated “religion”

the M-Scale factors and self-rated “religion” as for self-rated “spirituality”: While there are significant positive effects of *interpretation* for the “more spiritual” and, as expected, for the “equally religious and spiritual” group in both samples and also for the German “neither religious nor spiritual” group, there are negative direct effects of *extrovertive mysticism* and, among the Germans, also of *introvertive mysticism* for these groups. The similarity of the patterns for self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” contradicts our expectations since, in line with the findings of Hood (1976; Morris & Hood, 1980), we assumed only positive effects of *interpretation* on self-rated “religion,” in particular among the groups who identify themselves as “religious.” Instead, as for “spirituality,” there are indirect positive effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* which are mediated by *interpretation*. H_5 cannot be corroborated also for another reason: It is striking that there are no significant associations between the M-Scale factors and either self-rated “religion” or self-rated “spirituality” among the “more religious than spiritual” at all. This might, however, be at least partly due to the small size of the group of the “more religious” in both samples (in contrast, the most significant results can be found in the largest subsamples). Considerable explanations of the variance of self-rated “religion” by mysticism factors can be found only for the German groups of the “equally spiritual and religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual.”

The association between self-rated “religion” and self-rated “spirituality” turned out to be significant in all but the “more religious” group in the American sample and in all four categorical groups in the German sample. As expected, there are significant regression weights for the association between “religion” and “spirituality” among the groups of the “equally spiritual and religious” ($\beta_{USA} = .46, p \leq .001$; $\beta_{GER} = .31, p \leq .001$) and the “neither religious nor spiritual” ($\beta_{USA} = .45, p \leq .001$; $\beta_{GER} = .26, p = .005$). However, unexpectedly the association is also significant in the “more spiritual” group in both samples and the German “more religious” group

although the regression weights are slightly lower ($\beta \leq .22, p \leq .001$). Thus, also H_6 can only partially be confirmed.

Discussion

As the confirmation of H_{1a} to H_{3b} shows, our correlation and ANOVA results match with the previous findings of Hood and colleagues (1973, 1976, 2003; Chen et al., 2012; Morris & Hood, 1980) and Zinnbauer et al. (1997): All three subscales of the M-Scale are significantly associated with self-rated “spirituality” and the categorical self-identification as “spiritual,” thus illustrating that mysticism corresponds strongly with today’s common understanding of “spirituality.” The more mystical experiences someone has, the more likely is he to see himself as “spiritual.” In contrast, only the interpretive component of mysticism is substantially associated with “religion.” This might be a hint that the notions of both “spirituality” and “religion” have changed during the last decades; while “spirituality” seems to express an experience-oriented approach to transcendence, which might be interpreted in terms of traditional “religious” language (such as “sacred,” “holy,” “divine,” “ultimate,” or “wonder”), “religion” seems to require such explicit “religious” framing, but is not necessarily bound to underlying experiences of *introvertive* or *extrovertive mysticism*.

This pattern fits well into the already existing picture of contemporary “spirituality.” The results of the SEM, in general, support the assumption that mystical experiences are related with both self-rated “spirituality” and the self-identification as “spiritual.” Of the four categorical groups, three (the “more spiritual than religious,” the “equally religious and spiritual,” and, at least in the German sample, also the “neither religious nor spiritual”) showed high estimates for explained variance, explaining as much as 30 % of the variance of self-rated “spirituality” in the model. However, the SEM results provide also some further insights which have not been clearly detected so far: Taking the mutual relations of

the M-Scale factors into account, the enormous importance of the factor *interpretation* for self-declared “spirituality” and, although to a lesser extent, also self-declared “religion” becomes visible. The three aspects which characterize the *interpretation* factor are *positive affect* or the emotional benefit of the experience, *sacredness* or specialness of the experience, and *noetic quality* where the individual experiences a new reality and must find a way to express it. These facets can be assumed to be transformative in terms of psychological constructs. They are cognitive in that they are linguistic, and schematic as new boundaries are drawn in how one views the world. They are also affective as they leave an overall emotional impression on the person. It may be that the interpretive factor is the common person’s mystical experience providing at least a colloquial descriptive frame of legit experience. Without such a suitable interpretive frame, our SEM results suggest that experiences of *introvertive mysticism* are not perceived as “spiritual” anymore, and experiences of *extrovertive mysticism* might even appear to be somehow “anti-spiritual”—if they are neither felt to be emotionally beneficial nor valuable nor offering insights into a new, deeper kind of reality, they are probably confusing and scaring. In accordance with this assumption, Byrom (2009) found that *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* were significantly correlated with a measure of magical ideation, while *interpretation* remained uncorrelated. Thus, without an interpretive frame of reference, introvertive and extrovertive mystical states of consciousness might even bear resemblance to symptoms of psychopathology (Hood & Francis, 2013). Hence, the covariance of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* with *interpretation* seems to make an important difference.

All in all, the associations between the three M-Scale factors and self-rated “spirituality” across the four groups of “spiritual” and “religious” self-identifications in both samples resemble each other recognizably. The similarity of patterns might be understood as indicator for the cross-cultural validity of the M-Scale which functions well in Germany as in the USA. From this point of view, also the Common Core Thesis

gains plausibility. The M-Scale has, to our knowledge, not been applied in Germany so far, but the findings for the German sample match those for the American sample in our study as for other samples from the USA and from abroad (Chen et al., 2012; Hood et al., 2001).

A possible cultural difference might be identified with respect to the effects of the M-Scale factors on self-rated “religion”: While mysticism contributes to the variance explanation of self-rated “religion” in the German groups which identify convergently as “spiritual” and “religious” (“equally religious and spiritual,” “neither religious nor spiritual”), there are no effects of the three M-Scale factors on “religion” in the US sample at all. Thus, in the US solely “spirituality” appears to be a legitimate term to label mystical experiences while in Germany “religion” might be accepted to name such experiences, too—but only if “spirituality” and “religion” are understood as related concepts. This finding corresponds with the distribution of “spiritual” self-identification in both countries as detailed in Chap. 3: While a broad majority of Americans prefer to describe themselves as “spiritual,” only a minority of Germans call themselves “spiritual,” whereas “religious” is still the more widespread term.

However, all in all, the similar associations of the three components of mysticism with self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” rather illustrate that both labels, “spirituality” as well as “religion,” share a common experiential basis which some prefer to call “spiritual” and some “religious” (and “spiritual”). Whether this conclusion applies for people describing themselves merely as “religious,” too, requires further research on a broader empirical basis because our subsamples of “more religious than spiritual” people have probably been too small to yield clearer effects.

This point leads to the discussion of possible limitations of our study. One major concern is probably that our decision to compare the associations of mysticism with self-rated “spirituality” and “religion” across groups of distinct categorical “spiritual” and “religious” self-identifications reduced the size of the subsamples and, as consequence, also the variance of the included variables. However, the differential

results which we have presented in the previous section required such a design, and we considered to use this design since most groups still have considerable size, except the “more religious” group in both samples. It is, however, possible that the missing effects in this group are not due to reduced variance, but can be interpreted substantially: Maybe mysticism is only related to “religion” if people associate “religion” with “spirituality”? Further studies are necessary to shed light on this question.

Another possible limitation might be due to our decision to test only one of the two approaches to applying factorial models to Hood’s mystical framework, the three factor solution. Using SEMs, it would be applicable to look at the fit of both the two factors as well as the three factor solution. In subsequent analyses, it might be interesting to explore both models within various cultural contexts looking for cultural invariance as it might apply in the model (cf. Chen et al., 2012; Hood et al., 2001). While some cultural psychologists may find this potentially problematic, it could be that cross-cultural similarities may be described statistically as a family resemblance referring to the common core of mysticism. In our case, the invariance is useful as it can show how variables deviate slightly, but similar trends in the data provide statistically useful patterns shedding great insights on culturally significant and emergent phenomena such as “spirituality.” As the literature has shown, however, the interpretative factor appears in both approaches and has been proven to be the most important predictor within the overall relationship between “spirituality” and mysticism in our study.

Beside these limitations, our study nevertheless shows that Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001) entire M-Scale is an excellent predictor of both self-rated “spirituality” and “spiritual” self-identification which is probably due to the widespread notion of “spirituality” as experience-oriented approach to unite with some kind of transcendence. It is striking that several of the scales claiming to operationalize “spirituality” which have been reviewed at the very beginning of this chapter never have been correlated with

self-rated “spirituality” nor checked for mean differences according to “spiritual” self-identification. Since they do not evidence any correspondence with contemporary notions of “spirituality,” they lack an important proof of construct validity. From this point of view, the M-Scale appears to serve as a much better measure for what many people today understand as “spiritual.” A further advantage is that the M-Scale does not claim to measure “spirituality” (although it seems to do): It is a measure of mystical experiences theoretically well-grounded in the literature on mysticism. Thus, content validity of the M-Scale is not in question, whereas many scales trying to explicitly measure “spirituality” lack sufficient content validity. Whoever wants to measure what deems “spiritual” to many people is well advised to consider the M-Scale.

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Abstract

This chapter presents results about personality and self-identified “spirituality” from the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality.” The data yield insights in commonalities and differences not only between the USA and Germany, but between emerging new forms of religion and between different versions of “spirituality,” such as the “spirituality” opposed to religion, or the “spirituality” of self-identified “atheists” and “non-theists.” How are such different versions of “spirituality” reflected in the personality of our respondents? This is the question this chapter deals with on the basis of the results with the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI). Results indicate that, compared to the normative values for the USA and Germany, the “more spiritual than religious,” but also the “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents in both countries score considerably higher on *openness to experience*. Further, there is little evidence in our data that self-identified “spirituality” could be explained by *openness to experience* or other personality factors. Finally, as Analyses of Variance of the Big Five personality dimensions in the “spiritual”/“religious”/“atheist” self-identifying groups (our focus groups) demonstrate, *openness to experience* is especially suitable for mapping the varieties of “spirituality” in our data.

Contextualization with Previous Research

The relation of personality and religion receives high attention in the psychology of religion (see for reviews and meta-analyses: Ashton & Lee, 2014; Saroglou, 2010; Piedmont & Wilkins, 2013a, b). While in most research ‘personality’ is

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conceptualized and measured with the Five Factor model, thus with a well-established and validated concept, there is greater conceptual uncertainty with ‘religion.’ Most researchers take into account though that individual religiousness is not monolithic, but rather diverse and divided into different religious orientations, and that there is transformation and the development of new forms of religion. This may have nurtured the interest in spirituality and in studying the relation between personality and spirituality—and may be the door through which spirituality may have come on stage in personality research.

For example, Saucier and Skrzypinska (2006) conceptually distinguish between ‘tradition-oriented religiousness’ and ‘subjective spirituality’—and demonstrated that ‘subjective spirituality’ is associated with *openness to experiences* ($r = .40$) while ‘tradition-oriented religiosity’ negatively correlates with *openness to experiences* ($r = -.26$) and positively with *agreeableness* ($r = .29$). It should be noted, however, that ‘subjective spirituality’ was assessed in Saucier and Skrzypinska’s research primarily with a combination of measures, mostly taken from McDonald’s (2002) Expressions of Spirituality Inventory, with a strong focus on mystical experiences and paranormal beliefs.

To mention another example, Saroglou (2002, 2010), in his extensive meta-analyses of research in personality and religion including 71 studies from 19 countries and a total of over 20,000 participants, found it most adequate to discern (a) ‘religiosity,’ (b) ‘spirituality/mature faith’ and (c) ‘religious fundamentalism’—hypothesizing that *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness* account for (any version of) religion, while *openness to experience* positively correlates with ‘spirituality/mature faith’ and negatively with ‘religious fundamentalism.’ And in fact, Saroglou (2010) reports positive correlations between *openness to experience* and ‘spirituality/mature faith’ ($r = .18$) and negative correlations with ‘religious fundamentalism’ ($r = -.21$), while the correlations between *openness to experience* and ‘religiosity’ was insignificant and marginal, and

agreeableness and *conscientiousness* moderately correlated with all three versions of religion. However, also here, ‘spirituality’ needed to be combined with ‘mature faith’ in order to do justice to all studies included in the meta-analysis.

Thus, we note two things in these two examples: (1) There is support for ambitious hypotheses in the literature—and apparently clear results—in regard to the relation of personality and spirituality: *agreeableness* (and eventually *conscientiousness*) accounts for religion, while *openness to experience* positively correlates with spirituality and negatively with religion. (2) Nevertheless, there is only tentative agreement about the concept and the division(s) of religion, and rather considerable uncertainty in regard to the conceptualization and operationalization of spirituality. Spirituality appears to serve as a kind of umbrella construct. There is need for clarification.

Our study may indicate a methodological avenue: As detailed in Chaps. 3 and 4 of this volume, in our Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality,” we have taken a different approach, which includes careful and decisive attention to the emic perspective: the starting point for all our research should be the self-identifications of our respondents with a variety of options such as self-rating scales for being “religious” and being “spiritual,” with a four-option item for self-identifying as “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual,” but also with an item allowing self-identifications such as being “atheist” or “non-theist.” In addition, our questionnaire included assessments for the semantics of “religion” and “spirituality” such as semantic differentials (see Chap. 7) and free text-entries for subjective definitions of “religion” and “spirituality” (see Chaps. 8 and 9). This approach once more expands the options for self-identifications—and the variety within “religion”—and likewise in “spirituality.” What does this mean for research on the relation of “religion,” “spirituality” and personality?

Only beginning in research on personality and religion is decisive attention to different versions of “spirituality”: Besides the identification of individuals as both “spiritual” and “religious,” “spirituality” can, by the participants (!), be opposed to religion (for a study on the differences between “spirituality with religion” and “spirituality without religion,” see Schnell, 2012), but “spirituality” can also be associated with “atheist” and “non-theist” self-identifications and with “horizontal transcendence” (Streib & Hood, 2013). There are “more spiritual atheists” in our sample and we report results regarding their personality profile in this chapter.

Results from previous research suggest that *openness to experience* is one of the personality characteristics that mark the difference between religious and non-religious self-understandings and between belief in God and non-atheist world views (Caldwell-Harris, 2012; Galen, 2009; Streib & Klein, 2013). From our own Study on Deconversion (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009), we report that deconverts considerably differ from the participants who did not deconvert, but remained in their religious group (in-tradition members) in significantly higher means on *openness to experience* in both the USA and Germany with very high effect size ($d_{Cohen} = 1.33$; $d_{Cohen} = 0.82$, respectively). Calculating the mean difference on *openness to experience* especially for the secular exiters, they score higher with high effect size ($d_{Cohen} = 1.21$).

Taken together, we approach our data with the following questions: How are the personality dimensions reflected in the different versions of “spirituality” which we can identify in our data? Since we have four groups for self-identifying “spiritual”/“religious” and have constructed six focus groups, in which, in addition, “atheist”/“non-theist” self-identifications are considered, this question can be specified: How are the five personality dimensions reflected in these six groups? In light of results from previous research, we assume that *openness to experience* may clearly differentiate between the different versions of “spirituality.”

Notes on the Methods of Analysis

The results reported in this chapter are based on the data of the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality” that consists of $n = 1,113$ cases in the USA and $n = 773$ in Germany who answered a bi-lingual online and paper questionnaire in the years 2011 and 2012. For the assessment of the personality dimensions, the Neo Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) has been used in its original English version (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and its official German translation (Borkenau & Ostendorf, 1993). The NEO-FFI measures, with twelve items each, five personality dimensions: *neuroticism* (N), *extraversion* (E), *openness to experience* (O), *agreeableness* (A), and *conscientiousness* (C). Sum score means, standard deviations and reliabilities of the NEO-FFI subscales in our data are presented in Table 12.1 and indicate that reliabilities are all above the threshold for acceptable values.

The analyses reported in this chapter primarily take a differential perspective and, as a first major step, compare our data with normative values. For that purpose, we use the NEO-FFI normative values for the USA from Costa and McCrae (1992); normative values for Germany are taken from Borkenau and Ostendorf’s (2008) second and revised edition of the German NEO-FFI Manual.

In order to base comparison with normative values on the most precise results possible, the means and standard deviations for the US and German subsamples and the four “spiritual”/“religious” self-identification groups in the Spirituality sample were calculated by a series of UNIANOVAs, in which age, sex, cultural capital and per-capita income has been controlled. Further, for the estimation of the significance of the difference between normative values and results for the Spirituality samples, a *t*-test calculation has been used. Finally, to estimate the effect size of these differences and identify large effect sizes (Cohen’s $d > 0.70$),¹ Cohen’s *d* calculations were performed. Thus, these methodic procedures

¹According to Cohen (1988), effect sizes are interpreted as follows: $d < .2$ indicates no effect, $.2 \leq d < .5$ indicates a small, $.5 \leq d < .8$ a medium, and $d \geq .8$ a large effect size.

Table 12.1 Means and Reliabilities of the NEO-FFI Scales in the Spirituality Data

	US sample (N = 1,113)	German sample (N = 773)	Total sample (N = 1,886)
<i>Neuroticism</i>	20.8 (8.6) $\alpha = .88$	18.8 (8.3) $\alpha = .88$	20.0 (8.5) $\alpha = .88$
<i>Extraversion</i>	28.9 (6.9) $\alpha = .82$	27.6 (6.5) $\alpha = .80$	28.3 (6.7) $\alpha = .81$
<i>Openness</i>	31.7 (6.9) $\alpha = .81$	35.2 (5.5) $\alpha = .70$	33.1 (6.6) $\alpha = .77$
<i>Agreeableness</i>	31.3 (6.1) $\alpha = .78$	33.3 (5.6) $\alpha = .76$	32.4 (6.0) $\alpha = .77$
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	32.2 (7.1) $\alpha = .86$	31.0 (6.4) $\alpha = .81$	31.7 (6.9) $\alpha = .84$

should yield precise enough estimates for the difference of the NEO-FFI scales in our Spirituality sample and the normative values. Results are presented in Tables 12.2 and 12.3.

For the assessment of group difference between the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theist” group and the other five “spiritual”/“religious”/“atheist” focus groups in our Spirituality samples, Analyses of Variance and Post hoc Tests have been performed. Again, also Cohen’s d calculations indicate the effect size of the difference between the groups. Results are presented in Table 12.5 and Figs. 12.1 and 12.2.

Results

Comparison with Norm Values

Inspection of Table 12.2 (last two columns) indicates that, for the US respondents in the Spirituality Project sample, mean values for all of the NEO-FFI scales differ significantly from the US normative values presented by Costa and McCrae (1992). Thereby, an interesting pattern emerges: While *neuroticism* and *extraversion* are (by 1.7 or 8.9 % and 1.2 or 4.3 %, respectively) higher than the norms, *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness* are (by 1.0 or 3.0 % and 2.4 or

6.9 %, respectively) lower. Considerably greater is the difference in *openness to experience*: With $M = 31.7$ ($SD = 6.9$), the mean for *openness to experience* is by 4.7 (or 17.4 %) with high significance ($t = 18.1$, $p < .001$) greater than the normative value for the USA. Comparing effect sizes for the difference between normative values and our Spirituality Project results across the personality dimensions, it is obvious that, with Cohen’s $d = .73$, only *openness to experience* has a difference with medium to large effect size, while all other personality dimensions have only small effect size differences.

How should these differences to normative values be interpreted? What does this pattern tell us about self-identified “spirituality”? An interpretation has to take into account the high preference for “spirituality” in our US sample with 40.0 % respondents, who score highest on the 5-point scale for self-rating as “spiritual” and 50.9 % who explicitly self-identify as “more spiritual than religious.” But concluding from the four personality scales, except *openness to experience*, the means in the US sample of the Spirituality project differ only slightly from the normative values for the USA. It is only *openness to experience* which makes a great difference. From this we may conclude that the high results for *openness to experience* in our data are related to the very high inclination for self-rate as “spiritual.”

Table 12.2 Means of the NEO-FFI Scales in the US Subsample of the Spirituality Project Data Compared With Normative Results for the USA

	Spirituality project data					Normative values
	More religious than spiritual (<i>n</i> = 71)	Equally religious and spiritual (<i>n</i> = 304)	More spiritual than religious (<i>n</i> = 566)	Neither religious nor spiritual (<i>n</i> = 172)	Total US sample (<i>n</i> = 1,113)	(Costa & McCrae, 1992) (<i>N</i> = 1,000)
<i>Neuroticism</i>	22.1 (7.5) <i>t</i> = 3.2 <i>p</i> = .002 <i>d</i> = 0.39	20.4 (8.1) <i>t</i> = 2.5 <i>p</i> = .011 <i>d</i> = 0.17	20.6 (8.7) <i>t</i> = 3.5 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.19	21.3 (9.5) <i>t</i> = 3.4 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.28	20.8 (8.6) <i>t</i> = 4.7 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.21	19.1 (7.7)
<i>Extraversion</i>	28.6 (6.9) <i>t</i> = 1.2 <i>p</i> = .198 <i>d</i> = 0.15	29.6 (6.4) <i>t</i> = 5.0 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.32	29.3 (6.7) <i>t</i> = 5.0 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.26	26.4 (7.5) <i>t</i> = -2.7 <i>p</i> = .008 <i>d</i> = -0.21	28.9 (6.9) <i>t</i> = 4.4 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.19	27.7 (5.9)
<i>Openness to experience</i>	26.2 (5.6) <i>t</i> = -1.1 <i>p</i> = .261 <i>d</i> = -0.14	28.5 (6.3) <i>t</i> = 3.9 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.25	33.5 (6.6) <i>t</i> = 20.3 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 1.07	33.8 (6.2) <i>t</i> = 14.1 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 1.16	31.7 (6.9) <i>t</i> = 18.1 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.73	27.0 (5.8)
<i>Agreeableness</i>	30.3 (6.3) <i>t</i> = -4.0 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.49	32.8 (5.9) <i>t</i> = 0.0 <i>p</i> < .999 <i>d</i> = 0	32.2 (6.1) <i>t</i> = -2.1 <i>p</i> = .036 <i>d</i> = -0.11	29.6 (6.0) <i>t</i> = -7.5 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.62	31.8 (6.1) <i>t</i> = -4.1 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.18	32.8 (5.0)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	31.9 (6.9) <i>t</i> = -3.7 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.45	33.1 (6.9) <i>t</i> = -3.7 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.24	32.3 (6.0) <i>t</i> = -7.4 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.39	30.8 (7.1) <i>t</i> = -7.6 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.62	32.2 (7.1) <i>t</i> = -8.4 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.37	34.6 (5.9)

Note Standard deviations in brackets; variables for sex, age, cultural capital and per-capita income have been controlled in the analysis with the Spirituality Project data; *t* and *p* result from two-sample *t*-test calculations; *d* indicates the effect size of the differences resulting from Cohen’s *d* calculations

In the framework of the higher-order factors (Big Two) perspective (Digman, 1997; McCrae et al., 2008), this pattern of lower *emotional stability* (*neuroticism* reversed), *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness* and higher *extraversion* and *openness* could be understood as indicating higher plasticity (vs. stability) or transformation (vs. traditionalism) in our Spirituality sample. The conclusion then could be that plasticity/transformation is connected with self-declared “spirituality.”

Closer inspection of the differences between the four groups of “more religious than spiritual,”

“equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual” self-identification may open deeper insight. Table 12.2 (first four columns) presents means and standard deviations of NEO-FFI scales for each of the four “spiritual”/“religious” groups and, in addition, *t*-scores and significance indices, as well as, effect size estimates (Cohen’s *d*) for the difference to the normative values for the USA.

Focusing on *openness to experience*, comparison with normative values indicates an even higher difference for the “more spiritual than

religious” group: With a t -score of 20.3 ($p < .001$) and Cohen’s $d = 1.07$, the *openness to experience* mean value is 6.5 points higher than the norm for the USA, while for the “more religious than spiritual” group, the *openness to experience* mean is even slightly lower than the norm, with only insignificant difference and a very small effect size. The “equally religious and spiritual” group is about in the middle between the “more religious than spiritual” and the “more spiritual than religious” groups. This could be translated in the conclusion that the more respondents self-identify as “religious,” the lower their *openness to experience*, while the more they self-identify as “spiritual,” the higher their *openness*. These results appear largely in agreement with previous research, as detailed in the beginning of this chapter, and with our own assumptions.

Does this mean that *openness to experience* is strongly, and eventually exclusively, related to self-identified “spirituality”? Doubts emerge from attention to the results for the “neither religious nor spiritual” group (fourth column in the Tables): Their mean for *openness to experiences* is even slightly higher than for the “more spiritual than religious” group in the USA. *Openness to experience* appears to be not only high for those, who self-identify with “spirituality,” but also for those, who reject “spirituality” together with “religion” and self-identify as “neither spiritual nor religious.” This appears to fit with research reported by Galen (2009).

Furthermore, attending to group differences on *agreeableness*, it is noteworthy that the mean for the “more spiritual than religious” respondents does not differ so much from the normative value, and that the “equally religious and spiritual” appear to exactly correspond to the norm. However, the “neither religious nor spiritual” group has significantly lower means, compared to the US normative values. And for the “more religious than spiritual” group, the *agreeableness* mean is, with moderate effect size, but highly significant, lower than the normative value and lower than the means of the two groups with identification as equally or more “spiritual.” This is surprising and suggests, contrary to our

expectation, that high *agreeableness*, in the US sample, is associated with “spirituality,” rather than with “religion.”

Now we attend to the results for the German subsample (Table 12.3) for which the mean values in the five personality factors are compared with the normative values for Germany presented by Borkenau and Ostendorf (2008). The pattern of results presented in Table 12.3 appears, on first sight, to be similar to the pattern that we have seen for the USA in Table 12.2. While results for the personality dimensions *neuroticism*, *extraversion*, *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness* for the German total sample differ only slightly from the normative values and the four variables taken together approximately match with the normative values, it is again *openness to experience* which makes a difference—a difference which is even slightly bigger than for the USA: With a difference of 5.7, the mean for *openness to experience* in the German Spirituality data is significantly ($t = 19.1$, $p < .001$) and with high effect size ($d_{Cohen} = 0.94$) higher than the normative value for Germany.

Our explanation for this refers to the high preference for “spiritual” self-identification also in our German sample with 40.6 % highest self-ratings as “spiritual” on the 5-point rating scale and with 48.8 % “more spiritual than religious” respondents. We may conclude that, also for the German sample, the high result for *openness to experience* is related to the very high inclination for self-identifying with “spirituality.”

Again, a more differentiated picture emerges from attention to the differences between the four groups of “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual” self-identification (Table 12.3, first four columns). But here, we discover also cultural differences between the USA and Germany.

In *openness to experience*, the German “more spiritual than religious” respondents score high above the normative values: With a t -score of 16.9 ($p < .001$) and Cohen’s $d = 1.04$, the *openness to experience* mean value is 6.3 or 21.4 % above the norm for Germany. But for the German “more religious than spiritual” group, the means for

Table 12.3 Means of the NEO-FFI Scales in the German Subsample of the Spirituality Project Data Compared with Normative Results for Germany

	Spirituality study data					Normative values
	More religious than spiritual (<i>n</i> = 79)	Equally religious and spiritual (<i>n</i> = 146)	More spiritual than religious (<i>n</i> = 377)	Neither religious nor spiritual (<i>n</i> = 171)	Total German sample (<i>n</i> = 773)	(Borkenau & Ostendorf, 2008) (<i>N</i> = 871)
<i>Neuroticism</i>	19.5 (8.6) <i>t</i> = -1.6 <i>p</i> = .109 <i>d</i> = -0.19	19.1 (8.6) <i>t</i> = -2.7 <i>p</i> = .008 <i>d</i> = -0.24	19.1 (8.4) <i>t</i> = -3.8 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.24	17.7 (7.7) <i>t</i> = -5.0 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.42	18.8 (8.3) <i>t</i> = -5.5 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.27	21.0 (7.9)
<i>Extraversion</i>	27.9 (6.2) <i>t</i> = 1.3 <i>p</i> = .189 <i>d</i> = 0.15	28.7 (6.4) <i>t</i> = 3.1 <i>p</i> = .002 <i>d</i> = 0.28	27.4 (6.4) <i>t</i> = 1.3 <i>p</i> = .210 <i>d</i> = 0.08	26.7 (6.7) <i>t</i> = -0.4 <i>p</i> = .714 <i>d</i> = -0.03	27.6 (6.5) <i>t</i> = 2.2 <i>p</i> = .029 <i>d</i> = 0.11	26.9 (6.5)
<i>Openness</i>	31.6 (5.5) <i>t</i> = 2.8 <i>p</i> = .006 <i>d</i> = 0.33	34.4 (5.8) <i>t</i> = 8.6 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.77	35.9 (5.2) <i>t</i> = 16.9 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 1.04	36.0 (5.0) <i>t</i> = 12.4 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 1.04	35.2 (5.5) <i>t</i> = 19.1 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.94	29.5 (6.5)
<i>Agreeableness</i>	34.4 (5.1) <i>t</i> = 6.2 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.72	34.3 (5.9) <i>t</i> = 7.8 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.69	33.6 (5.5) <i>t</i> = 9.3 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.57	31.2 (5.4) <i>t</i> = 1.5 <i>p</i> = .122 <i>d</i> = 0.13	33.3 (5.6) <i>t</i> = 10.3 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = 0.51	30.5 (5.4)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	31.9 (6.2) <i>t</i> = -1.0 <i>p</i> = .330 <i>d</i> = -0.12	32.3 (6.0) <i>t</i> = -0.6 <i>p</i> = .582 <i>d</i> = -0.05	30.3 (6.3) <i>t</i> = -6.1 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.37	30.7 (6.8) <i>t</i> = -3.7 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.31	31.0 (6.4) <i>t</i> = -5.2 <i>p</i> < .001 <i>d</i> = -0.26	32.6 (6.1)

Note Standard deviations in brackets; variables for sex, age, cultural capital and per-capita income have been controlled in the analysis with the Spirituality Project data; *t* and *p* result from two-sample *t*-test calculations; *d* indicates the effect size of the differences resulting from Cohen’s *d* calculations

openness to experience are also above the norm, however moderately; and for the “equally religious and spiritual” group, the *openness to experience* mean is higher and closer to the “more spiritual than religious” group, compared to their American equivalents. Thus, for the German subsample, the conclusion which we stated for the US sample is less strongly supported, but still suggests: The more respondents self-identify as “religious,” the lower their *openness to experience*; the more they self-identify as “spiritual,” the higher their *openness to experience*. And again, also in the German sample, the means in *openness to experience* for

the “neither religious nor spiritual” group is slightly higher than for the “more spiritual than religious” group—which means that *openness to experience* is not only high for those who self-identify with “spirituality,” but also for those who reject “spirituality” together with “religion.”

It is finally noteworthy that all groups, except the group of the “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents, in the German sample have higher means on *agreeableness*, compared with the normative value of *agreeableness* for Germany. These differences are highly significant and with middle effect sizes ($d_{Cohen} > 0.55$); but for

“neither religious nor spiritual” respondents the difference to the normative value is insignificant and without effect size. This result appears less surprising when we take into account that in the German population, according to recent survey results (GESIS, 2013; ALLBUS 2012, 2013), only a small minority indicates that they are “spiritual” (5.5 %) or “rather spiritual” (10.5 %), while a majority in our German Spirituality sample indicate that they are “spiritual” (40.5 %) or “rather spiritual” (25.5 %). And interestingly, not only the “more religious than spiritual” and “equally religious and spiritual” respondents are considerably higher in *agreeableness*—which corresponds to previous results (e.g. Saroglou, 2010)—, but also the German “more spiritual than religious” respondents are clearly above the norm in *agreeableness*.

Taken together, we can summarize and conclude:

1. *Openness to experience* is the NEO-FFI scale on which the respondents in both the USA and Germany in our Spirituality Study have greatest differences to the normative values.
2. The “more spiritual than religious” respondents in both countries score particularly high on *openness to experience*, with highly significant and effective difference to the normative values for the USA and for Germany. This could be interpreted in support of the assumption that self-attributed “spirituality” is associated with *openness to experience*.
3. Highest on *openness to experience* are not only the “more spiritual than religious,” but also the “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents in both the USA and Germany, with greatest difference, significance and effect size in regard to the normative values. We conclude from this that not only “spiritual” self-understanding, but also, and even more so, the rejection of “religion” and “spirituality,” thus a secular identity, may be associated with *openness to experience*.
4. Mean scores in *agreeableness* are lower than the norm for the US respondents, and higher for the German respondents. This may point toward a cultural difference: In a cultural

environment in which it is socially desired to be both “religious” and “spiritual” such as the USA, secular and “more religious than spiritual” are lower in *agreeableness*; in contrast, in a cultural environment in which it is less common to identify as “religious” and only a minority identifies as “spiritual,” people who identify as “religious” or as “spiritual” or both, are higher in *agreeableness* than normal.

Is It Possible to Predict Self-rated “Spirituality” from Personality?

The answer is plainly: No. In the data of our Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality,” correlations between NEO-FFI scales and self-rated “spirituality” are rather marginal and insignificant (see Table 12.4), and regression weights and variance explained in regression analyses (not reported here) were very low; thus, we came to the conclusion that it is not possible to predict self-rated “spirituality” from the NEO-FFI scales in our data. Nevertheless, as we will present in Chap. 25, we found that it is possible to predict the level of *neuroticism* with the three subscales of the Mysticism Scale (Hood, 1975). Thus, changing the direction of prediction and using a comprehensive measure of “spiritual” experience instead of a single item for self-rated “spirituality” appears to offer further insights.

An answer to the question of predictability of “spirituality” by the NEO-FFI appears necessary because the comparison with normative values for the USA and Germany has revealed that our group of “more spiritual than religious” respondents has means on *openness to experience* very high above the norm, and one may be tempted to assume that there exists a predictive effect of this specific NEO-FFI scale specifically on self-rated “spirituality”—and ignore the fact that already the even slightly higher *openness to experience* mean for the “neither religious nor spiritual” group may raise some doubt, and, on closer scrutiny, it should be obvious that also the factor “religion” may have an effect on the scores of the “more spiritual than religious” group. But it may be

necessary to take a closer look into our data to call this assumption into question to resolve this issue.

To document this impossibility and allow more detailed inspection of our data, we present (Table 12.4) the correlations of the NEO-FFI variables with self-rated “spirituality,” but also include, for comparison, the correlations with self-rated “religion” and the self-identifications as “atheist” or “non-theist.” It may be interesting to investigate correlations also on the facet level. Therefore we included the NEO-FFI facets constructed according to Saucier (1998) and Chapman (2007).

Table 12.4 shows that none of the NEO-FFI scale scores has high correlations with self-rated “spirituality.” Moderate correlations exist only between *agreeableness* and “spirituality” ($r_{USA} = .21, p < .01; r_{GER} = .24, p < .01$) and between *extraversion* and “spirituality” for the US respondents ($r = .18, p < .01$). However, only marginal or zero correlations are observed between *openness to experience* and self-rated “spirituality.” This may suffice as evidence to discourage any further search for predicting effects.

Interesting, however, are the relatively high or moderate, but negative correlations between self-rated “religion” and *openness to experience* ($r_{USA} = -.40, p < .01; r_{GER} = -.24, p < .01$) and, on the other side, moderate or low, but positive correlations of self-ratings as “atheist”/“non-theist” and *openness to experience*. This pattern is reflected in the facet *intellectual interest* (O2) and—even more pronounced—in the facet *unconventionality* (O3). Here we see the advantage of including not only “religion,” but also “atheist”/“non-theist” self-identifications. A more detailed picture emerges.

How can we interpret this pattern? One important fact, again, is the structure of our samples in both the USA and Germany with ca. 50 % “more spiritual than religious” respondents; and most of these respondents assemble in the respective focus group. Therefore the smaller groups with preference for “religion” or “atheism” more strongly account for the variance—as is obvious from a comparison of the four subgroups with the norm values on *openness to*

experience for each country: The smaller groups either score clearly (“more religious than spiritual”) or somewhat (“equally religious and spiritual”) lower on *openness to experience*, or they score even somewhat higher (“neither religious nor spiritual”) than the, already very high, scores of the majority of the sample.

Personality Profiles of the Focus Groups

As the final step in our presentation of results with the personality scales, we concentrate on the focus groups that we have constructed in our Spirituality sample. The aim is to identify personality profiles for each focus group, on the basis of which lines can be drawn to other quantitative evaluations of our data, and which may illuminate the case studies in later chapters.

The focus groups, as detailed in Chaps. 4 and 5 of this book, are constructed on the basis of the self-identifications as “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious” and “neither religious nor spiritual” (used in Tables 12.2 and 12.3), but use an additional dividing line: the self-identification as “atheist” or “non-theist.” While in the first two groups there were only a few “atheist”/“non-theists” (that were excluded from focus groups), in the “more spiritual than religious” and the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups there were enough “atheists” and “non-theists” to allow separate focus group construction. Thus, we work with six focus groups: the “more religious than spiritual” (FG1), the “equally religious and spiritual” (FG2), the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” (FG3), the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” (FG4), the “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” (FG5) and the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” (FG6).

A set of Analyses of Variance and Post hoc Tests were performed using the six focus groups as independent variables and the NEO-FFI scales as dependent variables; thereby the NEO-FFI scales have been z-scored for each country for better visualization of the specific profiles of the

Table 12.4 Correlations Between NEO-FFI Scales and Facets and “Religious,” “Spiritual” and “Atheist/Non-theist” Self-identifications

	US sample			German sample		
	Rel	Spir	Ant	Rel	Spir	Ant
Neuroticism (sum score)	.01	-.09**	.01	.02	.00	-.07
<i>Self-reproach</i> (N1)	.01	-.10**	.03	.04	.01	-.08*
<i>Anxiety</i> (N2)	.02	-.04	.01	.02	.03	-.08*
<i>Depression</i> (N3)	-.02	-.06*	.02	.01	.00	-.05
Extraversion (sum score)	.13**	.18**	-.12**	.12**	.07	-.08*
<i>Positive affect</i> (E1)	.07*	.17**	-.07*	.07	.11**	-.08*
<i>Sociability</i> (E2)	.17**	.16**	-.12**	.13**	.00	-.06
<i>Activity</i> (E3)	.07*	.11**	-.10**	.09*	.05	-.04
Openness (sum score)	-.40**	-.03	.19**	-.24**	.00	.08*
<i>Aesthetic interest</i> (O1)	-.14**	.10**	.08**	.08*	.20**	-.10**
<i>Intellectual interest</i> (O2)	-.30**	-.01	.17**	-.20**	-.05	.09*
<i>Unconventionality</i> (O3)	-.54**	-.21**	.24**	-.41**	-.20**	.20**
Agreeableness (sum score)	.11**	.21**	-.08**	.19**	.24**	-.17**
<i>Non-antagonistic orient.</i> (A1)	.14**	.22**	-.08**	.18**	.24**	-.16**
<i>Pro-social orientation</i> (A2)	.03	.12**	-.05	.15**	.18**	-.14**
Conscientiousness (sum score)	.10**	.12**	-.09**	.14**	.05	-.04
<i>Orderliness</i> (C1)	.12**	.10**	-.06*	.10**	.09*	-.05
<i>Goal-striving</i> (C2)	.10**	.12**	-.13**	.12**	-.04	-.02
<i>Dependability</i> (C3)	.03	.09**	-.07*	.13**	.04	-.03

Note * Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed): *Rel* self-rated “religion,” *Spir* self-rated “spirituality,” *Ant* self-identification as “atheist” or “non-theist”

focus groups in Figs. 12.1 and 12.2, while Table 12.5 presents the sum score means. In addition, for each focus-group-specific mean value, a Cohen’s *d*-test was performed to estimate the effect size of the mean differences between FG3 (the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist”) and all other focus groups. Because it is not restricted by group size, the Cohen’s *d* is appropriate for our data in which the size for the focus groups that include “atheists”/“non-theists” is rather small.

Figures 12.1 and 12.2 present the focus group profiles of the NEO-FFI scales for both countries. For an adequate comparison of the figures, note that the y-axis in Fig. 12.1 has a range from -1.0 to +1.2, which is considerably larger than in Fig. 12.2, which has range from -0.7 to +0.3.

For the US sample (Fig. 12.1), z-score means for *openness to experience* in FG1 are extremely

low, while extremely high for the (rather small) FG4 of “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists.” Related to this, the effect sizes of mean difference to FG3 are all very high (FG1: $d_{Cohen} = -1.12$; FG2: $d_{Cohen} = -0.75$; FG4: $d_{Cohen} = 0.83$). Compared with the German focus groups (Fig. 12.2), the US “more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist” focus group (FG4) appears extremely high and eventually indicates a cultural difference. And, again, second after *openness to experience*, also *agreeableness* accounts for some differences between the focus group profiles: “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents are less agreeable.

The profiles for the German focus groups (Fig. 12.2) appear considerably different from the US focus group profiles: While, again, *openness to experience* accounts for most of the diversity and, with secondary effect size, low *agreeableness* is

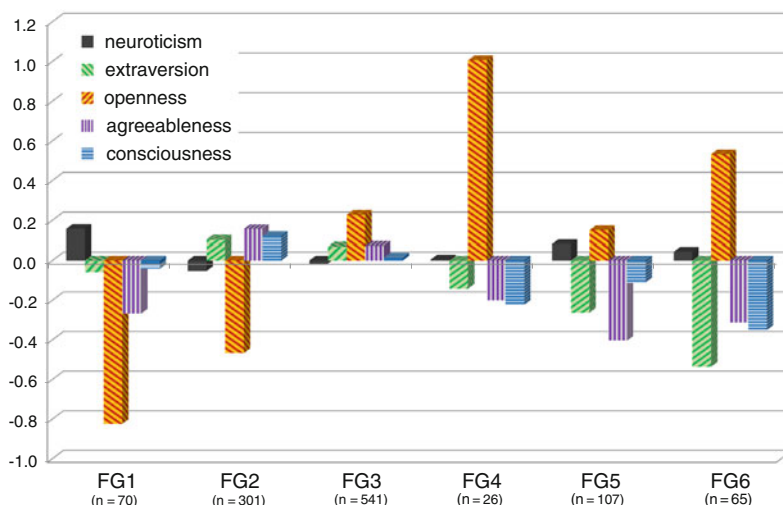


Fig. 12.1 Patterns of the NEO-FFI Scales for the Six Focus Groups in the US Sample

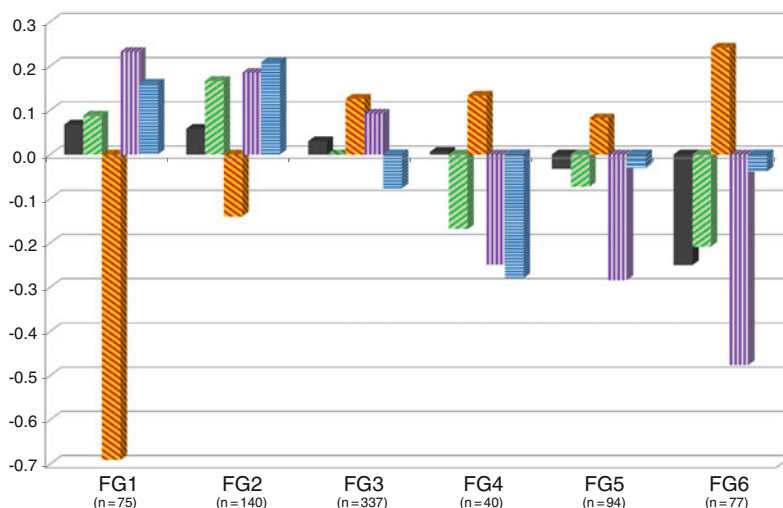


Fig. 12.2 Patterns of the NEO-FFI Scales for the Six Focus Groups in the German Sample

Note FG1 the “more religious than spiritual” focus group; FG2 the “equally religious and spiritual” focus group; FG3 the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; FG4 the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group; FG5 the “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; FG6 the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” focus group; *d* Cohen’s *d*, indicating the effect size of the mean difference

the characteristic for the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups—very pronounced in the FG6 of the “neither religious nor spiritual atheist and non-theist”, considerable cultural differences between the German and the US focus groups are obvious: The German “more religious than spiritual” focus group (FG1) is characterized by relatively high *agreeableness*, while *openness to*

experience is extremely low for this focus group. Therefore, the difference to the reference focus group of the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theist” respondents (FG3) is very high with very high effect size ($d_{Cohen} = 0.86$). A further observation is that there are almost no differences in *openness to experience* between the focus groups FG3, FG4, FG5,

Table 12.5 Means of the NEO-FFI Scales for the Six Focus Groups and Comparison of the “More Spiritual Than Religious, Not Atheist/Non-theist” Focus Group with the Other Five Focus Groups

	More religious than spiritual	Equally religious and spiritual	More spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist	More spiritual than religious atheist or non-theist	Neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist	Neither religious nor spiritual atheist or non-theist
US sample	<i>n</i> = 70	<i>n</i> = 301	<i>n</i> = 541	<i>n</i> = 26	<i>n</i> = 107	<i>n</i> = 65
<i>Neuroticism</i>	22.1 (7.6) <i>d</i> = 0.18	20.3 (8.1) <i>d</i> = -0.06	20.6 (8.6)	20.8 (10.2) <i>d</i> = 0.02	21.5 (9.5) <i>d</i> = 0.10	21.1 (9.6) <i>d</i> = 0.06
<i>Extraversion</i>	28.5 (6.9) <i>d</i> = -0.13	29.6 (6.4) <i>d</i> = 0.03	29.4 (6.7)	27.9 (6.8) <i>d</i> = -0.22	27.1 (7.7) <i>d</i> = -0.34	25.2 (7.2) <i>d</i> = -0.62
<i>Openness</i>	26.0 (5.4) <i>d</i> = -1.12	28.5 (6.3) <i>d</i> = -0.75	33.3 (6.6)	38.7 (4.9) <i>d</i> = 0.83	32.7 (6.4) <i>d</i> = -0.09	35.4 (5.6) <i>d</i> = 0.32
<i>Agreeableness</i>	30.2 (6.3) <i>d</i> = -0.34	32.8 (5.9) <i>d</i> = 0.08	32.3 (6.1)	30.6 (4.8) <i>d</i> = -0.28	29.4 (6.3) <i>d</i> = -0.47	29.9 (5.5) <i>d</i> = -0.40
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	32.0 (6.1) <i>d</i> = -0.04	33.1 (6.9) <i>d</i> = 0.11	32.3 (7.2)	30.7 (6.7) <i>d</i> = -0.22	31.5 (6.9) <i>d</i> = -0.11	29.8 (7.4) <i>d</i> = -0.35
German sample	(<i>n</i> = 75)	(<i>n</i> = 140)	(<i>n</i> = 337)	(<i>n</i> = 40)	(<i>n</i> = 94)	(<i>n</i> = 77)
<i>Neuroticism</i>	19.4 (8.1) <i>d</i> = 0.04	19.3 (8.7) <i>d</i> = 0.02	19.1 (8.4)	18.9 (8.8) <i>d</i> = -0.02	18.6 (8.0) <i>d</i> = -0.06	16.7 (7.2) <i>d</i> = -0.29
<i>Extraversion</i>	28.1 (6.0) <i>d</i> = 0.08	28.6 (6.5) <i>d</i> = 0.16	27.6 (6.4)	26.5 (6.2) <i>d</i> = -0.17	27.1 (6.6) <i>d</i> = -0.08	26.2 (6.8) <i>d</i> = -0.22
<i>Openness</i>	31.4 (5.5) <i>d</i> = -0.86	34.4 (5.9) <i>d</i> = -0.28	35.9 (5.1)	35.9 (5.6) <i>d</i> = 0.00	35.6 (5.2) <i>d</i> = -0.06	36.5 (4.7) <i>d</i> = 0.12
<i>Agreeableness</i>	34.6 (5.0) <i>d</i> = 0.15	34.3 (5.9) <i>d</i> = 0.09	33.8 (5.6)	31.9 (5.2) <i>d</i> = -0.34	31.7 (5.3) <i>d</i> = -0.38	30.6 (5.4) <i>d</i> = -0.58
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	32.0 (6.1) <i>d</i> = 0.24	32.3 (6.2) <i>d</i> = 0.29	30.5 (6.3)	29.2 (6.0) <i>d</i> = 0.21	30.8 (6.2) <i>d</i> = 0.05	30.7 (7.5) <i>d</i> = 0.03
Total sample	(<i>n</i> = 145)	(<i>n</i> = 441)	(<i>n</i> = 878)	(<i>n</i> = 66)	(<i>n</i> = 201)	(<i>n</i> = 142)
<i>Neuroticism</i>	20.7 (8.0) <i>d</i> = 0.08	20.0 (8.3) <i>d</i> = 0.00	20.0 (8.5)	19.6 (9.4) <i>d</i> = -0.05	20.1 (8.9) <i>d</i> = 0.01	18.8 (8.6) <i>d</i> = -0.14
<i>Extraversion</i>	28.3 (6.4) <i>d</i> = 0.06	29.3 (6.4) <i>d</i> = 0.09	28.7 (6.6)	27.0 (6.4) <i>d</i> = -0.26	27.1 (7.2) <i>d</i> = -0.24	25.8 (7.0) <i>d</i> = -0.44
<i>Openness</i>	28.8 (6.1) <i>d</i> = -0.89	30.4 (6.7) <i>d</i> = -0.61	34.3 (6.2)	37.0 (5.5) <i>d</i> = 0.44	34.1 (6.0) <i>d</i> = -0.03	36.0 (5.1) <i>d</i> = 0.28
<i>Agreeableness</i>	32.5 (6.1) <i>d</i> = 0.07	33.3 (5.9) <i>d</i> = 0.07	32.9 (5.9)	31.4 (5.0) <i>d</i> = -0.26	30.4 (6.0) <i>d</i> = -0.42	30.2 (5.5) <i>d</i> = -0.46
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	32.0 (6.5) <i>d</i> = 0.06	32.9 (6.7) <i>d</i> = 0.19	31.6 (7.0)	29.8 (6.3) <i>d</i> = -0.26	31.1 (6.6) <i>d</i> = -0.07	30.3 (7.4) <i>d</i> = -0.18

Note Standard deviations in brackets; significances of differences to FG3 on the $p < .05$ level in *italics*; significances on the $p \leq .001$ level in ***bold italics***; *d* = Cohen's *d*, indicating the effect size of these differences thereby medium size effects in *italics*, large effects are in ***bold italics***

and FG6 in Germany. Thus, Germans who distinguish themselves from religion and associate with either “spirituality,” “atheism” or secularity are the ones who are higher in *openness to experience*.

After the profiling of the focus groups on the basis of z-scores—which allows for easy-to-read visualization, but does not allow precise numbers—, we present the NEO-FFI sum score means for all six focus groups in Table 12.5.

Conclusion

The NEO-FFI scales in our data have rather small effects on self-rated “spirituality” per se. As presented in Table 12.4, correlations between self-rated “spirituality” and *agreeableness* are moderate, but low or zero with *openness to experience*. This result apparently contradicts assumptions of a one-to-one correlative and eventually predictive effect between *openness to experience* and “spirituality.” Our results, for example, differ from Schnell’s (2012) findings of a moderate positive correlation ($r = .32, p < .01$) between self-rated “spirituality” and *openness to experience*; and Schnell’s study in this regard directly speaks to our findings because of Schnell’s assessment of “spirituality” and “religion” with *self-ratings*. But our results differ also from the wider field of research, for which we have, in the beginning of this chapter, referred to Saucier and Skrzypinska’s (2006) study and Saroglou’s (2002, 2012) meta-analyses. For an understanding of this difference, we should take into account the structure of our Spirituality sample with means for *openness to experience* high above the normative values, especially for the very large groups of “more spiritual than religious” respondents in both the USA and Germany (see Tables 12.2 and 12.3). Thus, the variance—and highly negative correlations with *openness to experience*—is left to the minority group of more “religious” and less “spiritual” respondents.

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to conclude from moderate correlations to a predictive effect of *openness to experience* for self-rated

“spirituality.” For an example, we may, again, refer to Schnell’s (2012) study, which revealed that, despite moderate correlations, the NEO-PI-R add very little ($\Delta R^2 = .04, n.s.$) to explain variance in self-rated “spirituality” when entered in regression analysis in a second step after variables for ‘sources of meaning.’ This corresponds to previous, more general conclusions that personality per se contributes little to predict or explain religion or spirituality (Piedmont & Wilkins, 2013a, b; Saroglou 2010). Thus, relying on regression analysis and searching for predictor effects in our Spirituality data would very likely be a dead-end road. But prediction was not the focus of the analyses presented in this chapter.

Instead, we have turned the perspective around and demonstrated what kind of personality profiles are characteristic for different versions of self-identified “spirituality” that are represented by the “spiritual”/“religious” self-identification groups and the “spiritual”/“religious”/“atheist” focus groups in two cultural environments, the USA and Germany. This evaluation strategy, including the comparison with country-specific normative values and special attention to cultural differences, resonates with Saroglou’s (2010) suggestion that the personality-environment interaction and the cultural adaption need to be taken into account. However, our focus group construction is going considerably beyond Saroglou’s (2002, 2010) distinction between spirituality/mature faith and religious fundamentalism, and beyond Saucier and Skrzypinska’s (2006) earlier distinction between tradition-oriented religiousness and subjective spirituality: We did not only account for the polar distinction between religion and spirituality, but accounted for a broader variety of versions of self-identified “spirituality,” and thereby explicitly included “atheist”/“non-theist” self-identifications. Thereby we have not only shifted the focus from the etic to the emic, but also from “religion” to “spirituality”—and made it the central construct in our analyses. Thus, viewed in the context of previous research and conceptualization, our analyses and results cover new ground.

After having stated what we did not aim for and how we justify the evaluative strategy we have decided for, we have a positive statement to

make and, in conclusion from our findings, agree with Connelly, Ones, and Chernyshenko (2014, p. 12) that

Openness ... stands out as one of the most important personality traits in studying creativity and innovation, political attitudes, religiosity and spirituality, prejudice and tolerance for diversity, education, and workplace behaviors.

The reason for this positive conclusion is this: When we take the groups, which are constructed according to a set of self-attributions (“spiritual,” “religious,” “atheist”/“non-theist”) and which are embedded in different cultural contexts, as the starting point and then ask for their patterns of personality factors, then the NEO-FFI scales demonstrate their capability for profiling individual and group differences. And here, our results demonstrate that *openness to experience* stands out as the the NEO-FFI scale on which the variety of “spiritualities” in both the US and German context displays greatest differences. This has been demonstrated in the comparison with the normative values (Tables 12.2 and 12.3), but even more detailed and pronounced in the comparison of the focus groups (Figs. 12.1 and 12.2 and Table 12.5).

We conclude from this that *openness to experience* qualifies as the variable on which the individual differences in our sample can be plotted. *Openness to experience* is used as a coordinate for mapping “spirituality”—even down to the level of single cases (see Chap. 14). Could *openness to experience* also qualify as coordinate in a model of “spiritual” development? This is the question which is taken up in Chap. 13.

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Abstract

This chapter presents new perspectives for understanding “spirituality” that emerge from its relation with religious styles and schemata in the data of the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality.” ANOVA results with our focus groups indicate that respondents who self-identify as “more spiritual than religious” in both the USA and Germany have lower scores on *truth of texts and teachings (ttt)*, a subscale of the Religious Schema Scale (RSS); still lower on *ttt*, however, are the respondents who self-identify as “neither religious nor spiritual” or as “atheists” or “non-theists.” Results further indicate that self-identification as “spiritual” (“more spiritual atheist/non-theists” excluded) is associated with a preference for *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog (xenos)*. Religious schema groups, which were constructed according to exclusively high agreement with either *ttt*, *fr*, or *xenos*, profile the relation of the religious schemata to “spirituality” and “religion” further and confirm the relation of “spirituality” with dialogical, xenosophic attitudes. Finally, regression and mediation analyses using structural equation modelling show that *ttt* predicts the self-attribution “religious” stronger than the self-attribution “spiritual,” while *xenos* for most respondents predicts the self-attribution “spiritual,” rather than the self-attribution “religious.” The religious schemata have strong effects in predicting and mediating the predictions on self-rated “religion” and, more important for our project, on self-rated “spirituality.”

Religious Styles and Schemata

Religion is a question of style. This is the central thesis of the religious styles perspective (Streib, 1997, 2003), which has emerged from Fowler’s (1981) faith development theory and, after a critical evaluation (Streib, 1991) of Fowler’s concept, emancipated itself as conceptual and

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methodological revision (Streib, 2001, 2005), which may be better equipped to understand e.g. fundamentalist developmental trajectories (Streib, 2007).

Besides its roots in a developmental perspective on religion, the religious styles perspective belongs to a differential approach to religion and integrates attempts to differentiate various versions of religion-as-schema (Koenig, 1995; McIntosh, 1995; Paloutzian & Smith, 1995) and religion as meaning-making (e.g. Park, 2005, 2007).

Besides revisions in the qualitative research with the faith development interview (see Chap. 17), it was necessary to open a perspective for quantitative assessment. As argued elsewhere (Streib, 2013; Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010), the precise quantitative assessment of religious styles requires attention to religious schemata. A proposal for such assessment is the Religious Schema Scale (RSS, Streib et al., 2010), which has been developed using data from earlier research (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). The RSS has predictive power for inter-religious dialog (Streib & Klein, 2014) and discriminatory effect in regard to religious openness (Ghorbani, Watson, Geranmayepour, & Chen, 2013; Kamble, Watson, Marigoudar, & Chen, 2014; Watson, Chen, & Morris, 2014).

Because it was our hypothesis, as detailed in our Hypothetical Model (see Fig. 4.1 in Chap. 4), that the religious styles perspective, and thus the RSS, may help us understand not only “religious,” but also “spiritual” self-attribution, we included the RSS in the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality.”

The RSS is a 15-item scale measuring three religious schemata with 5 items each: an absolutistic, ethnocentric schema called *truth of texts and teachings* (*ttt*), a religious schema of tolerance toward the other religion (*fairness, tolerance and rational choice, ftr*), and a schema of universalistic openness for dialog (*xenosophical/inter-religious dialog, xenos*). Means and reliabilities for the RSS subscales in our data are presented in Table 4.1 in Chap. 4; sum score means for focus groups are included in Table A.1 in the Appendix; correlations between the three subscales are presented in Table 13.1.

From the relation with religious schemata, we expect a new perspective for understanding “spirituality,” but contextualized in related self-attributions, and also contextualized in the various other measures used in our study. Therefore, we present in Table 13.1 correlations of *ttt*, *ftr* and *xenos* with the most important scales and single items—and among them the self-attributions as “spiritual,” “religious” and “atheist/non-theist” (for details about the scales and single items, see Chap. 4).

Results with the Religious Schema Scale for Self-Rated “Spirituality” and Related Self-Identifications

The presentation of results proceeds as follows: in the first part, we present three perspectives based on (a) the correlations of RSS subscales with other scales, (b) focus-group specific means of the RSS subscales and (c) on the construction of religious schema groups. The second part of the presentation of results in this chapter has its focus on the potential prediction of “religious” and “spiritual” self-rating using structural equation modelling.

Correlations

Table 13.1 presents correlations.¹ We cannot comment any detail in the correlation matrix of Table 13.1, but we point to some noteworthy results. Remarkable are results for *openness to experience*, which will later be important in the structural equation models: *ttt* has relative strong negative correlations with *openness to experience*, in both the US and the German sample, while *xenos* positively correlates with *openness to experience*, stronger in the US sample. Further, for the German respondents, but not for the US respondents, self-rated “religion” correlates with

¹A more extensive correlation matrix of the RSS subscales and many other scales is presented in Table A.5 in the Appendix.

Table 13.1 Correlations of the Three RSS Subscales and with Selected Scales and Single Items

	US sample			German sample		
	<i>tnt</i>	<i>ftt</i>	<i>xenos</i>	<i>tnt</i>	<i>ftt</i>	<i>xenos</i>
<i>tnt</i>	1			1		
<i>ftt</i>	-.06*	1		.07	1	
<i>xenos</i>	-.13**	.42**	1	.18**	.23**	1
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-.04	-.12**	.03	.02	-.09*	.00
<i>Extraversion</i>	.16**	.19**	.12**	.12**	.20**	.12**
<i>Openness</i>	-.47**	.37**	.32**	-.32**	.21**	.17**
<i>Agreeableness</i>	.15**	.32**	.10**	.15**	.25**	.26**
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	.12**	.26**	.02	.11**	.25**	.10**
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	.11**	.11**	.32**	.23**	-.01	.44**
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	-.01	.10**	.40**	.23**	.01	.52**
<i>Interpretation</i>	.35**	.18**	.23**	.43**	-.01	.43**
<i>M-Scale total</i>	.18**	.15**	.35**	.32**	-.01	.50**
Self-rating as “religious”	.72**	-.10**	-.05	.66**	.10**	.18**
Self-rating as “spiritual”	.45**	.09**	.24**	.36**	-.04	.53**
Self-identification as “atheist/non-theist”	-.33**	.05	-.20**	-.32**	.02	-.33**

Note * = correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); ** = correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

xenos, indicating openness for inter-religious dialog for religious individuals.

For self-identified “atheists” and “non-theists,” this pattern is reversed: both *tnt* and *xenos* correlate negatively with “atheist”/“non-theist” self-understanding; and this is the case for both the US and the German respondents. We note also that *ftt* apparently has very low or insignificant correlation with self-identifications as “spiritual,” “religious” or “atheist”/“non-theist.”

In regard to self-rated “spirituality,” it is noteworthy that there are positive correlations with both *tnt* and *xenos*—with a different pattern for the US and the German respondents however. Here, the results from correlation analysis point to a cross-cultural difference: While in the US part of our sample, *tnt* more strongly than *xenos* correlates with self-rated “spirituality,” it is the reverse for the German subsample, where the correlation coefficient is much stronger for *xenos* than for *tnt*. Closer inspection of the focus groups (see Table 13.2) indicates that the group of respondents in the USA who assemble in the focus group of “equally religious and spiritual” respondents may account for the difference: In

the “equally religious and spiritual” group, the means on *tnt* are the highest of all focus groups in the USA. The cross-cultural difference thus reads: Many respondents in the USA adhere rather strongly to the truth of texts and teachings of their “spirituality” (which they could also call their “religion”), while for most respondents in Germany, any identification with “spirituality” more strongly contrasts to any truth of texts and teachings—even if they self-identify as “equally religious and spiritual.” Going more into detail with self-rated “spirituality” in the context of related self-identifications, the mean differences for the focus groups are of interest.

Mean Differences in RSS Scores Between the Focus Groups

Figures 13.1 and 13.2 present, for the US and the German sample, the means of the three RSS subscales for the six focus groups that we have constructed according to self-identification as “more religious than spiritual,” “equally religious and spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious” and

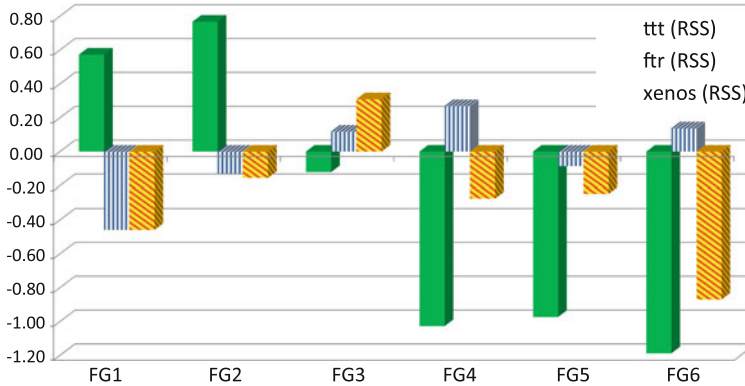


Fig. 13.1 Z-scored Means of the Three RSS Subscales for Focus Groups in the US Sample

Note FG1 = “more religious than spiritual;” FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual;” FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist;” FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists;” FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist;” FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists;” *ttr* truth of texts and teachings; *ftr* fairness, tolerance and rational choice; *xenos* xenosophia/inter-religious dialog

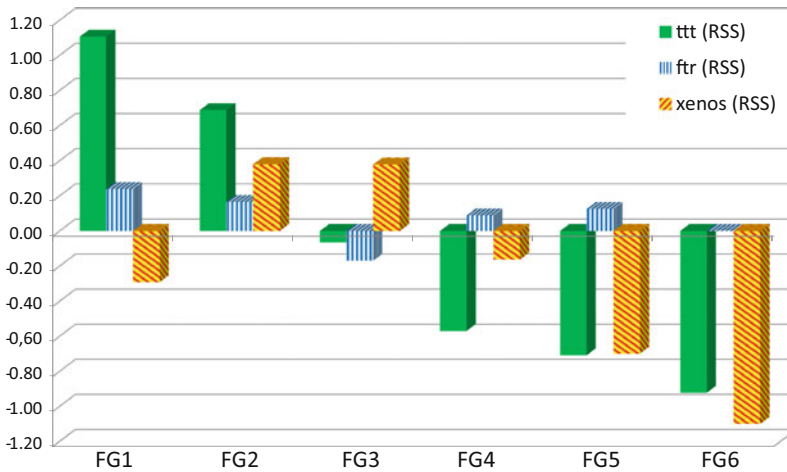


Fig. 13.2 Z-scored Means of the Three RSS Subscales for Focus Groups in the German Sample

“neither religious nor spiritual” in combination with the self-identifications as “atheist”/ “non-theist” (see Chap. 4 for details). Means have been z-scored separately for the US and the German samples. Table 13.2 presents the respective sum-score mean values and also the effect size estimates for the mean differences between the “more spiritual than religious” respondents and all other focus groups.

Our central focus group is FG3. These “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” respondents present “spirituality” in its purest

form, i.e. combined with neither “religion” nor with “atheism/non-theism.” This focus group is also the largest group in both subsamples. We thus take FG3 as starting point for comparisons with the two groups on the left, where self-identification as “religious” is equal or higher, and with the three groups on the right, where both “religion” and “spirituality” are rejected and/or respondents self-identify as “atheists” or “non-theists.” This structure is also employed in the columns of Table 13.2. (Cohen’s *d* to FG3), which give the effect size

Table 13.2 Sum Score Means of the Three RSS Subscales for Focus Groups and Effect Size of Mean Difference to Focus Group Three

	Truth of texts and teachings (<i>ttt</i>)			Fairness, tolerance and rational choice (<i>ptr</i>)			Xenosphia/inter-religious dialog (<i>xenos</i>)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i> to FG3	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i> to FG3	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i> to FG3
US sample									
FG1	17.9	4.2	0.8	20.0	3.4	−0.6	15.4	3.6	−0.8
FG2	19.1	4.3	1.1	21.0	3.1	−0.3	19.7	4.5	−0.5
FG3	13.4	5.9		21.8	3.0		18.7	3.9	
FG4	7.6	4.2	−1.0	22.3	2.5	0.2	16.2	2.1	−0.6
FG5	7.9	3.9	−1.0	21.2	3.5	−0.2	16.3	3.6	−0.6
FG6	6.5	2.9	−1.2	21.9	2.5	0.0	13.7	3.5	−1.3
German sample									
FG1	16.6	4.5	1.4	22.5	2.0	0.4	16.8	4.2	−0.8
FG2	14.4	4.7	0.9	22.4	2.2	0.3	20.0	3.9	0.0
FG3	10.4	4.4		21.5	2.8		20.0	3.6	
FG4	7.8	3.2	−0.6	22.2	2.3	0.2	17.4	3.2	−0.6
FG5	7.0	4.0	−0.8	22.3	2.0	0.3	15.1	3.6	−1.3
FG6	5.9	2.0	−1.1	22.0	2.0	0.2	13.4	2.8	−1.8

Note FG1 = “more religious than spiritual” ($n_{USA} = 70$; $n_{GER} = 75$); FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual” ($n_{USA} = 302$; $n_{GER} = 140$); FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” ($n_{USA} = 540$; $n_{GER} = 337$); FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” ($n_{USA} = 26$; $n_{GER} = 40$); FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” ($n_{USA} = 107$; $n_{GER} = 94$); FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” ($n_{USA} = 65$; $n_{GER} = 77$); Cohen’s *d* to FG3 = effect size estimate for the difference of means for respective focus groups to the focus group of the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” (FG3) respondents; According to Cohen (1988), effect sizes are interpreted as follows: $d < 0.2$ indicates no effect, $0.2 \leq d < 0.5$ indicates a small, $0.5 \leq d < 0.8$ a medium, and $d \geq 0.8$ a large effect size

estimates of the difference of means between FG3 and the specific focus groups.

For both “religious” focus groups on the left, FG1 and FG2, in both the US and German sample, *ttt* is considerably higher compared with FG3. However, already here cultural differences are obvious: *ttt* for the US FG1 differs from *ttt* of US FG3 with Cohen’s $d = 0.77$, thus with medium effect size, while for the German sample, a large effect size (Cohen’s $d = 1.42$) of this difference is estimated. Reverse for focus groups FG2: here the US FG2 differs from FG3 on *ttt* with Cohen’s $d = 1.06$, while, for the German sample, this difference is $d = 0.90$. These results indicate that US respondents who self-identify as “equally religious and spiritual” not only score highest of all focus groups on *truth of text and teachings*, but differ in this regard extremely effective from FG3 members. In the German

sample, the “more religious than spiritual” respondents (FG1) show this extreme difference.

Attending to *xenos* in FG1 in the US and the German samples, it is obvious that the “more religious than spiritual” respondents in both countries have the lowest scores on *xenos* of all religious or spiritual focus groups. The difference respective to FG3 is large with $d = -0.84$ for the US and medium size with $d = -0.76$ for the German groups. An interesting cultural difference emerges in the FG2: While for the US FG2, *xenos* is low and below average with a small difference ($d = -0.46$) to FG3, FG2 has high scores on *xenos* in the German sample and the difference to FG3 is zero. This confirms what we have already described above, and supports the conclusion that, for the German respondents, any self-identification with “spirituality” is associated with high regard for the attitude of inter-religious dialog.

Turning to the right side of the figures and evaluating focus groups FG4, FG5 and FG6, it is obvious on first sight that *ttt* is very low and negative. People who reject both self-identifications, “spiritual” and “religious,” strongly disagree with *ttt*. Most pronounced is the disagreement with *ttt* among the self-identified “atheists” and “non-theists,” and most extreme is the difference for the US FG4: The “more spiritual atheists/non-theists” in the US sample are extremely low on *ttt* with very large difference ($d = -1.00$) to FG3. Thus, within the group of “more spiritual than religious” respondents, self-identification as “atheist” or “non-theist” makes a great difference. And, finally, the “neither religious nor spiritual atheist and non-theists” have strongest rejection for *xenos*—which is most extreme for the German FG6 with the largest difference effect size ($d = -1.81$) to FG3.

Taken together, the religious schemata measured by the RSS, primarily *ttt*, secondarily *xenos* reveal as very effective indicators that help to profile “spirituality” as characteristic of the focus groups.

Religious Schema Group Construction

In this section we present religious schema groups that are characterized by an exclusive preference for one specific religious schema. Memberships to the religious schema groups were calculated on the basis of z-scored means for *ttt*, *ftt* and *xenos*. The rationale is this: respondents who have positive z-scores on *ttt* that are higher than their z-scores on both *ftt* and *xenos* are assigned to the “Traditionalist Schema” group; respondents who have positive z-scores on *ftt* that are higher than their z-scores for both *ttt* and *xenos* are assigned to the “Tolerant Schema” group; and finally respondents who have positive z-scores on *xenos* that are higher than their z-scores on both *ttt* and *ftt* are assigned to the “Xenosophic Schema” group. Thus in these religious schema groups gather the cases with most pronounced preference for the respective religious schema. This group construction resulted in group sizes as presented in Table 13.3.

Table 13.3 Religious Schema Groups in the US and German Sample

	US sample	German sample	Total
Traditionalist schema group	410	206	616
Tolerant schema group	262	232	494
Xenosophic schema group	313	224	537
Total	985	662	1647

Note Because the cases with negative z-scores have been excluded in religious style group construction, the number of valid cases is reduced

Already cross-tabulation, which is the basis for Fig. 13.3, opens interesting insights: The Traditionalist Schema group members represent over 70 % in focus groups FG1, including also FG2 for the USA. This is another confirmation that most traditionalists assemble in the focus groups with a “more religious than spiritual” self-identification. That this strong presence of the Traditionalist Schema includes also the US focus group of the “equally religious and spiritual” respondents reflects the cross-cultural difference that we have seen already: FG2 is the focus group for the US respondent who prefer “religion” and “tradition” and use “spirituality” as well, but only in combination with “religion”—and eventually subordinated to “religion.”

The distribution of the Tolerant Schema in the six focus groups in both countries indicates that this schema, contrary to the impression that could have emerged from observation of rather high mean agreement with *ftt*, but very low variance of *ftt* across the focus groups, does play an important role: For “atheist” and “non-theists” in particular, the Tolerant Schema group members represent over 90 % of the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” and over 85 % of the “more spiritual atheists/non-theists” in the USA (FG4). This has to do, of course, also with the very low presence of members of the Traditionalist and Xenosophic Schema groups. But this distribution structure applies to all other focus groups as well—and should not lead to

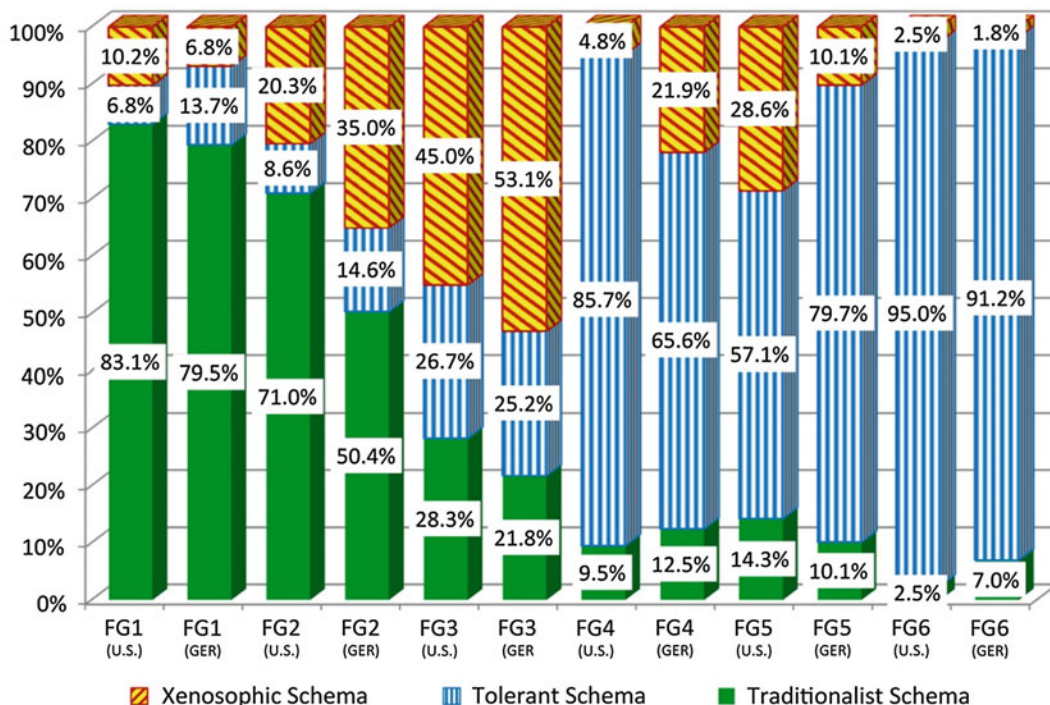


Fig. 13.3 Frequencies of Religious Schema Group Memberships in the Focus Groups in the US and German Samples

Note FG1 = “more religious than spiritual” ($n_{USA} = 59$; $n_{GER} = 73$); FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual” ($n_{USA} = 290$; $n_{GER} = 137$); FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” ($n_{USA} = 498$; $n_{GER} = 294$); FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” ($n_{USA} = 21$; $n_{GER} = 32$); FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” ($n_{USA} = 77$; $n_{GER} = 69$); FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” ($n_{USA} = 40$; $n_{GER} = 57$)

underrate the result that the most prominent characteristic of respondents who self-identify as “atheist” and “non-theist” is tolerance, rather than traditionalism or xenophobia.

Of particular importance for our question of “spirituality” and religious schemata is the distribution of the Xenosophic Schema group members: Over 50 % in the German sample and over 45 % in the US sample assemble in FG3 of the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus groups. This documents the relation between xenosophic and dialogical attitudes and self-rated “spirituality.”

In addition to the assessment of the distribution in the focus groups, we calculated and compared the means of the three religious schema groups for self-rated “religion” and “spirituality” using analysis of variance and a post hoc test. Based on these results, the centroids of the three religious schema groups are plotted in the field with

self-rated “religion” and “spirituality” as coordinates in Figs. 13.4 and 13.5.

The figures visualize that the Tolerant Schema groups for both countries have their centroid in the lower left segment, where scores for self-rated “religion” are low and “spirituality” is below the means for the respective country sample. Conversely, the Traditionalist Schema groups have their centroid in the upper right field segment, where self-rated “religion” is clearly above the means and in the positive spectrum, and self-rated “spirituality” is also above means for the respective country. The Traditionalist Schema thereby is clearly characterized as “spiritual and religious.” Thus, the difference to the Xenosophic Schema groups is mainly their lower preference for “religion,” while their self-rating as “spiritual” is not much different from the traditionalists in the US, but somewhat higher for the German Xenosophic Schema group.

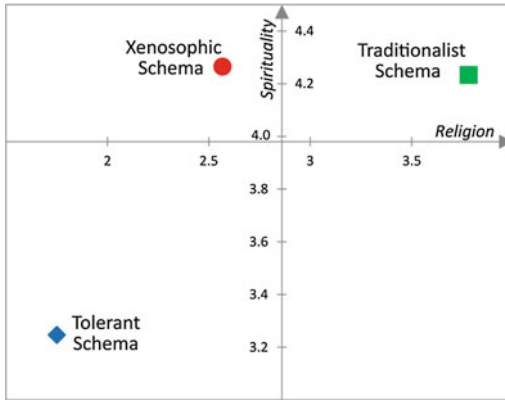


Fig. 13.4 Centroids for US Religious Schema Groups for Self-rated “Religion” and “Spirituality”

Note The axes cut each other at the mean value for self-rated “religion” and “spirituality” in the US sample

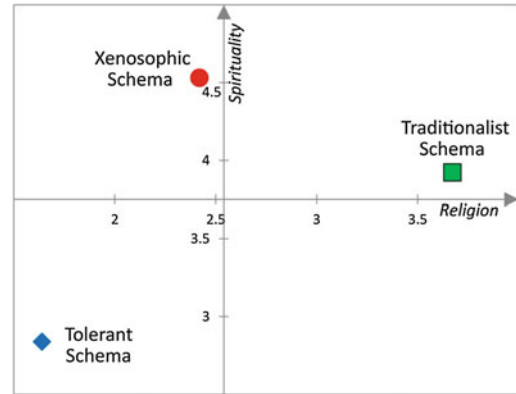


Fig. 13.5 Centroids for German Religious Schema Groups for Self-rated “Religion” and “Spirituality”

Note The axes cut each other at the mean value for self-rated “religion” and “spirituality” in the German sample

Taken together, the religious schema groups, because of their pronounced focus, help us profile the relation of the three religious schemata in relation to self-rated “religion” and “spirituality.” Generally the assumption is supported that *xenos* (the Xenosophic Schema group) clearly relates to “spirituality,” while *trt* (the Traditionalist Schema group) relates more strongly to “religion”—but we need to take into account that this happens on a rather high level of “spirituality,” especially in the US data, where Xenosophic and Traditionalist Schema groups are on about the same level of self-rating as “spiritual.”

Religious Schemata as Predictors for Self-Rated “Spirituality”

After profiling the religious schemata in correlational analyses and analyses of variance, it is a next step to investigate the potential predicting and mediating effects of religious schemata on the self-rating as being “spiritual” in comparison with the self-rating as being “religious.” Thereby structural equation modelling using AMOS 22 software was employed for regression analyses estimating the effects of the three factors of the Religious Schema Scale, *trt*, *frt*, and *xenos*, on the

self-rating items for “spirituality” and “religion” in our questionnaire.

Thereby the following research questions were addressed: a. Are there direct predicting effects of the three religious schemata measured by the RSS on self-rated “religion” and “spirituality”? b. To what extent do the three religious schemata operate as mediators, when we include other potential predictors in the equation? As detailed in Chap. 14, two scales stand out in our data for mapping—and potentially predicting—“spirituality”: *mysticism* measured by Hood’s (1975) *Mysticism Scale*, which has revealed as rather effective indicator for “spirituality” (see Chap. 11), and *openness to experience*, a scale of the NEO Five Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1985), the relation of which to “spirituality” and other self-attributions were investigated (results are presented and discussed in Chap. 12).

To investigate the potential predicting and mediating effects of the religious schemata, we proceeded in three steps and tested three models: Model 1 tests the direct effects of the three RSS subscales on “spirituality” and “religion”; Model 2 tests the direct effects of *mysticism* and *openness to experience* on “spirituality” and “religion”; and finally, Model 3 integrates Model 1 and Model 2 into one equation in order to estimate the mediating

effect of the three RSS subscales when *openness to experience* and *mysticism* are treated as predictors and “religion” and “spirituality” as targets.

Model 1: Regression of the Three RSS Subscales on Self-Rated “Religion” and “Spirituality”

Model 1 for the regression of the RSS subscales on self-rated “religion” and “spirituality” is presented in Fig. 13.6, where circles represent latent variables, rectangles represent measured variables. Thereby observed variables for the RSS items, and also error terms, have been blinded for more easy reading of the figure.

The total data set contains responses from $N = 1886$ participants. Seventeen cases had to be excluded from the analyses because of missing data in the variables for self-rated “religion” and/or “spirituality.” Thus $N = 1869$ cases remained for the structural equation modelling estimation. There were no missing data. While various sets of multi-group-analyses were performed, we present here the analysis with sample split for German ($n = 769$) and US ($n = 1106$) respondents.

Maximum likelihood estimation was employed to calculate the model. After respecification of the model,² we obtain the following estimation of results for regression weights and squared multiple correlations: The multiple squared correlations for both target variables, “*religious*” and “*spiritual*” are remarkably high

($R^2 \geq .50$), except for “spirituality” in the US sample ($R^2 = .37$, which is still considerable). Thus, generally we may conclude that the three religious schemata explain considerably high portions of the variance in the “spiritual”/“religious” self-attributions—indicating that religious styles and schemata play a strong role in understanding self-rated “religion” and “spirituality.”

We further observe, as expected, high regressions weights from *ttt* on self-rated “religion” ($\beta = .77, p < .001$ for the US; $\beta = .68, p < .001$ for the German sample). Stronger adherence to the texts and teachings of one’s religious tradition potentially predicting self-rated “religion” is not a surprising finding and as expected; it is more surprising that *ttt* positively relates also to self-rated “spirituality”—which is for Germany moderately high, but positive ($\beta = .19, p < .001$), but with $\beta = .56$ ($p < .001$) considerably high for the US respondents. This reflects that “spirituality” is not unvaryingly understood as opposed to “religion” by our respondents, less so by the US respondents; especially for them, adherence to the texts and teachings of one’s religious tradition may to great extent also predict self-rated “spirituality.”

However, *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* appears to clearly ($\beta = .77, p < .001$ for the US; $\beta = .68, p < .001$ for the German sample) predict self-rated “spirituality,” but not (or considerably lower) self-rated “religion.” This also supports our assumptions.

Taken together, the structural equation in Model 1 supports the assumption that self-rated “religion” and “spirituality” may be a question of style (cf. Streib, 2003)—with the effect that *xenos* clearly predicts “spirituality” and *ttt* strongly predicts “religion” and, somewhat lower, “spirituality.” Thus, Model 1 is in itself a valid contribution to understanding self-rated “religion” and “spirituality,” demonstrating the potential predicting effect of religious schemata in the RSS. However, to investigate this in greater detail and make the case stronger, also the mediating effect of the RSS was put to the test. The two following models, Model 2 and Model 3, belong together, because mediation should be tested in two equations: one with and one without the mediator.

²The estimation for the (not yet respecified) model with five observed variables for each RSS subscale resulted in the following fit indices: $\chi^2 = 2263.152, df = 222, CFI = .85, RMSEA = .070$ (lower bound = .068, higher bound = .073) for the country-split analysis. While the RMSEA indicates not a close (cf. Browne & Cudeck, 1992), but, for the purpose of the study, acceptable fit of the model, the CFI is considerably below the level of .90 for a close model fit (Bentler, 1990). Inspection of the modification index indicated that especially one item of the RSS (RSS 14, the fourth item in the subscale of *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog*) may considerably contribute to the poor model fit. Therefore, the model has been post hoc modified by deleting item RSS 14 from the model. Figure 13.3 presents estimation based on this respecified model, which now had improved fit indices.

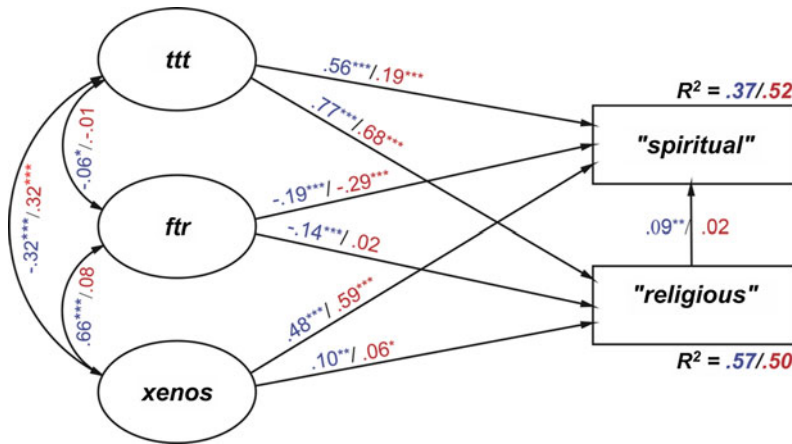


Fig. 13.6 Effects of Religious Schema Scale Subscales on Self-rated “Spirituality” and “Religion”

Note model fit indices: $\chi^2 = 1655.722$, $df = 192$, CFI = .88, RMSEA = .064 (upper bound = .067, lower bound = .061); estimates of regression weights and multiple squared correlations for the US sample are first numbers (before the slash and in blue color), estimates for the German sample are presented after the slash (in red color); *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .01$, * = significant with $p < .05$; *ttt* truth of texts and teachings, *ftr* fairness, tolerance and rational choice, *xenos* xenosophia/inter-religious dialog; “spiritual” = self-rating on the 5-point scale as “spiritual;” “religious” = self-rating on the 5-point scale as “religious” (color figure online)

Model 2: Regression of Mysticism and Openness to Experience on Self-Rated “Religion” and “Spirituality”

A second model was developed for the estimation of the regression of *openness to experience*, one of the NEO-FFI scales (Costa & McCrae, 1985), and *mysticism* as measured by Hood’s (1975) *Mysticism Scale* on self-rated “religion” and self-rated “spirituality.” Model 2 is presented in Fig. 13.7. Again, circles represent latent variables, rectangles represent measured variables. Thereby all observed variables, i.e. facets for *openness to experience* and *mysticism* (see Chaps. 11 and 12 for details), latent variables for the *mysticism* factors, and also error terms have been blinded for more easy reading of the figure.

Again, the results for the country-split analysis are presented and only the elementary estimates for regression weights and squared multiple correlations are included in the figure. Multiple squared correlations indicate for the German sample a low and for the US sample a high explained variance for self-rated “religion” and, for the US sample, a somewhat lower, but for the German sample a considerably higher

explained variance for self-rated “spirituality.” To prevent over-interpretation, however, the high regression weight of “religious” on “spiritual,” which is $\beta = .32$ ($p < .001$) for the US sample and still $\beta = .16$ ($p < .001$) for the German sample has to be taken into account. Thus, squared multiple correlations indicate that *openness to experience* together with *mysticism*—and these two latent variables alone—do explain portions of self-rated “religion” and “spirituality.”

Regression weights display a familiar pattern (see Chap. 12 for details and for references): *Openness to experience* strongly, but *negatively* relates to self-rated “religion” ($\beta = -.65$, $p < .001$ for the US sample; $\beta = -.34$, $p < .001$ for the German sample). The regression weights of *openness to experience* on self-rated “spirituality” are not significant. *Mysticism*, in contrast, has strong and *positive* regression weights on self-rated “spirituality” ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$ for the US sample; $\beta = .64$, $p < .001$ for the German sample), but also positive, however considerably lower, regression weights on self-rated “religion.”

Taken together, the strongest effects on self-rated “spirituality” are performed in Model 2 by *mysticism*, which has strong regression weights on self-rated “spirituality,” especially for the

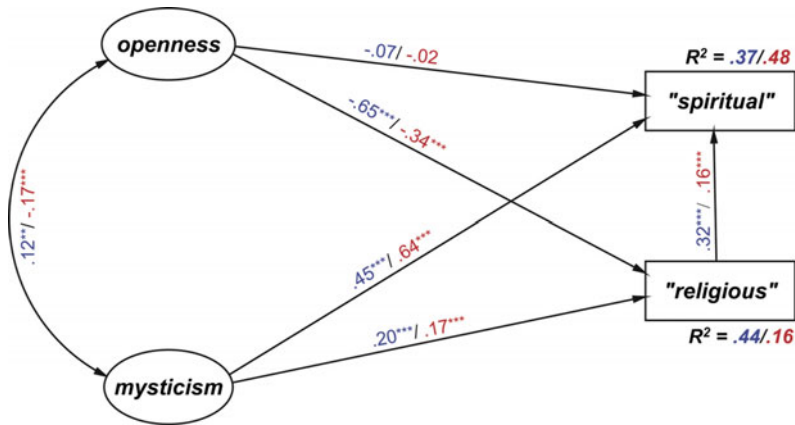


Fig. 13.7 Effects of *Openness to Experience* and *Mysticism* on Self-rated “Spirituality” and “Religion”

Note model fit indices (after post hoc respecification): post hoc model respecification was performed to develop a better fitting model. Inspection of the modification index suggested the control of the high correlation of error terms of two *openness to experience* facets, *aesthetic interest* and *intellectual interest*. This respecification appears justified not only by statistics, but also from apparent content overlap and resulted in an improvement of model fit indices $\chi^2 = 1315.322$, $df = 114$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .075 (upper bound = .079, lower bound = .072); estimates of regression weights and multiple squared correlations for the US sample are first numbers (before the slash and in blue color), estimates for the German sample are presented after the slash (in red color); *** = significant with $p \leq .001$; *openness* = NEO-FFI scale *openness to experience*, *mysticism* = *Mysticism Scale* total score; “spiritual” = self-rating on the 5-point scale as “spiritual;” “religious” = self-rating on the 5-point scale as “religious” (color figure online)

German respondents. This supports our assumptions and the results presented in Chap. 11. *Openness to experience* has effects primarily on self-rated “religion”: The (negative) effects of *openness to experience* on self-rated “religion” are high for the US sample and still strong for the German sample, while effects of *openness to experience* on “spirituality” are insignificant. Therefore we note that an explanation or prediction of self-rated “spirituality” by *openness to experience* is not possible. As argued in more detail in Chap. 12, “spirituality” cannot be explained by personality. In short, we conclude that *mysticism* predicts “spirituality,” while *openness to experience* negatively predicts “religion.”

Model 3: Prediction of Self-rated “Religion” and “Spirituality” by *Openness to Experience* and *Mysticism* Mediated by the Three Religious Schemata

Model 1 and Model 2 are combined in Model 3 for estimating the mediation effects. As argued

also in Chap. 14, *openness to experience* as dimension of personality and *mysticism* as measure for experiences that may relate to religion, are conceptually considered to be prior in predicting “religion” and “spirituality,” while the religious schemata are to be regarded rather as mediators in the equation.

Model 3 is presented in Fig. 13.8, where, again, all observed variables, i.e. facets for *openness to experience* and *mysticism*, latent variables for the *mysticism* factors, RSS items, and also error terms have been blinded for more easy reading of the figure (which is complex enough even in the blinded version). And again, only the results for the country-split analysis are presented.

Multiple squared correlations indicate higher explained variance for self-rated “spirituality,” increasing from $R^2 = .37$ in Model 1 and Model 2 to $R^2 = .45$ in Model 3 for the US sample, and from $R^2 = .52$ in Model 1 and $R^2 = .48$ in Model 2 to $R^2 = .60$ in Model 3 for the German sample. Noteworthy are the low regression weights of “religious” on “spiritual” in Model 3, which are only $\beta = .12$ ($p < .001$) for the US sample and

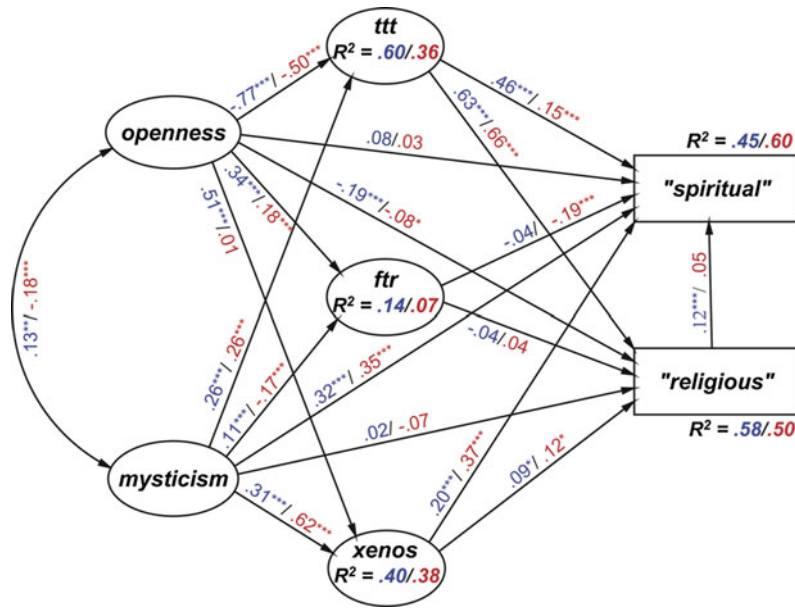


Fig. 13.8 Effects of *Openness to Experience* and *Mysticism* on Self-rated “Spirituality” and “Religion” Mediated by the Religious Schemata

Note model fit indices: $\chi^2 = 4411.801$, $df = 608$; CFI = .86 (We are aware that, according to Bentler (1990), only CFI > .90 indicates a close model fit. But after the combination of Model 1 and Model 2, respecification seemed less appropriate than integrating the models unchanged); RMSEA = .058 (upper bound = .059, lower bound = .056); estimates of regression weights and multiple squared correlations for the US sample are first numbers before the slash (in blue color), estimates for the German sample are presented after the slash (in red color); *** = significant with $p \leq .001$; * = significant with $p < .05$; openness = NEO-FFI scale *openness to experience*, mysticism = *Mysticism Scale* total score; *ttr* = RSS Subscale *truth of texts and teachings*, *ftr* = RSS Subscale *fairness, tolerance and rational choice*, *xenos* = RSS Subscale *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog*; “spiritual” = self-rating on the 5-point scale as “spiritual;” “religious” = self-rating on the 5-point scale as “religious” (color figure online)

insignificant for the German sample. This indicates that *openness to experience* together with *mysticism*, when mediated by the three religious schemata of the RSS, explain large portions of self-rated “spirituality.”

Regression weights display the following patterns: *Openness to experience* strongly, but negatively relates to *ttr*, which in turn relates strongly to self-rated “religion,” while the direct regression weights from *openness to experience* on self-rated “religion” are moderately low for the US sample and very low for the German sample. These direct effects had been high in Model 2. Thus, here we see a clear role of *ttr* mediating between *openness to experience* and self-rated “religion.”

For the prediction of self-rated “spirituality” from *openness to experience*, there is not much to mediate, because regression weights were

insignificant already in Model 2. These regression weights remain insignificant in Model 3, and all predictor effects for “spirituality” come from other variables, such as *ttr* with about the same effect size as in Model 1, and such as *xenos*.³

³Regarding regression from *openness to experience* on *xenos* and further on self-rated “spirituality”, a pattern emerges from the equation that is not easy to understand: for the US sample, a regression weight from *openness to experience* on *xenos* is estimated with $\beta = .51$ ($p < .001$), while for the German sample it is insignificant. To some extent this pattern reflects correlations of *openness to experience* and *xenos* (see Table 13.1), which are estimated by SPSS with $r = .32$ ($p < .001$) for the US sample and $r = .17$ ($p < .001$) for the German sample. However, the extent of the difference in Model 3 is significant, but not easy to explain. Because, however, the regression weights from *xenos* to self-rated “religion” in Model 3 are lower than in Model 1, a mediating effect can be excluded.

For the effect of *mysticism* on self-rated “religion,” a mediating effect is obvious through *ttt*: Results indicate moderately strong regression weights from *mysticism* on *ttt* (which in turn has strong effects on self-rated “religion”), while the direct regression from *mysticism* to self-rated “religion” does not reach significance in Model 3, whereas it had been moderately high and significant in Model 2. In contrast, regressions from *xenos* to self-rated “religion” are low in Model 3 as in Model 1; this excludes a mediating effect of *xenos*.

Also for the effects of *mysticism* on self-rated “spirituality,” a mediating effect is visible, even though less strong than for self-rated “religion”: The direct effect of *mysticism* on self-rated “spirituality” drops from $\beta_{US} = .45$ and $\beta_{GER} = .64$ in Model 2 to $\beta_{US} = .32$ and $\beta_{GER} = .35$ in Model 3 (all significant with $p < .001$), while regression weights of *mysticism* on *ttt* and *xenos* (and further on self-rated “spirituality”) are estimated moderately or rather high. But still, *mysticism* retains significant regression weights of $\beta > .30$ for the effects on self-rated “spirituality.” Different from *ttt* and *xenos*, there is no evident mediating effect of *fr*.

Taken together, the religious schema *truth of text and teachings* has a strong mediating role for the effect of *openness to experience* on self-rated “religion” and a moderate mediating role for the effect of *mysticism* on self-rated “religion.” *Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* has a clear mediating role for the effects of *mysticism* on self-rated “spirituality.”

We conclude that the religious schemata are powerful in predicting and mediating self-rated “religion” and, more important for our research, self-rated “spirituality.” Thereby, confirming our assumptions, *xenos* in particular predicts self-rated “spirituality,” while *ttt* has stronger predicting effects on self-rated “religion.” Mediating effects, however, are not strong enough for regarding *openness to experience* and *mysticism* as obsolete. All together explain the most variance.

Conclusion

From the results presented in this chapter, we conclude that the preferences for “religion” and/or “spirituality” are associated with the preferences for specific religious schemata. Religious schemata have revealed as effective correlates, predictors or mediators of the preference for “spiritual” and/or “religious” self-identifications. For respondents’ self-rating as “spiritual” and/or “religious,” especially two of our three religious schemata measured by the RSS stand out: *truth of text and teachings* and *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog*. For respondents who reject both “spirituality” and “religion” or self-identify as “atheists” or “non-theist,” *fr* plays a decisive role and Tolerant Schema group membership is likely.

As we have seen in the results, *xenos* in particular relates to and predicts self-rated “spirituality,” while *ttt* has stronger associations with self-rated “religion” and the more or equally “religious” focus groups. But *ttt* has also correlative and predictive effects with self-rated “spirituality,” especially for the US respondents; Traditionalist Schema group members are generally highly “spiritual” as well. Thus, results indicate that the picture is a bit more complex, even though generally confirming our assumptions.

While the religious styles perspective began with the intuition and assumption that religion is a question of style (Streib, 1997, 2003), we may now, in light of our results, add that also self-rated “spirituality” may be a question of style. Insofar as the most effective religious schemata, *ttt* and *xenos*, reflect Allport’s (1954) distinction between religion of an ethnocentric order as contrasted to a religion of a universal order, we may conclude on the basis of our results that self-rated “spirituality” stands on the universalistic side.

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Heinz Streib and Ralph W. Hood Jr.

Abstract

The entire volume aims at discovering new perspectives on whether, how and why “spirituality” makes a difference. In this context, this chapter unites central psychological perspectives and presents a new way for mapping “spirituality” and explains the selection of coordinates for such mapping. Thus, this last chapter in the Part on “measuring characteristics and effects of spirituality” draws conclusions from the previous chapters: As detailed in Chaps. 11 and 12, two variables stand out in their effects on self-rated “spirituality”: *mysticism* (assessed by Hood’s Mysticism Scale) and *openness to experience* (a subscale of the NEO Five Factor Inventory). We not only argue in this chapter that these two variables can be used as coordinates for mapping “spirituality” in a two-dimensional space, but demonstrate that “spiritual”/“religious” self-identification groups, semantic preferences, religious schemata and even single cases can plausibly be plotted in the two-dimensional space of *openness to experience* and *mysticism*. Thus, we conclude that these coordinates allow for accounting for and visualizing the difference that “spirituality” makes.

In the hypothetical model for this study (see Chap. 4 in this volume), we included a variety of measures which were hypothesized as predictors, correlates or outcome variables for self-identified “spirituality.” The resulting plentitude of data has been evaluated in previous chapters of this

volume: with special attention to demographics and sociological aspects (Chap. 5), to the instruments assessing the semantics of “spirituality” (Chaps. 6–10), and to the psychological scales that may help to understand “spirituality” in psychological terms (Chaps. 11–13; and later in Chap. 25). Thus, while the entire volume aims at discovering new perspectives on whether, how and why “spirituality” makes a difference, the part of the book of which this chapter draws conclusions had a focus on psychological characteristics of “spirituality.”

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The general question is this: How can “spirituality”—in its commonalities and differences with related self-identifications such as being “religious” or being “atheist” or “non-theist”—be mapped in the framework of the most pertinent psychological measures? This is an ambitious question because it requires checking everything we have in our data in terms of psychological assessments and identifying the most effective measures for mapping “spirituality.”

Examining Psychological Correlates for “Spirituality”

Primary candidates for psychological correlates in our data are: the Big Five personality factors measured with Costa and McCrae’s (1985) NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), *well-being* assessed by the six dimensions of the Ryff’s (1989; Ryff & Singer, 1998) Psychological Well-being and Growth Scale, *generativity* assessed with the Loyola Generativity Scale (McAdams & de St Aubin, 1992), *mysticism* assessed with Hood’s (1975) Mysticism Scale, scores on the Attitudes toward God Scale (Wood et al., 2010), and finally the results with the three subscales of the Religious Schema Scale (Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010).

It is obvious that the identification of most pertinent psychological correlates needs to be selective. Criteria should be: (a) conceptual adequacy and (b) strength of statistical effect. Beginning with the former, our mapping of “spirituality” on psychological correlates should exclude variables that explicitly address religious constructs. Explaining or interpreting “spirituality” by “religion” is problematic. Thus, the Attitudes toward God Scale and the Religious Schema Scale are not considered primary candidates. Taking the other, not explicitly religious, instruments into consideration, it is obvious that the Loyola Generativity Scale and the Ryff Scale for Psychological Well-being and Growth would rather speak to outcomes, while the NEO Five Factor Inventory and the Mysticism Scale focus on predictors. Of course, theoretically it would

be possible to interpret “spirituality” in the framework of outcomes. But the predictor scales receive more plausibility when the aim is understanding “spirituality.” And personality and experiences are more likely to function as predictors. Therefore, from these conceptual considerations, we may focus on the Mysticism Scale and the NEO-FFI.

This selection can be confirmed, but also specified, when we take into account the effects of potential psychological predictors for self-rated “spirituality” in comparison with self-identification as “religious” and as “atheist” or “non-theist.” Table 14.1 presents correlations and thus allows for a comparison.

It is obvious from comparing these correlations that *openness to experience* as single dimension of the Big Five and *mysticism* are the non-religious variables with the strongest correlations and the largest differences in correlations with self-identified “spirituality,” “religion” and “atheism”/“non-theism.” So we may expect to see a rather contrastive profile of “spirituality” in the framework of these two variables.

With this selection, we take the discussion in previous Chaps. 11 and 12 a step further. Now we argue that these two variables can be used as coordinates for mapping “spirituality” in a two-dimensional space and thus allow for a visualization of the difference that “spirituality” makes.

The statistical argument for using *mysticism* and *openness to experience* as coordinates is supported further when we attend not only to correlative commonalities, but also to the differences which these two coordinates have the potential to disclose. We regard the differences between the focus groups as most revealing.

Table 14.2 presents the means for the NEO-FFI and the mysticism scales that were calculated in a series of Analyses of Variance, whereby the variables for sex, age, cultural capital and per-capita income were controlled. Of interest are also the estimates for significance (F -values) and the explained variance (partial η^2). They indicate, both in the US and German sample, largest difference between the focus groups on *openness to experience* as personality dimension and on *mysticism* sum score: With $F(5, 1109) = 56.035$,

Table 14.1 Correlations Between NEO-FFI and Mysticism Scales and Self-ratings as “Religious” and “Spiritual” and the Self-identification as “Atheist/Non-theist”

	US sample			German sample		
	Rel	Spir	Ant	Rel	Spir	Ant
<i>Neuroticism</i> (NEO-FFI)	.01	-.09**	.01	.03	-.00	-.07
<i>Extraversion</i> (NEO-FFI)	.13**	.18**	-.12**	.12**	.07	-.08*
<i>Openness to experience</i> (NEO-FFI)	-.40**	-.03	.19**	-.24**	-.00	.08*
<i>Agreeableness</i> (NEO-FFI)	.11**	.21**	-.08**	.19**	.24**	-.17**
<i>Conscientiousness</i> (NEO-FFI)	.10**	.12**	-.09**	.14**	.05	-.04
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i> (M-scale)	.10**	.43**	-.18**	.16**	.58**	-.34**
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i> (M-scale)	.03	.34**	-.15**	.18**	.61**	-.36**
<i>Interpretation</i> (M-scale)	.28**	.54**	-.29**	.33**	.66**	-.42**
<i>Mysticism (total)</i> (M-scale)	.16**	.49**	-.23**	.24**	.66**	-.40**

Note * = Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); ** = Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed); Rel = self-rating as “religious,” Spir = self-rating as “spiritual,” Ant = self-identification as “atheist” or “non-theist” A table that includes all scales in our data is presented in the Appendix (Table A.4)

$p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .203$ for the US sample and $F(5, 752) = 88.789$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .366$ for the German sample, *mysticism* clearly is the top variable to map the differences between focus groups, followed by *openness to experience*, on which focus groups highly differ in the US sample ($F(5, 1109) = 42.592$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .162$), and in the German sample still with middle effect size ($F(5, 752) = 10.198$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .063$).

These focus group differences are visualized in Fig. 14.1 for the US and in Fig. 14.2 for the German sample using z-scored means. Thereby, an interesting pattern emerges in both the US and the German samples: the “more religious than spiritual” respondents are lowest in *openness to experiences* ($M_{US} = -.82$; $M_{GER} = -.69$) and moderately low in reporting mystical experiences ($M_{US} = -.35$; $M_{GER} = -.25$), while all “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents (FG5 and FG6) report the least mystical experiences ($M_{FG5/US} = -.88$; $M_{FG5/GER} = -.80$; $M_{FG6/US} = -1.19$; $M_{FG6/GER} = -1.40$) and are moderately higher in *openness to experience*.

For a more detailed comparison, we start with the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus groups (FG3)—which are the largest groups in the US ($N = 540$) and the German sample ($N = 337$); FG3 in both cultures are the most interesting in respect to the “spirituality” of

the ordinary “more spiritual” respondents. From this starting point, the difference to the “more religious than spiritual” (FG1), on the one hand, and to the “neither religious nor spiritual” (FG5 and FG6), on the other hand, are very high in both cultures: With effect sizes of Cohen’s d between $-.71$ and -1.12 for the differences between FG3 and FG1 in both *mysticism* and *openness to experience*, and effect sizes of Cohen’s d between -1.26 and -2.39 on *mysticism* for the differences between FG3 and FG5/FG6, the “more spiritual than religious” group (FG3) has a unique profile and contrasts very clearly and sharply in both directions. In other words: *Mysticism* and *openness to experience* most accurately and strongly account for the difference between “spirituality” (FG3) and “religion” (FG1), but also for the difference between “spirituality” (FG3) and secular self-identification.

Culture-specific differences are visible for the FG4 in the US and for the “equally religious and spiritual” group (FG2) in Germany. The US “more spiritual than religious atheists and non-theists” respondents (FG4) score extremely high on *openness to experience*. The self-identification as “atheist” or “non-theist” is obviously associated with, or eventually requires, far more *openness* in the USA than in Germany. For the German respondents, there is even no difference at all in

Table 14.2 Means of Selected Scales for the Six Focus Groups in the US and German Sample

	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	F	Part. η^2
US sample								
N = 1110	70	302	540	26	107	65		
<i>Neuroticism</i> (NEO-FFI)	22.1 (7.6)	20.3 (8.1)	20.6 (8.6)	20.8 (10.2)	21.5 (9.5)	21.1 (9.6)	0.542	.002
<i>Extraversion</i> (NEO-FFI)	28.5 (6.9)	29.6 (6.4)	29.4 (6.7)	27.9 (6.8)	27.1 (7.7)	25.2 (7.2)	6.346**	.028
<i>Openness to experience</i> (NEO-FFI)	26.0 (5.4)	28.5 (6.2)	33.3 (6.6)	38.7 (4.9)	32.7 (6.4)	35.4 (5.6)	42.592**	.162
<i>Agreeableness</i> (NEO-FFI)	30.2 (6.3)	32.8 (5.9)	32.3 (6.1)	30.6 (4.8)	29.4 (6.3)	29.9 (5.5)	5.869**	.026
<i>Conscientiousness</i> (NEO-FFI)	32.0 (6.9)	33.1 (6.9)	32.3 (7.3)	30.7 (6.7)	31.5 (6.9)	29.8 (7.4)	2.559*	.011
<i>Introverted mysticism</i> (M-Scale)	36.8 (9.0)	41.9 (9.3)	44.1 (10.2)	45.7 (9.6)	32.3 (11.1)	29.6 (13.4)	45.395**	.171
<i>Extroverted mysticism</i> (M-Scale)	23.0 (7.1)	25.8 (7.4)	28.4 (7.8)	28.3 (8.4)	21.1 (8.0)	19.1 (9.5)	29.855**	.120
<i>Interpretation</i> (M-Scale)	43.3 (7.7)	47.9 (8.0)	47.4 (8.7)	43.1 (7.5)	35.9 (9.7)	32.5 (9.7)	64.120**	.226
<i>mysticism</i> (total) (M-Scale)	103.1 (20.0)	115.7 (21.0)	119.9 (23.9)	117.1 (22.4)	89.2 (25.7)	81.2 (30.0)	56.035**	.203
German sample								
N = 763	75	140	337	40	94	77		
<i>Neuroticism</i> (NEO-FFI)	19.4 (8.1)	19.3 (8.7)	19.1 (8.4)	18.9 (8.8)	18.6 (8.0)	16.7 (7.2)	1.373	.009
<i>Extraversion</i> (NEO-FFI)	28.1 (6.0)	28.6 (6.5)	27.6 (6.4)	26.5 (6.2)	27.1 (6.6)	26.2 (6.8)	1.556	.010
<i>Openness to experience</i> (NEO-FFI)	31.4 (5.5)	34.4 (5.9)	35.9 (5.1)	35.9 (5.6)	35.6 (5.2)	36.5 (4.7)	10.198**	.063
<i>Agreeableness</i> (NEO-FFI)	34.6 (5.0)	34.3 (5.9)	33.8 (5.6)	31.9 (5.2)	31.7 (5.3)	30.6 (5.4)	4.849**	.031
<i>Conscientiousness</i> (NEO-FFI)	32.0 (6.1)	32.3 (6.2)	30.5 (6.3)	29.2 (6.0)	30.8 (6.2)	30.7 (7.5)	2.127*	.014
<i>Introverted mysticism</i> (M-scale)	38.1 (10.9)	47.4 (10.2)	47.7 (10.9)	44.1 (10.8)	33.5 (13.5)	25.8 (10.4)	61.395**	.289
<i>Extroverted mysticism</i> (M-scale)	24.0 (8.0)	31.5 (7.2)	31.3 (7.9)	27.4 (7.9)	19.8 (8.2)	15.0 (6.2)	71.929**	.323
<i>Interpretation</i> (M-scale)	44.1 (9.6)	50.4 (7.9)	48.7 (9.0)	41.1 (11.7)	35.3 (10.7)	28.9 (7.5)	77.319**	.339
<i>Mysticism</i> (total) (M-scale)	106.3 (24.6)	129.3 (22.8)	127.8 (24.9)	112.6 (27.1)	88.7 (28.3)	69.7 (21.2)	88.789**	.366

Note Standard deviations in brackets; * = significant at the $p < .05$ level; ** = significant at the $p < .001$ level; variables for sex, age, cultural capital and per-capita income have been controlled in the analyses; FG = focus group; FG1 = “more religious than spiritual”; FG2 = “equally religious and spiritual”; FG3 = “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist”; FG4 = “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists, ” FG5 = “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist”; FG6 = “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists.”

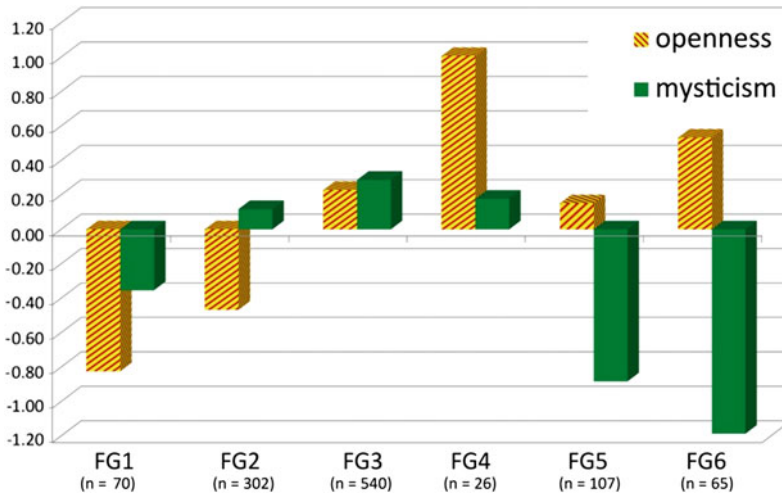


Fig. 14.1 Openness to Experience and Mysticism in the Focus Groups in the US Subsample

Note for Figs. 14.1 and 14.2 FG1 = the “more religious than spiritual” focus group; FG2 = the “equally religious and spiritual” focus group; FG3 = the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; FG4 = the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group; FG5 = the “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; FG6 = the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” focus group; openness = z-scores of the NEO-FFI scale *openness to experience*; mysticism = z-scores of the Mysticism-Scale sum score

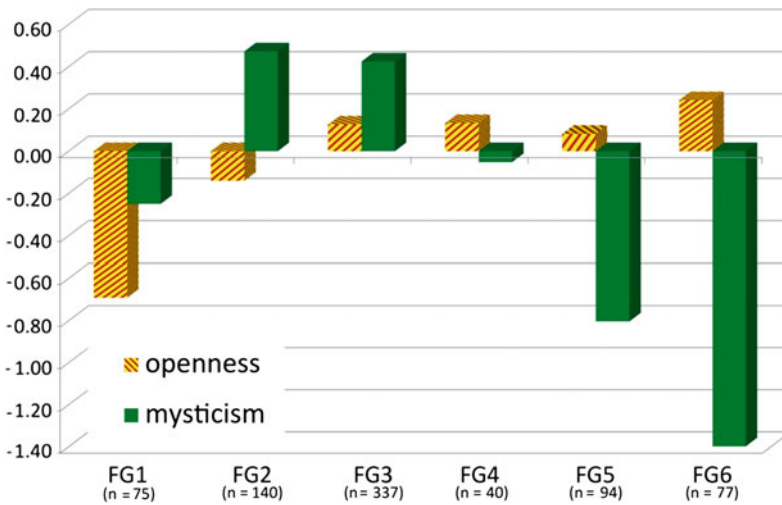


Fig. 14.2 Openness to Experience and Mysticism in the Focus Groups in the German Subsample

openness to experience between the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theist” (FG3) and the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” (FG4).

Also the difference on *openness to experience* between FG3 and FG6 is marginal for the Germans, as indicated by a Cohen’s $d = .12$. Taken together, there is no, or only a marginal, difference

in *openness to experience* in the German subsample between the self-identification as “more spiritual” and as “atheist”/“non-theist.” From self-attributed “spirituality” to self-attributed “atheism/non-theism,” there is only a small step in *openness* for the German respondents.

Another cross-cultural difference is noteworthy for *openness to experience*: The difference between the “equally religious and spiritual” (FG2) and the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theist” (FG3) in *openness to experience* is small (Cohen’s $d = -.28$) for the German respondents, while rather large (with a rather large effect size of Cohen’s $d = .73$) for the US groups. Similarly for *mysticism*: The difference between the German FG2 and FG3 is marginal, and the German FG2 is even slightly higher in *mysticism* than FG3; between the US FG2 and US FG3, there is a small difference. Thus, different from the USA, any identification with “spirituality” in Germany, whether “equally spiritual” (FG2) or “more spiritual,” is associated, without much difference, with higher report of mystical experiences; and also *openness to experience* does not account for great differences between the different version of “spiritual” self-identification in FG2 and FG3.

This clear cultural difference between the USA and the German samples in regard to the semantics of “spirituality” corresponds to and reflects the difference in correlations: *Mysticism* and self-rated “spirituality” correlate with $r = .49$ ($p < .01$) for the US respondents and with $r = .66$ ($p < .01$) for the German respondents (see Table 14.1; see also Chap. 11). “Spirituality” and thus the semantics of “spirituality” is stronger associated with mystical experiences (and perhaps with experiences in general) for the German respondents, than this is the case for the US respondents.

The Two-Dimensional Space with Openness and Mysticism

After presenting the results that clearly demonstrate the differential power of the two variables *mysticism* and *openness to experience*, it is only a small next step to our solution for mapping

“spirituality.” We take *mysticism* and *openness to experience* as coordinates for constructing a space in which “spirituality” and many associations with “spirituality” can be plotted.

Of course, *mysticism* and *openness to experience* are not exactly orthogonal in both cultures: While in the German sample, correlations are small ($r = .09$, $p < .01$) and thus *mysticism* and *openness to experience* may be regarded as approximately orthogonal, both variables correlate with $r = .24$ ($p < .01$) in the US sample. Nevertheless, we arrange the coordinates with 90° angle in the figures for mapping “spirituality” in both the US and the German data; but interpretation eventually should take into account the non-orthogonal relation in the US sample.

What can be demonstrated with the two-dimensional space opened by the coordinates? Mapping “spirituality” could suggest plotting all cases according to their self-rating as “spiritual.” But the large number of cases and the dispersion of cases are difficult to read and interpret. The figures are easier to read, when—again—we use the focus group divisions. A perspective on the relief of self-identified “spirituality” in contrast to the self-identifications of being “religious” on the one hand, and being “atheist” or “non-theist” on the other hand, emerges from plotting the centroids of means for the focus groups on *mysticism* and *openness to experience*, as presented in Figs. 14.3 and 14.4.

In these maps of focus groups, it becomes obvious how self-identified “spirituality” makes a difference: “Spirituality” in the “more spiritual than religious” groups, including also the “more spiritual atheists and non-theists” has the relatively highest scores on both *openness to experience* and *mysticism*; the centroids fall in the upper right segment. In contrast, the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups, especially the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists and non-theists” are the lowest and far below the average on *mysticism*, even though they have positive means on *openness to experience*; centroids fall in the lower right segment. In contrast, the centroids for the “more religious than spiritual” respondents assemble in the lower left segment, where both *mysticism* and *openness to*

Fig. 14.3 Centroids for the US Focus Groups in the Two-Dimensional Space Between Mysticism and Openness to Experience

Note The axes represent the sum score mean values for *openness to experience* and *mysticism* the US resp. the German subsample

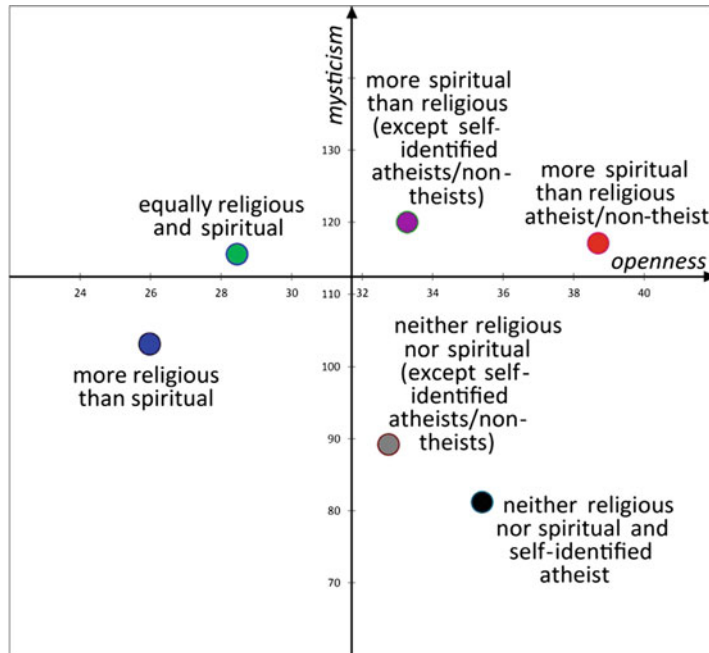
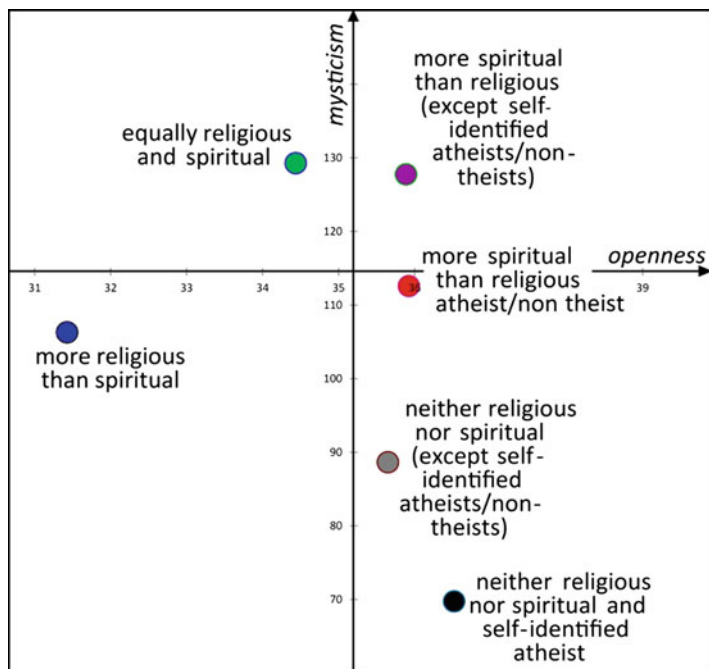


Fig. 14.4 Centroids for the German Focus Groups in the Two-Dimensional Space Between Mysticism and Openness to Experience

Note The axes represent the sum score mean values for *openness to experience* and *mysticism* the US resp. the German subsample



experience are low and below average. These results indicate that “spirituality” is generally associated with higher report of mystical experience and with higher *openness to experience*.

Again, the cross-cultural differences are visible also in these figures: The German “equally religious and spiritual” group is higher in *mysticism*, even slightly higher than, but rather close to, the “more spiritual non atheist or non-theist” group. Also, the “more spiritual atheists/non-theists” in the USA show their very high *openness to experience* in Fig. 14.3.

Religious Schema Groups in the Two-Dimensional Space

The coordinate system with *mysticism* and *openness to experience* may also open new perspectives on religious development, insofar it involves the preference for religious schemata. Figures 14.5 and 14.6 present the centroids for the three Religious Schema Groups, which, for both the US and German sample, have been constructed according to higher agreement to one of the three subscales of the Religious Schema Scale (RSS), *truth of text and teachings (ttt)*, *fairness, tolerance and rational choice (ftr)* and *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog (xenos)* (see Chap. 13 for details of this group construction). The three groups have been labeled “Traditionalist Schema Group”

($n_{US} = 410$; $n_{GER} = 206$), “Tolerant Schema Group” ($n_{US} = 262$; $n_{GER} = 232$) and “Xenosophic Schema Group” ($n_{US} = 313$; $n_{GER} = 224$).

The Traditionalist Schema groups for Germany and the USA are characterized by scores on *openness to experience*, which are considerably lower than the means for the country, while *mysticism* is somewhat below the mean level for the US, and somewhat above the mean level for the German group. The Tolerant Schema groups have their centroid in the lower right segment with relatively high *openness to experience* and very low *mysticism* scores.

In contrast, the Xenosophic Schema groups in both the USA and Germany fall in the upper right segment indicating high scores in both *mysticism* and *openness to experience*. This is an indication that the schema of *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* combines both characteristics for positive “spiritual” development: mystical experiences and openness for the other, the not yet familiar. These results reflect the close relations between “spirituality” and *xenos* presented in Chap. 13.

Taken together, the mapping of religious schemata in the coordinate system of *openness to experience* and *mysticism* leads to plausible results, and it helps to profile the religious schemata and styles further. The most important characteristic of respondents with exclusively high agreement to *truth of texts and teachings*, who assemble in the Traditionalist Schema group, is low *openness to experience*. From

Fig. 14.5 Centroids for the US Religious Schema Groups Plotted in the Two-Dimensional Space of Mysticism and Openness to Experience

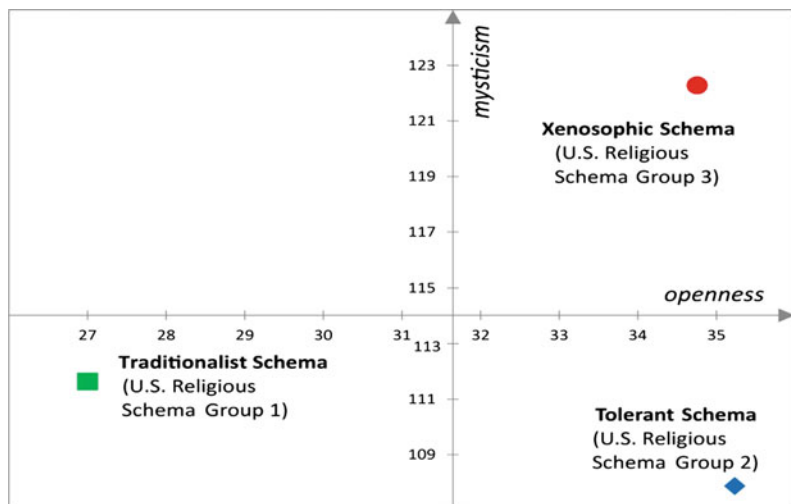
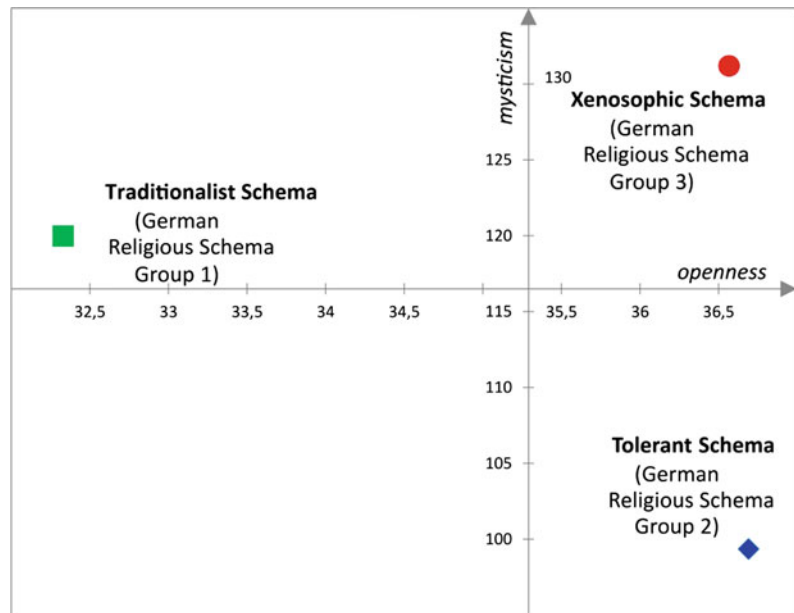


Fig. 14.6 Centroids for the German Religious Schema Groups Plotted in the Two-Dimensional Space of Mysticism and Openness to Experience



there, two rather different (developmental) avenues are indicated: clear agreement to *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* that may lead to membership in the Tolerant Schema group, which is characterized by low mystical experience, but high *openness to experience*; or clear agreement to *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* that may lead to membership in the Xenosophic Schema group. And the latter is characterized not only by high *openness to experience*, but also by higher mystical experiences. Thus, the Xenosophic Schema group is not a group without religious experiences, but with transformed religious experiences, that many then call “spirituality,” and this may be well understood as a version of the “religion of a universalistic order” (Allport, 1954).

Mapping the Semantics of “Spirituality”

Also the semantics of “spirituality” receive a new perspective from the new mapping in the two-dimensional space using *openness to experience* and *mysticism* as coordinates. Thus, with this new way of mapping “spirituality,” we take

up threads from chapters on the semantics of “spirituality” (especially Chaps. 7 and 8) and plot adjectives from the semantic differentials and the factors from coding the subjective definitions of “spirituality” in the new coordinate system.

The Semantic Differentials in the Two-Dimensional Space

Scatter plots of the adjectives from both the Osgood and the Contextual Semantic Differentials (see Chap. 7 for more details) are presented in Fig. 14.7 for the US sample and in Fig. 14.8 for the German sample. The adjectives from both semantic differentials have been combined in these figures. For the Osgood Semantic Differential, the association of adjectives with the three Osgood factors, *evaluation, potency* and *activity*, are indicated.

Some explanation should be given about how the scatter plots are constructed. The figures present only the positive poles of the adjective pairs and omit their negative counterparts in the semantic differentials. Furthermore, the position of the adjectives is determined by both the semantic differential for “spirituality” and the semantic differential for “religion.” Thereby the adjective ratings for “religion” have been subtracted from

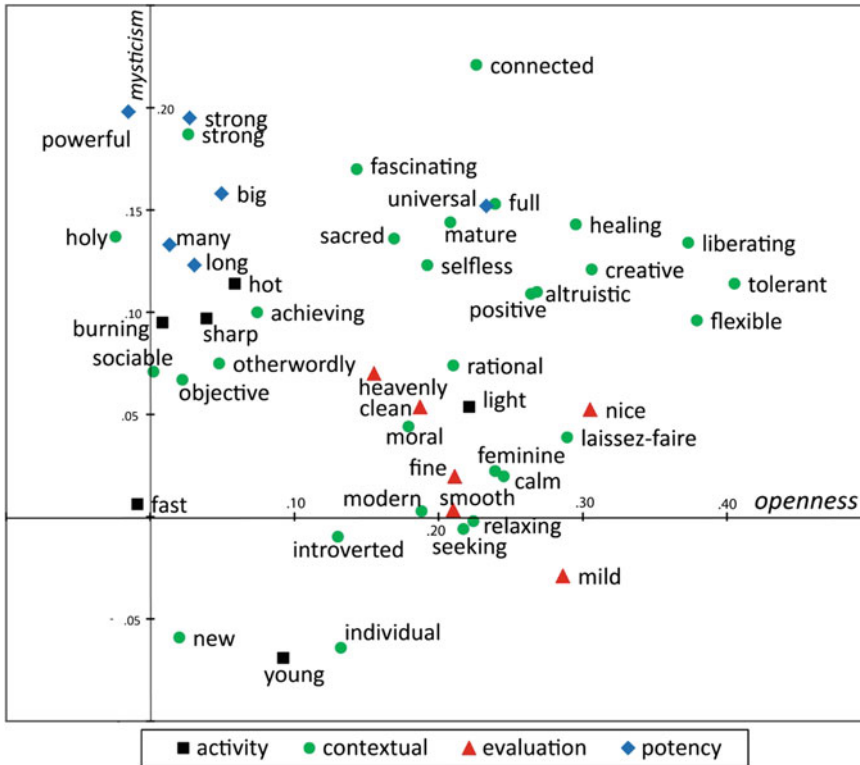


Fig. 14.7 Correlations of “Spiritual, not Religious” Adjective Ratings in the US Semantic Differentials with Openness to Experience and Mysticism

the ratings for “spirituality” and saved in a new variable. Thus, the position of the adjectives exhibits a “spiritual, not religious” logic, which is based on the association by our respondents.

For example, a respondent may have rated “spirituality” as highly associated with “nice,” “healing” or “creative,” and “religion” as associated rather with the opposite poles of these adjectives in the semantic differential, thus with “awful,” “wounding” or “destructive.” The larger the difference in the rating of the respondents, the higher is the value for the adjectives in the new variable. This influences the position of the adjectives in the coordinate system because the scatter plots are based on correlation analysis of the new variable with *openness to experience* and *mysticism*. The correlations are used as vectors determining the position of the adjectives in the coordinate system.

The new coordinate system for mapping “spirituality” adds an important new perspective, because now we use the most effective

psychometric variables, *openness to experience* and *mysticism*, for mapping the semantics of “spirituality.”

It is obvious on first sight on Fig. 14.7 that, for the US respondents, a number of adjectives from our Contextual Semantic Differential assemble in the upper right segment, where correlations with *openness to experience* are (rather) high and correlations with *mysticism* are (moderately) positive. For example (and presenting the way how to read the figure), “connected,” “healing” and “liberating” are adjectives which were rated by the US respondents as highly appropriate for “spirituality,” but not for “religion.” These semantic characterizations (“connected,” “healing” and “liberating” are words preferred for “spirituality”) correlate highly with *openness to experience* and (moderately) positively with *mysticism*. We may conclude that respondents who reserve “connected,” “healing” and “liberating” for “spirituality” are the ones who are more

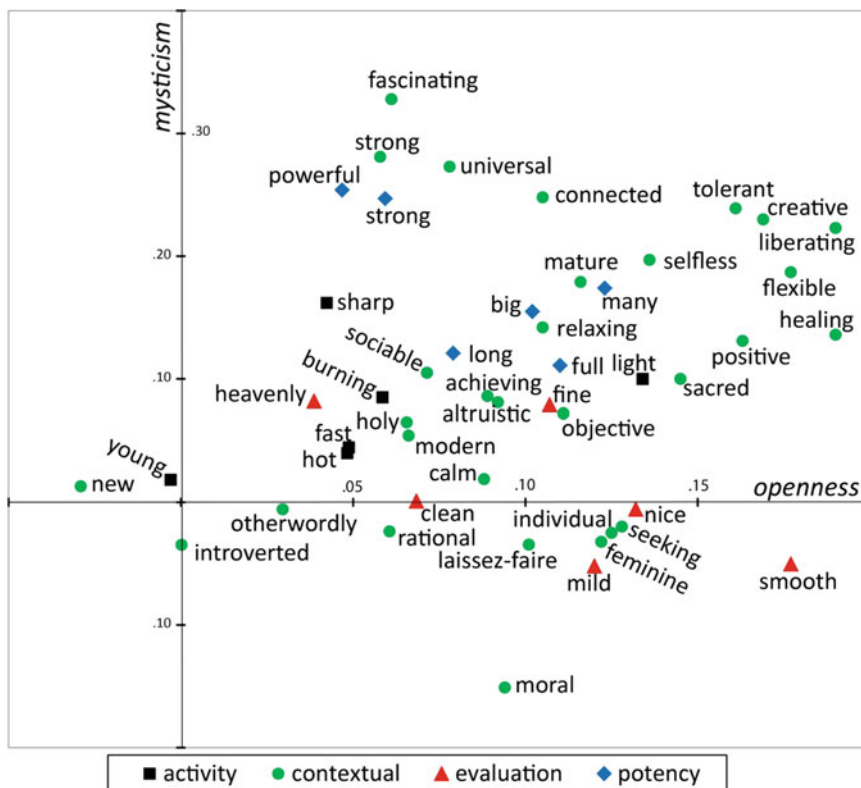


Fig. 14.8 Correlations of “Spiritual, not Religious” Adjective Ratings in the German Semantic Differentials with Openness to Experience and Mysticism

open for new experiences and report more mystical experiences.

A second observation in the scatter plot: Almost all adjectives that belong to Osgood’s factor of *potency* (e.g. “strong,” “powerful” or “big”), when associated by the US respondents rather exclusively with “spirituality,” correlate moderately positive with *mysticism*, but not with *openness to experience*. This may indicate (something we have not seen in the semantic evaluations in Chap. 7) that there are respondents in the USA, who use potency adjectives for characterizing “spirituality” rather than “religion,” and that these respondents are the ones who report more mystical experiences.

A third interesting observation in the US data: The adjectives which belong to Osgood’s factor of *evaluation* (e.g. “heavenly,” “nice” or “clean”), when used rather exclusively for characterizing “spirituality” by the US respondents,

are not or rather low associated with mystical experiences, but with higher score on *openness to experience*. This may indicate that not every positive evaluation of “spirituality” is associated with the speaker’s own mystical experiences, but rather with his or her *openness*.

Turning to the German respondents presented in Fig. 14.8, we should first draw attention to the different scaling of the coordinates in Figs. 14.7 and 14.8: While the x-axis (*openness*) in Fig. 14.7 spans from -0.10 to $+0.50$, the x-axis in Fig. 14.8 spans from -0.05 to $+0.20$; reversely on the y-axis for *mysticism*: in Fig. 14.7, the y-axis spans from -0.10 to $+0.30$, while in Fig. 14.8 the range is from -0.20 to $+0.40$. Thus, reading and interpreting the figures for cross-cultural comparison has to take into account that, in Fig. 14.8, the correlations of adjectives with *openness to experience* are relatively small in comparison with Fig. 14.7—indicating that correlations with

openness to experience are considerably smaller in the German respondents.

Obviously, we see a cultural difference between the US and the German respondents here: For the US respondents, the adjectives—and, nota bene, all adjectives that supposedly characterize “spirituality” rather than “religion”—have stronger correlations with *openness to experience* and somewhat lesser correlations with *mysticism*. Conversely for the German respondents: For them, the adjectives correlate more strongly with *mysticism* and less strongly with *openness to experience*. This clear cultural difference between the US and the German samples in regard to the *semantics* of “spirituality” reflects again the cross-cultural difference in the correlation matrices with the self-identification as “spiritual,” “religious” and “atheist/non-theist,” as presented in Table 14.1 and detailed above. Thus, the semantics of “spirituality” reflects the correlative pattern of self-attributed “spirituality”: For the German respondents, “spirituality” and also the semantics of “spirituality” correlate considerably less with *openness to experience* and far more strongly with *mysticism* than this is the case for the US respondents.

Despite these clear cultural differences, a similar pattern emerges for a number of adjectives from the Contextual Semantic Differential (“connected,” “tolerant,” “liberating” or “creative”) in Fig. 14.8: These adjectives assemble in the upper right segment indicating the relatively highest correlations with both *mysticism* and *openness to experience*. Less pronounced, compared to the US sample, are the associations of the adjectives, which, according to Osgood, belong to the factor of *potency*, with *mysticism* for the German respondents. But adjectives that belong to the factor *evaluation* correlate, even if relatively weak, with *openness to experience*, rather than with *mysticism*. This may indicate that, also for the German respondents, not every positive evaluation of “spirituality” is associated with the speaker’s own mystical experiences, but rather with his or her *openness*.

Of course, these interpretations are not exhaustive and cannot attend to every detail. They demonstrate, however, the effectiveness of

the coordinate system of *mysticism* and *openness to experience* for mapping the semantics of “spirituality.”

Mapping Respondents’ Subjective Definitions

The mapping of the semantics of “spirituality” can also focus on the free entries in the questionnaire, in which respondents gave their subjective definitions of “spirituality.” The content analytic and factor-analytic evaluation has been presented and discussed in detail in Chap. 9. Here we only add the inclusion of these results into the coordinate system of *mysticism* and *openness to experience*.

The maps in Figs. 14.9 and 14.10 are, again, based on the correlations (correlations are reported in Table 14.3) between *mysticism* and *openness to experience* on the one hand, and the ten components that were our result from Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of the more than 40 categories that were used to interpret respondents’ definitions of “spirituality” in free entries in the questionnaire. Also the three higher-order components are identified in the figures which, as detailed in Chap. 9, were obtained from a second-order PCA with the ten factors from the primary PCA.

Most semantics components of “spirituality” fall in the upper right quartile of both figures, indicating positive correlations with both *openness to experience* and *mysticism*. This is most pronounced for the component (*all*)*connectedness*, which represents a version of “spirituality,” as stated in the full interpretative text, in which “spirituality” is understood as “(All-) connectedness and harmony with the universe, nature and the whole,” falls in the upper right segment of both figures, indicating clearly that respondents, for whom an understanding of “spirituality” in terms of (all-) connectedness belongs to their semantic, tend to be higher in both *openness to experience* (somewhat stronger in the US sample) and *mysticism* (somewhat stronger in the German sample).

Fig. 14.9 Correlations of the Components for the Subjective Definitions of “Spirituality” in the US Subsample with Mysticism and Openness to Experience

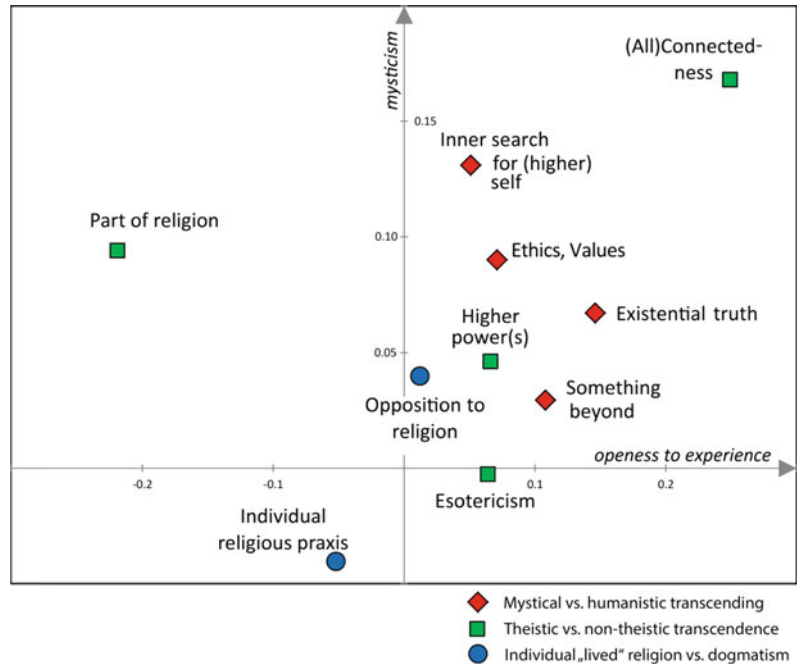
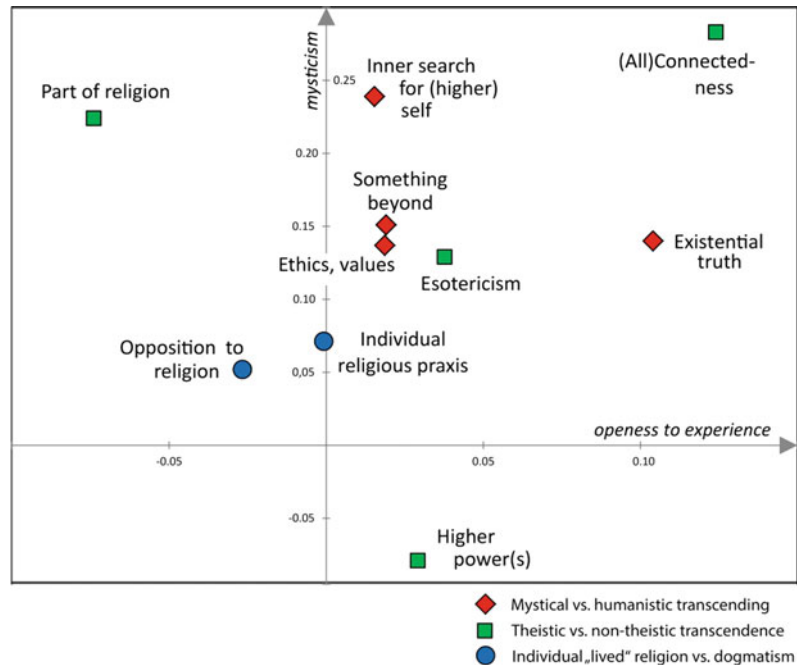


Fig. 14.10 Correlations of the Components for the Subjective Definitions of “Spirituality” in the German Subsample with Mysticism and Openness to Experience



As detailed in Chap. 9, the varimax rotated component matrix of the second-order PCA suggested that *(all)connectedness* together with *part of religion*, *belief in higher power(s)* and *esotericism* belong to one second-order component—

that we interpreted as polarity of theistic versus non-theistic transcendence. Non-theistic, or vertical, transcendence appears obvious for *(all) connectedness*, theistic transcendence for *part of religion*, which understands “spirituality” in

Table 14.3 Interpretation of Primary and Second-Order Components for the Subjective Definitions or “Spirituality” and Their Correlations with Mysticism and Openness to Experience

Components from primary PCA	Correlations				Components from primary PCA
	US		Germany		
	Myst	Open	Myst	Open	
Ethics , Holding and everyday acting according to values and morality in relation to humanity (IV)	.09**	.07*	.14**	.02	
Intuition of something or some being (s) that are unspecified, but higher than and beyond oneself (VI)	.03	.11**	.15**	.02	<i>Mystical transcending (toward higher self and beyond oneself) versus humanistic transcendence</i>
Search for (higher) self , meaning, inner peace and enlightenment (III)	.13**	.05	.24**	.02	
Experience of truth , purpose and wisdom beyond rational understanding (VII)	.07*	.15**	.14**	.10**	
Part of religion , Christian beliefs (II)	.09**	-.22**	.22**	-.07*	
Esotericism , Awareness of a non-material, invisible world and experience of supernatural energies and beings (spirits, etc.) (VIII)	.00	.06*	.13**	.04	<i>Symbolization of transcendence: theistic versus non-theistic (in terms of esotericism and all-connectedness)</i>
Belief in higher power(s) , higher beings (deities, gods) (V)	.05	.07*	-.08*	.03	
(All) connectedness and harmony with the universe, nature and the whole (I)	.17**	.25**	.28**	.12**	
Opposition to religion and dogmatic rules, and traditions (IX)	.04	.01	.05	-.03	<i>Individual “lived” religion versus dogmatism</i>
Individual religious praxis , meditation, prayer, worship, not cognition (X)	-.04	-.05	.07	.00	

Note * = significant at the $p < .05$ level (2-tailed); ** = significant at the $p < .01$ level (2-tailed); Keywords for interpretation in primary 10-component PCA solution are in **bold** print; Interpretation of three second-order components are in *italics*; interpretation keywords are in **bold italics**; myst = correlations with *mysticism*; open = correlations with *openness to experience*

mostly Christian terms. *Belief in higher power (s)* and *esotericism* (as “awareness of a non-material, invisible world and experience of supernatural energies and beings, spirits, etc.”) are somewhere in the middle. They are in a middle position also in regard to their association with *openness to experience*, but obviously not in regard to *mysticism*, which for both semantic components is considerably lower, especially for the German respondents.

But in both the US and the German sample, *part of religion*—this component is predominantly characterized by Christian theological categories such as reference to the trinity, to

Jesus, to the Holy Spirit and to the Bible—is the semantic component, which falls as the only one clearly in the upper left quartile, where relation with *mysticism* is positive and relation with *openness to experience* is negative. This location reflects what we have seen earlier in our analyses. But the cultural difference is noteworthy: In the German data, *mysticism* has a much stronger relation with the component of *part of religion*, while in the US data the negative correlation with *openness to experience* is much stronger. Thus, “spirituality” as *part of religion* is slightly (German sample) or moderately (US sample) negatively related to *openness to experience*, but

slightly positive (US sample) or moderate (German sample) related to *mysticism*. Thus, mapping the semantics of “spirituality” in the coordinates *mysticism* and *openness to experience* adds a new perspective—in this case: whether transcendence is symbolized in theistic, vertical, or on non-theistic, horizontal terms, is related to the respondents’ attitude of openness and their mystical experiences.

While the correlations for the components *opposition to religion* and *individual religious praxis* were insignificant (which does not mean that these components are less interesting), there is another second-order component with clear correlations to *mysticism* and *openness to experience*: the one that we interpreted as *mystical transcending (toward higher self and beyond oneself)* versus *humanistic transcendence*, and which consists of the first-order components *search for (higher) self*, *everyday ethics*, *non-rational truth* and *something beyond*. The component *search for (higher) self* is particularly interesting because of its correlation with *mysticism*—which, again, in the German sample is higher. But generally this indicates that the semantics of “spirituality” as *search for (higher) self*, *meaning*, *inner peace* and *enlightenment* is associated with the report of mystical experience.

Taken together, the coordinate system with *mysticism* and *openness to experience* opens new interpretative perspectives on the semantics of “spirituality.” It contributes to the profiling of the varieties of the semantic versions and types.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented our elementary model for interpreting “spirituality” and explained the selection of coordinates for mapping “spirituality” based on conceptual considerations and empirical characteristics of psychometric scales.

We have decided for Hood’s (1975) Mysticism Scale because of its great statistical effects in our data, but also because of conceptual reasons: because it is a scale that is not an explicit measure

of “religion” or “spirituality,” but a measure of potential experiential preconditions for the various versions of being “spiritual.” We may conclude, in agreement with Campbell, Lee, & Cothran (2010) study, that “mysticism matters” in differentiating versions of being “spiritual.” And there is more: Our results presented in this chapter and other chapters of this book are in line with and support the conclusion in which Hood, Hill, & Spilka (2009) summarize the review of a considerable number of studies with the Mysticism Scale and “spirituality” with the statement that “mystical experience (“spirituality”) is commonly reported by individuals who identify themselves as spiritual rather than religious, and by those who identify themselves as equally religious and spiritual” (p. 378). However, our study makes a significant additional contribution: the variety of “spiritualities” considered in our study by far exceeds the distinction “religious/not-religious” and includes attention to the “neither religious nor spiritual,” attention to the “spirituality” of self-identified “atheists” and “non-theists” and attention to the semantic varieties (reduced to ten components and then to three components)—which can be related to *mysticism* in our new model for mapping “spirituality.”

Also the NEO Five Factor scales have emerged as helpful tool for discerning the differences in the varieties of “spirituality” and its various aspects in our data. As most effective dimension of the NEO-FFI for this discrimination and profiling “spirituality” is *openness to experience*; thus it qualified as one of the coordinates for mapping “spirituality.” The choice for *openness* coordinate reflects the perspectives developed in the discussion about higher-order factors (Digman, 1997; McCrae et al., 2008), which have interpreted the “Big Two” polar higher-order constructs as “transformation” versus “traditionalism” or “plasticity” versus “stability.” As discussed in Chap. 12 and in the beginning of this chapter, *openness to experience* has in our data a unique role among the “Big Five” dimensions in regard to the relation to “religion” and “spirituality.” This special role of *openness to experiences* may reflect its connotation with values. The parallels of *openness to experience* to the pole of “openness to

change,” as opposed to the pole “concern for conservation” on the other end, in Schwartz’ (1992, 2003) value circle is obvious. Our data do not explain or predict “spirituality,” neither in the Big Five, nor the Big Two model; and we still regard it impossible to explain “spirituality” by personality through regression analyses (see to this limitation also Piedmont & Wilkins, 2013a, b). Nevertheless, we identified *openness to experience* as the most effective dimension among the NEO Five Factors as variable/coordinate to account for difference: to profile and “map” the varieties of “spirituality” our data.

There is something in addition, which our model for mapping “spirituality” might offer to the research: the *combination* of the two coordinates. The two-coordinate model not only allows for nice visualizations, but it has a conceptual advantage, since it helps to surpass one-dimensional polarities such as open-minded versus close-minded or fundamentalist constrictedness versus spiritual openness. The (religious) world is more complex, and the inclusion of an experiential coordinate, in concreto: the inclusion of account for mystical experiences helps to widen the horizon. This has proven especially revealing in regard to “neither religious nor spiritual,” “atheist” and “non-theist” self-understandings.

We hope that we could convincingly demonstrate that the coordinates *mysticism* and *openness to experience* open new perspectives and deeper understanding of “spiritual”/“religious” self-identifications, semantic preferences, religious schemata, when these are plotted in the two-dimensional space of *openness to experience* and *mysticism*.

But this is not the end of the story: The coordinates developed and exemplarily demonstrated in this chapter will be used as key dimensions to map the single cases, which will be presented in Part V of this volume. There we use faith development as theoretical framework and the faith development interview as research instrument. We will present the positions of the individual faith development interviewees as indicated by their self-rating on the M-Scale and *openness to experience*. Thus, we keep the coordinates, but change the perspective: from statistical calculation of

central tendencies to identifying individual positions in the map created by the coordinates *mysticism* and *openness to experience*. We use individual ratings on the M-Scale as indicators for self-assessed spiritual experience; we take the individual ratings on the NEO-FFI subscale *openness to experience* as indicator for readiness to change and development. For all respondents with whom we have conducted a personal interview, this will be presented in Chap. 17 (Fig. 17.2). Thus the coordinate system that has been created and justified in this chapter will be preserved and advanced, when we now proceed from the nomothetic to the idiographic.

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Part IV

**Biographical Analyses—Methodological
Perspectives**

Heinz Streib, Michele Wollert and Barbara Keller

Abstract

This chapter presents an introduction to the Faith Development Interview (FDI) and describes its background in Fowler's theory and research, explains the FDI questions and the evaluation procedure according to the *Manual for Faith Development Research*. Then this chapter introduces our more recent methodological modifications of the FDI evaluation procedure, which were applied in the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of "Spirituality" in which more than one hundred FDIs have been conducted and evaluated. Suggestions for the modification of the evaluation method include: taking into account the differences between the aspects of faith, more decisive attention to the wealth of narrative data and the various dimensions which the FDI questions elicit beyond the structural-developmental information, and finally the triangulation with questionnaire data.

Research in Faith Development— Historical Introduction

That religiosity may change over the course of a person's lifetime is not an entirely new insight in the 20th century, but has roots or precursors in philosophical and theological thought of past

centuries. However, a new proposal has emerged in the past century: modelling religious changes in cognitive-structural terms of the Piagetian framework (cf. Piaget, 1926). Following Kohlberg's (1984) interpretation of Piaget's developmental perspective, both Fowler (1981) and Oser and Gmünder (1984) were inspired to design models of religious development and also to design the ways by which religious development can be assessed in empirical investigation. While Oser's model claimed to focus more genuinely on the Piagetian construct of religious judgment and, like Kohlberg, used a combination of dilemma and interview research, Fowler's model has implemented from the start a multi-dimensional

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construct of ‘faith,’ which was adopted from Cantwell Smith (1963, 1979), which reflects conceptualizations of theorists of religion such as Niebuhr (1943) and Tillich (1957), and which Fowler (1981, p. 92) defined in the following way:

In the most formal and comprehensive terms I can state it, faith is: People’s evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others and world (as they construct them) as related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence (as they construct them) and shaping their lives’ purpose and meanings, trusts and loyalties, in the light of the character of being, value and power determining the ultimate conditions of existence (as grasped in their operative images—conscious and unconscious—of them).

This concept of ‘faith,’ according to Fowler (1996, p. 168f.), “aims to include descriptions of religious faith as well as the less explicit faith orientations of individuals and groups who can be described as secular or eclectic in their belief and values orientations.” This broad concept of ‘faith’ is thus intended to include secular orientations and implicit versions of religion. As we speculate also in Chap. 24, were Fowler writing today, he would explicitly include a clear focus on the “spiritual” versions of ‘faith.’ Thus, Fowler’s broad concept of ‘faith’ appears far-sighted with respect to present-day “spirituality” that flourishes in considerable part outside religious traditions.

Fowler conceptualized ‘faith’ broad enough to include not only aspects such as cognitive development (adopted from Piaget), perspective-taking (adopted from Selman) and moral development (adopted from Kohlberg), but he has added four more aspects to his concept of ‘faith’: bounds of social awareness, locus of authority, form of world coherence, and symbolic function. They are assumed to form a coherent heptagon (as is visualized in Fig. 15.1 below).

It is also noteworthy that, for a perspective on development over the life span, Fowler explicitly intended to include also Levison’s (1978) “seasons,” Erikson’s (1968) psycho-social and Rizzuto’s (1979) psychoanalytic perspectives.

Finally, the historical perspective on the construction of the faith development model and on its operationalization in empirical research should also note that Fowler was inspired not

only from Kohlberg’s cognitive-structural model, but also, and previously, by his own experience in adult education retreat work with focus on auto-biographical reflection. Therefore, the perspective on the dynamics of life history is—sometimes more implicit—an important trait in faith development theory, and life review was to become the first part of—and thus perhaps the most powerful structuring element in—the faith development interview.

The Faith Development Interview and Its Evaluation

In view of such broad and comprehensive concept of ‘faith’ it is completely understandable that Fowler could not imagine a quantitative measure for ‘faith’ and has opposed any pencil and paper test, but instead from the beginning has opted for an interview approach, as is documented already in the first edition of the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Moseley, Jarvis, & Fowler, 1986).

Research in faith development, according to Fowler, is based on a semi-structured interview, the Faith Development Interview (FDI), which takes between 30 min and 2 h or more. In the FDI, twenty-five questions are asked that are divided in four sections: First, respondents are invited to reflect on their lives (*life tapestry/life review*), then in a second section on their *relationships* past and present, in a third section on their *values and commitments*, and only in the last section on *religion and world view*. Interview questions are presented in full length in Table 15.1.¹ Interviewees respond by presenting,

¹We present the version of the FDI questions (follow-up questions are in brackets) as used in our current research. In this version, some questions, as they are presented in the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (also in the 3rd edition: Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004), have been slightly modified in order to be more inclusive in regard to the variety of religious traditions and worldviews; for example, in question 20, the adjectives “spiritual” and “faithful” have been added; or in question 4, “image of God and relation to God” has been exchanged by “world view” in the main question, and the phrase “image of God and the Divine” has been moved to a follow-up question.

Table 15.1 The Faith Development Interview Questions**Life tapestry/Life review**

1. Reflecting on your life thus far, identify its major chapters. (If your life were a book, how would you name the different chapters? What marker events stand out as especially important?)
2. Are there past relationships that have been important to your development as a person?
3. Do you recall any changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or your way of thinking about things?
4. How has your world view changed across your life's chapters? (How has this affected your image of God or of the Divine? What does it mean to you now?)
5. Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning? (What are they? How have these experiences done so?)
6. Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life? (Have you experienced times when you felt profound disillusionment, or that life had no meaning?)

Relationships

7. Focusing now on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them? (Have there been any changes in your perceptions of your parents over the years? If so, what caused the change?)
8. Are there any other current relationships that are important to you?
9. What groups, institutions, or causes, do you identify with? (Why are they important to you?)

Present Values and Commitments

10. Do you feel that your life has meaning at present? (What makes your life meaningful to you?)
11. If you could change one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
12. Are there any beliefs, values, or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
13. When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the Universe?
14. What is your image or model of mature faith, of a mature response to questions of existential meaning?
15. When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it? (Can you give me an example? If you have a very difficult problem to solve, to whom or what would you look for guidance?)
16. Do you think that actions can be right or wrong? (If so, what makes an action right in your opinion? What makes an action wrong?)
17. Are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances? (Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?)

Religion and World View

18. Do you think that human life has a purpose? (If so, what is it? Is there a plan for our lives, or are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?)
19. What does death mean to you? (What happens to us when we die?)
20. Do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual or faithful person? Or would you prefer another self-description? What does it mean to you?
21. Are there any religious, spiritual or other ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you, or have been important to you?
22. Do you pray, meditate, or perform any other spiritual discipline?
23. What is sin, to your understanding?
24. How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
25. If people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?

explaining or justifying their opinions. It is however a special characteristic of the FDI that respondents—motivated by the autobiographical

questions at the beginning of the interview process—respond by reporting events and by telling stories and autobiographical narratives.

The early field work with the FDI consistently used, and the *Manual for Research in Faith Development* clearly suggests, the so-called “Life Tapestry Exercise” (see Fowler et al., 2004, p. 69), a sheet of paper with several columns (calendar year; age; geographic and socio-economic place, key relationships; uses and directions of self; marker events; events in society; images of God; value centers; authorities) and the respondents are asked to fill this out prior to the interview.

This indicates the very strong emphasis on autobiographical reconstruction, which should be elicited by the FDI. The interviewee and the interviewer had the “Life Tapestry sheet” in front of them in many interviews. And even when the “Life Tapestry Exercise” was not used, the very first question of the FDI invites the respondent to engage in this kind of structured autobiographical reconstruction.

Evaluation, consistent with the broad construct of ‘faith’ and the openness of the research instrument, is summarized in the following way:

Administering and coding the faith development interview is an exercise in hermeneutics. Language, in the form of verbal response to questions, is the observable datum upon which the interviewer/coder bases inferences about the mental and emotional processes of the person being interviewed. In order to do this, the interviewer must interpret these verbal responses and reconstruct them in terms of structural developmental theory. (Moseley et al., 1986, p. 16)

As this quote, which was included already in the first edition of the *Manual for Faith Development Research*, demonstrates, faith development interview evaluation decisively opts for an interpretative openness. But this quote also restricts openness: Immediately it is suggested to focus the interpretative attention to the *cognitive-developmental structures*. An underlying faith structure is considered the central object of evaluation, while thematic contents such as knowledge, assent to a statement of belief, or report of a practice are regarded to be surface phenomena. Thus, this quote demonstrates how the account for hermeneutical diversity is channeled immediately on the “reconstruction in terms of structural developmental theory.”

The process of evaluating the FDI thus implies to discern a supposedly stable pattern of faith, whose development is seen as “change that eventuates in increasingly complex structures” (Moseley et al., 1986, p. 3). Certainly, identifying the structures, which may or may not be conscious to the interviewee, is an *interpretation*. The question is—and this is our concern—whether and how this interpretation is able to invite and fully reflect the *diversity and multidimensionality* of faith.

The stages of faith are assumed to develop, as Kohlberg’s (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hower, 1983) criteria for “hard stage” structural-developmental models wanted to have it, in an invariant, sequential, irreversible, hierarchical and universally valid sequence of stages. And “stages” are assumed to be structural wholes, i.e. consistent constructs across all domains or aspects.

Fowler assumed the faith stages to progress (loosely related to age) in the following sequence: intuitive-projective faith (stage 1; <6 years); mythic-literal faith (stage 2; 7–12 years) oriented to reward and punishment; synthetic-conventional faith (stage 3; adolescence, adulthood) oriented to one’s own group and implicit reasoning; individuating-reflective faith with explicit systemic reasoning (stage 4); conjunctive faith, characterized by ‘second naiveté,’ which recognizes the evocative power inherent in symbols (stage 5); and, finally, and rarely identified in empirical reality, universalizing faith, described as loyalty to being and purged of ego striving (stage 6; adulthood and late adulthood). The sequence of faith stages is nicely visualized as a spiral by Fowler (1981, p. 275).

Taking the sequence of faith stages and the seven aspects together, Fowler imagined ‘faith’ as a heptagon, as visualized in Fig. 15.1. This heptagon, introduced by Fowler in 1980 (Fowler, 1980, p. 32), can be taken as the most influential visualization of his model because it structured theory and research in faith development (even though the figure was not included in *Stages of Faith*).

Also the *Manual for Faith Development Research* is structured like a grid of this

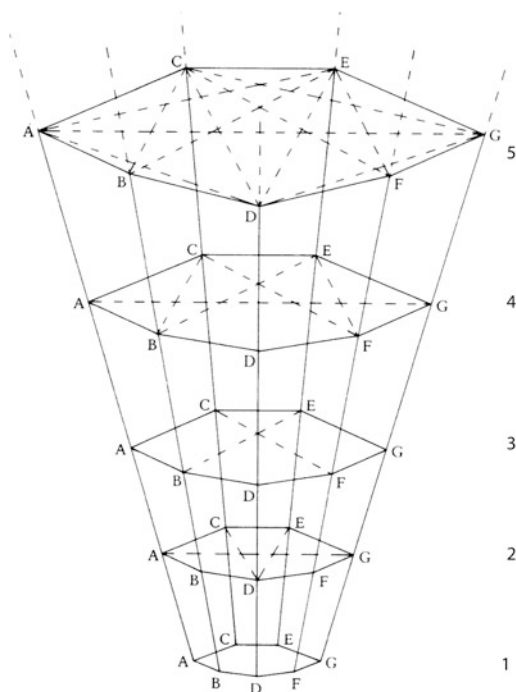


Fig. 15.1 Aspects and Stages in Faith Development (The Heptagon Model, Fowler, 1980).

Note A Form of logic; B Perspective-taking; C Moral judgment; C Bounds of social awareness; E Locus of authority; F Form of world coherence; F Symbolic function; numbers 1 to 5 indicate the faith stages

heptagon. In short form, this heptagon grid is presented as a table in *Stages of Faith* (Fowler, 1981, pp. 244–245). The *Manual* thus presents, for each stage-aspect combination (i.e. each cell in the heptagon grid), a brief summary of the faith stage and coding criteria in respect to the selection of FDI questions that are considered relevant for this cell. Because we regard it as very helpful for evaluation, we have kept this structure also in the 3rd edition of the *Manual* (Fowler et al., 2004).

Evaluation of an FDI then consists in rating the responses to the FDI questions in the interview transcript by comparing them with the coding criteria and descriptions in the respective section in the *Manual*. After eventually comparing the coding criteria of one stage above and/or one stage below, the evaluator decides for a faith stage assignment to the respective interact (s) in the interview. The evaluator then notes this

stage assignment, together with the interact number² and a brief note for justification of the faith stage assignment, in a scoring sheet (see Fowler et al., 2004, p. 77 for an example).

The total FDI score is calculated, according to the *Manual*, using a simple formula: add all faith stage assignment for the single responses and divide them through the frequency of assignments and round the decimals to integral numbers to indicate the faith stage, or rather to 0.5 numbers to indicate what Fowler regarded transitional stages. Taking the simple average is originally based on the assumption that stages are structural wholes and all aspects have equal weight.

Also in our analyses in this project, we have occasionally used the detailed average for statistically estimating the total FDI score, but we need to keep in mind that stages may not develop synchronically as structural wholes. The average estimation the total FDI score does not account for the differences between stage assignments in the seven aspects. Therefore we suggest in our revision of the evaluation method another way: to pay more decisive attention to the aspects and the differences between the aspects by mapping the single stage assignments, as detailed below.

Revisions of the Evaluation Method

Our revisions of research with the faith development interview are based on the experience accumulated in Bielefeld research projects, in particular in the Study on Deconversion (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009).³ In preparing field work for the Deconversion Project, a first wave of re-specifications of the FDI

²The interviews are transcribed verbatim and interacts are the single utterances of interviewer and interviewee (see Appendix B).

³With more than 500 FDIs (277 from the Deconversion Project, 102 from this Spirituality Study, ca. 150 with Muslim participants in Germany and Turkey), the Bielefeld Research Center for Biographical Studies in Contemporary Religion has the privilege of owning a considerable FDI data base (probably the largest in the world) with considerable cross-cultural and cross-religious diversity.

evaluation procedures has been completed. To the results of this revision belong the 3rd edition of the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler et al., 2004) and the development of the electronic scoring sheet.

While preparing this “Spirituality” Study, we have engaged in further revisions, which we now describe in greater detail. We begin with giving some account about the conceptual base, the decisive emphasis on interpretation, advancements of structural evaluation, and end with a description of our way to triangulate FDI results with questionnaire data.

The Conceptual Foundation of the Revision

The conceptual base for the revisions can be explained with reference to Fig. 15.1. Insofar the heptagon depicts a model of faith development, which should be understood as sequential abandonment of absolutely flat planes, i.e. coherent arrangements of the seven faith aspects, this model needs to be rejected with reference to empirical data that evidence differences in stage assignments of more than one stage as rule, rather than as exception. However, as a heuristic tool for structuring the evaluation of the FDIs and identifying the religious styles, the heptagon grid has proven very useful.

The religious styles perspective (Streib, 2001, 2003b, c, 2005, 2013), which has been elaborated as a result of critical-constructive engagement with Fowler’s project (Streib, 1991), has become the conceptual framework for our revisions. The religious styles perspective intends to open up perspectives of flexibility and permeability of religious development, rather than confining development to the sequential abandonment of stages that are considered structural wholes. The term ‘style’ is used to avoid pre-judgment for and fixation on a linear, irreversible developmental model and to open the perspective on the multi-directionality and diversity of developmental trajectories of our respondents.⁴ While the conceptual discussion is not the focus

of this chapter, it is important to refer to the religious styles perspective here, because of its consequences for the evaluation method.

Thus, evaluation procedure and interpretation of the FDIs have been carefully but extensively revised in light of the religious styles perspective (Keller, Klein, & Streib, 2013; Keller & Streib, 2013; see also Chap. 16). Changes and advancements of the procedure include: a stronger emphasis on the qualitative approaches, on interpretation, and on the revision of the structural evaluation and its preparation for triangulation.

Decisive Emphasis on Interpretative Evaluation

First and foremost, consistent with the recognition of greater complexity and diversity in the religious styles perspective, the FDIs are evaluated not only in cognitive-structural terms, but explicitly and extensively in a decisive qualitative approach accounting for narratives and a variety of thematic dimensions. Thus, special attention is given to the narratives in the FDIs, which is manifest in a focus on life review and on especially revealing (“hot”) narrative segments in the FDI.

Further, our evaluation now considers additional dimensions that we regard influential for religious development such as reflective functioning, attachment and wisdom-related performance. Insofar as these additional dimensions relate to the four sections of the FDI, they comprise entire sections in the case studies under headings such as “life review,” “relationships,” “values and commitments,” “religion and world view.” These are major changes and qualitative moves in the evaluation of the FDI and deserve

⁴A note on terminology: We use in this chapter and many other chapters of this book not only the term ‘style’, but also the term ‘stage.’ This is consistent with the *Manual for Faith Development Research* which was used for evaluation. But it is important to note that we associate with ‘stage’ not the entire set of structural-developmental assumptions, but rather understand ‘stage’ as synonymous with, or interpreted by, ‘style.’ Therefore, wherever possible and appropriate, we use both terms interchangeably or use both terms with a slash.

to be explained in greater detail and illustrated in an exemplary case study. Therefore, we dedicate a separate chapter (Chap. 16) for these changes in evaluation.

Advancements in Structural Evaluation and Triangulation

Second, also the classical structural evaluation of the FDI has been carefully modified to allow greater openness for diversity in stage assignments to the single FDI questions. This also includes attention to the potential differences between the aspects of faith. This needs to be explained here in this chapter in more detail.

It is not a new finding that faith stage assignments to the single FDI questions vary. The *Manual*, from the first edition on, has assumed some variance. But the prescription in the *Manual* is to average this variance in order to arrive at the total faith development score. This may be practical, but it can, in our judgment, lead to a reduction of complexity. Therefore we propose to explicitly account for the variance, which is disregarded in the averaging procedure.

Our suggestion of how to do this in an obvious way is the visualization of the faith stage assignments to the single FDI questions in what we call “Stage-aspect Maps.” The letters A through G indicate the aspects of faith according to the *Manual for Faith Development Research*. Most case studies in the following chapters include such stage-aspect maps. Figure 15.2 is an example from a case study in Chap. 19.

This detailed attention to the stage assignments in the single FDI questions opens the evaluation for important new questions. It enables the account for the aspect-specific stage assignment and leads to new questions for interpretation: What does it mean that stage assignments on aspect A are stage 4, on aspect C stage 3 and on aspect E stage 4?

The stage-aspect map also suggest a new way for estimating the FDI total score, which is now based on the majority of assignments of a certain stage. From Fig. 15.2 it is obvious that Laura’s total FDI score is estimated stage 3. But from this general tendency to stage 3 in Laura’s answers

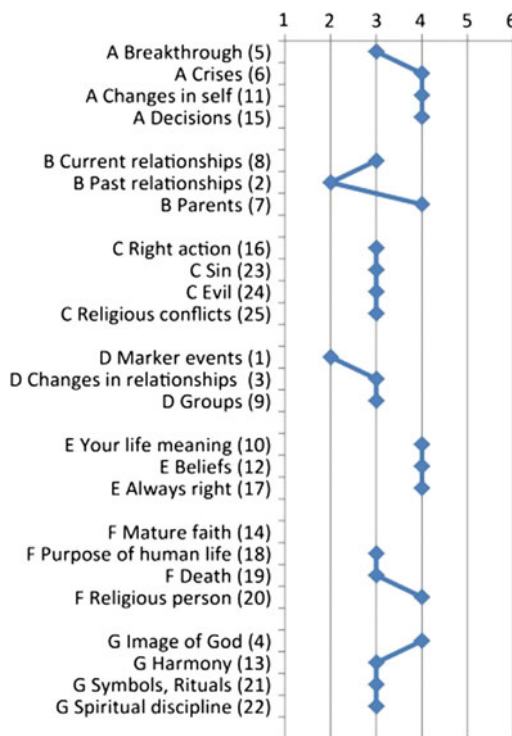


Fig. 15.2 Laura’s Ratings on the Different Aspects of Faith

the question arises, what do the stage 4 answers indicate?

The stage-aspect map approach also allows for a new way of analyzing the single FDI responses: when they are sorted according to whether they address religious or non-religious themes. We present, for example, this kind of sorting for the FDI with Ernestine (see Chap. 18 for the case study).

This way of looking at the stage assignments is very interesting and revealing. In Ernestine’s case, it may indicate a clear difference between a synthetic-conventional style that is used for dealing with everyday cognitive and social (non-religious) questions, while using a rather mythic-literal style to handle existential or religious questions. This reflects Ernestine’s strong commitment to her religious tradition in a rather absolutistic habitus, while she is, at the same time, dealing with everyday questions in rather conventional ways (Fig. 15.3).

Another advancement in FDI evaluation is the use of an electronic scoring sheet. This is

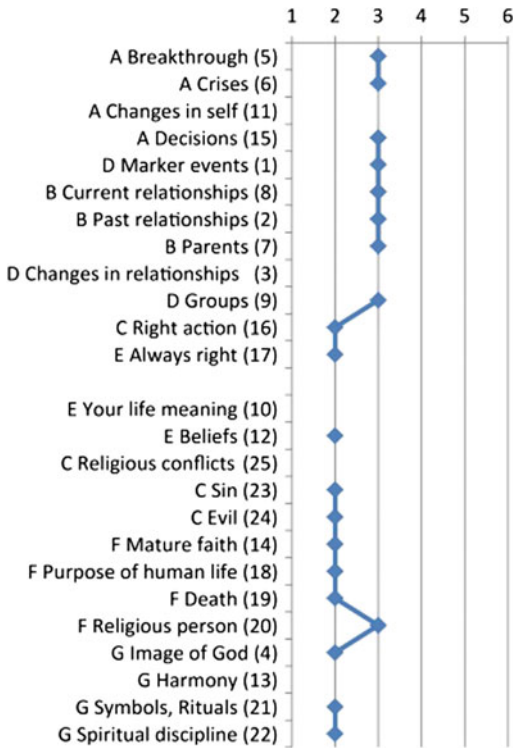


Fig. 15.3 Ernestine’s Ratings on Religious and Non-religious FDI Questions

important not only for a more convenient documentation and communication of the FDI evaluation; this is most important for the potential to import the FDI results into the quantitative data set—which opens up many options for triangulation. This, of course, is particularly interesting in research with a mixed method design, such as the present study on “spirituality,” which includes measures that are desirable for relating to the FDI evaluation results. Thus, after we have imported FDI evaluation results in the quantitative data, we could relate them to the data on the Religious Schema Scale (Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010) and then investigate the relation of faith stages/religious styles with (combinations of) religious schemata (see the report in Chap. 24). And, because of the special focus on the semantics of “spirituality” in the research design, in the questionnaire and in the extensive evaluation our data for the semantics, we are able to address questions of stage-specific semantic profiles (reported also in Chap. 24).

Taken together, we may claim to have accomplished some innovative advancement in the evaluation of the FDI, based, on the one hand, on conceptual improvement in terms of the religious styles perspective, and, on the other hand, on a clear commitment to the triangulation of methods and data. We recommend this design for consideration in future research including the FDI.

Aims of the Faith Development Interview in Our Study

The FDI was designed by Fowler and applied, in the early times of faith development research, as a kind of stand-alone measure for the search and presentation of evidence for the new and, for the time, spectacular hypothesis that there is development in faith over the adolescent and adult life-span. The 359 FDIs which Fowler and his research teams in Harvard and Atlanta have conducted and evaluated and Fowler (1981) was able to present, were primarily aimed at providing such evidence.

In subsequent research—Fowler’s faith development theory has inspired over 70 research projects, a majority of which were studies using the FDI (see Streib, 2003a for a review)—new aims for the FDI have emerged. Specific groups and specific challenges came into focus, such as, to note a few, development in adolescence, formation and learning in higher education, the status of and potential promotion of faith development in congregations, career satisfaction of clergy, coping with terminal illness such as HIV infection and coping with death.

Some exceptions notwithstanding, the general focus of research with the FDI did only marginally include cross-cultural and cross-religious—not to speak of longitudinal—perspectives. Also marginalized was the assessment of faith development/religious styles in the context of new forms of religious phenomena which have emerged in the religious field and would deserve attention.

In this context of faith development research, we have attempted to cover new ground already in previous research: We have related deconversion to faith development (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). Now, we extend this focus to the new phenomenon in the religious field which is associated with a self-attribution of “spirituality.”

Therefore, we describe our first and foremost aim for the inclusion of the FDI in this Spirituality Study: The aim is an assessment whether “spirituality” relates to changes in faith stage and/or changes in (the combination of) religious styles. That there is a kind of “family resemblance” between ‘faith’ and “spirituality” is the minimal conceptual proposition to which most researchers would agree. Eventually, however, ‘faith’ and self-attributed “spirituality” may have more in common. We regard this as question for empirical research—because we take “spirituality” as an emic term—and thus included the FDI in the research with just this aim to obtain more reliable data about the relation of ‘faith’ and “spirituality.”

From this first aim follow methodological consequences which lead to the formation of a second aim for the inclusion of the FDI in the research design. The inclusion of the FDI aims at the triangulation of measures in the questionnaire such as psychometric scales with the FDI evaluation. Such triangulation is, of course, necessary just because of the different sort of data: The FDI results are based on qualitative, interpretative evaluation and, if we want to relate them at all with questionnaire data, data have to be mutually exchanged.

It is however important to note that triangulating data exchange can—and should—go in both directions: from the FDI evaluation into the quantitative data set, and from the quantitative data set to the single case interpretation, especially when we are elaborating on a case study. For such triangulation we have included anything we regarded revealing and helpful. The import of FDI results into the quantitative data set has allowed conducting statistical analyses, reported in Chap. 24.

The other direction of triangulation can be seen in the case studies in the subsequent chapters. For each case study, we have produced a table, such as the Table 15.2 (which is taken from Chap. 16). These tables include the results of the most important scales such as the NEO Five Factor Inventory, the Mysticism Scale, the Psychological Well-being and Growth Scale, the Loyola Generativity Scale, the Attitudes toward God Scale, and the Religious Schema Scale. In these tables, the means and standard deviations for the focus group to which the case belongs are reported, based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled for sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income—to allow for comparison with the scores of the specific case on these scales. On the basis of such comparison, the FDI evaluation is opened up for more comprehensive interpretation and cross-validation. Ultimately, these comparisons feed into the interpretation of the case studies and profile the case—and his or her FDI—in the context of the quantitative results.

The final prominent aim of including the FDI in research is the interest in a “thick description” of biographical, moral and social-contextual embeddedness of “spirituality.” This should have the potential of resulting in case studies with a focus on “spirituality.” We even included the FDI as the only interview format in the present Spirituality Study. Based on research experiences in the Deconversion Project (Streib et al., 2009), in which we had included both the FDI and a narrative interview, we concluded that the FDI is sufficient because, when conducted competently, it allows studying how participants construct meaning for their lives in interaction with their significant others, with the society and larger culture. Participants thereby can be invited to talk about “spirituality” as they understand this word and to reconstruct their “spiritual” journey, if they see such development in their lives. The FDI invites remembering, reasoning and narrating about biography, relationships in past

Table 15.2 Comparison of Sarah L. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Sarah L.	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus group in the US	
		M	SD
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	29	20.6	8.6
<i>Extraversion</i>	31	29.4	6.7
<i>Openness to experience</i>	43	33.3	6.6
<i>Agreeableness</i>	34	32.3	6.1
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	38	32.3	6.3
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)	90	119.9	23.9
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	39	44.1	10.2
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	17	28.4	7.8
<i>Interpretation</i>	34	47.4	8.7
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	31	27.0	4.1
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	27	24.5	4.6
<i>Personal growth</i>	35	29.4	3.7
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	32	27.9	4.4
<i>Purpose in life</i>	26	26.8	4.5
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	23	25.9	4.7
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)	74	60.6	8.5
Attitudes toward God (ATGS)	49	75.1	20.8
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	5	13.4	5.9
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	24	21.8	3.0
<i>Xenosphia/inter-religious dialog</i>	17	18.7	3.9

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

and present, values and commitments, and on religion and world view. Thus the FDI questions initiate and structure an interview which invites the interviewee to wander through the variety of essential domains and biographical epochs in his or her life. Taken together, we used the FDI with the aim of generating a wealth of autobiographical narratives and reflections on a broad variety of life themes. The case studies in the following chapters, which are based solely on FDIs, are the proof that this methodological decision was not mistaken.

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Narrative Reconstruction and Content Analysis in the Interpretation of “Spiritual” Biographical Trajectories for Case Studies

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Abstract

In this chapter we explain how we construct case studies, including analyses of narrative and content of the FDI. We take as point of departure the location of the case under study in the chart of *openness to experience/mysticism*. Then we proceed in direction of increasing depth of interpretation and compare the case under study with the respective focus group: First we present the results of central scales from our questionnaire, covering measures of personality, adult development and, of course, religiosity, second we turn to semantics and, in some case studies, inspect the individual semantic differentials with those of the respective focus group. Next, we present the “classic” FDI evaluation, ratings according to the *Manual for faith development research* along with exploratory evaluations of proxies for current concepts we consider to include. Then we turn to the FDI for a deeper analysis of content and narrative. Finally, we draw results from the different research methods together, thus achieving triangulation on the level of the single case. Now we first discuss the analysis of narrative and content and, in the second part of the chapter, we show how these are included in a case study.

Attending to Content and Narrative of the Faith Development Interview

In response to longstanding criticism, the cognitive structural framework of the faith development interview (FDI) has been revised with respect to styles and schemata and made conversant with current concepts in developmental psychology. The religious styles perspective attends to content and to the narratives elicited by the FDI as articulations of respondents’ religious selves, associated with affectivity and emotion.

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Streib's critical appreciation of Fowler's work (Fowler, 1981) has inspired the research program of the religious styles perspective (e.g. Streib, 1991, 1997, 2001, 2003a, b, 2005). The model of religious styles discards the a priori assumptions of structural wholeness, irreversibility and sequentiality of the stages of faith. In line with multidimensional and multidirectional conceptions of development, Streib suggests paying more attention to the individual aspects of faith, which allows for divergent stage assignment of aspects (cognitive development, perspective-taking, moral development, bounds of social awareness, locus of authority, form of world coherence, and symbolic functioning, see Chap. 15, especially Fig. 15.1) and thus for aspect-specific profiles (rather than losing information by averaging assigned scores across aspects). The revision of the original evaluation procedure in the third edition of the *Manual for Faith Development Research* started by rearranging stage assignment according to aspects of faith (Fowler et al., 2004). This procedure was used in the deconversion studies (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). For the project on spirituality we have pursued this further by explicitly documenting the stage assignment of each single rating in a profile of aspects. We will demonstrate this below when we discuss our sample narrative analysis together with faith development ratings taking single aspects and currently studied concepts into account (see Keller & Streib, 2013), together with other selected measures of Faith Development such as the Religious Schema Scale (Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010).

Working Toward a Narrative Analysis of Faith Development

Streib (2005, 2013) has argued to account for content diversity, to account for narrative diversity, to use "the narrative and reflective responses" in the interview as well as the subject matter of life history that the interview offers, and, furthermore, to explore relationships of content and structure. The "narrative turn" in psychology offers concepts and methods worth exploring with respect to the faith development interview.

Narrativity has been brought on the research agenda in psychology and explored by Gergen and Gergen, by McAdams and his co-workers, Josselson and Lieblich, and others, who began to study narrative structures in theoretical accounts, narratives as windows to personality, and narrative identity (Gergen & Gergen, 2010; McAdams, 1990, 1993; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). Habermas (2006, 2010) has studied autobiographical narrative and reasoning, exploring issues of mental health and development. McAdams' recent publications include the exploration of religious attitudes (McAdams et al., 2008). For the formal characteristics of what a narrative consists of, the linguistic model introduced by Labov and Waletzky has been widely used (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) in English speaking countries and beyond.

Here, we explore the narrative potential of the FDI: When people are asked to look back and reflect on their lives, they do several things: They give information, reporting, explaining and accounting for what happened. In each of the sections of the FDI we receive such information, respondents also spontaneously develop thoughts as they talk about their experiences or the philosophies they have been living with and want to share. When people are revealing something important about themselves, they may tell a story—which points to some importance: What makes an experience worth telling? What makes it a "happening of a startling occurrence"¹ or "special"? The linguist Labov has collected many narratives and names in his recent book (Labov, 2013, p. 4), "three universal centers of interest: death, sex and moral indignation." These issues concern highly personal as well as universal experiences: To cope with others' death and with one's own mortality is personal, while all human life is transient. Sexuality is usually part of very personal or intimate experience and also something basic, although shaped and framed differently across times and cultures. Ethical standards and moral behavior is also a very personal as well as an important social issue, and a human concern.

¹"Unerhörte Begebenheit" (Goethe).

Thus, these issues can be related to questions of transcendence and values, or to religious and other world views. The narrative approach, tapping into personal experience special enough to be worth telling, can be seen as complementing the building block approach to the study of religion suggested by Taves (2009): “Special” experiences told in the course of a FDI may involve issues of life and death, of right and wrong, of very personal experience but also transcending it. They may explain how respondents came to be who they are. Stories of experiences deemed meaningful which emerge when our respondents talk about their own religious/spiritual developments are seen as windows into their narrative identity. We suggest calling them “religious identity narratives.”

These narratives are invited by FDI questions which explore, in biographical perspective, life review, relationships, values and commitments, and religion and world view. Therefore, throughout the interviews, we look for narratives as defined by Labov and Waletzky (1967), little stories consisting of orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. These narratives, stories worth telling, will point to important aspects of religious experience and identity. Table 16.1 illustrates the structure of such a story, according to Labov and Waletzky modified by Habermas and Berger (2011).

After having identified a narrative and ordered according to this pattern, we add a title telling what it is all about. In some cases narrators announce this themselves, sometimes giving an abstract which informs about the point to be made (cf. Habermas & Berger, 2011). Different ways of being “spiritual” may go along with different narratives which may be found in any of the sections of the FDI. Noting titles of stories

across interviews will support the exploration of the FDI as instrument which elicits narratives.

Narratives, Chronologies, and Reflections in the FDI

Not all respondents are story tellers, and not all FDIs contain narratives. There are also chronologies and reflections. How do we evaluate these contents? We summarize statements and contentions and use concepts like attachment, mentalization, moral foundations, and wisdom to structure interview content in the four sections of the FDI. These explore life review, relationships, values and commitments, and religion and world view (see Appendix for a comprehensive list of FDI questions).

The life review section, starting with the question of dividing one’s life into chapters, invites autobiographical narrative and reflection. It also invites the respondent to introduce her- or himself. Next, relationships are explored. This section can be evaluated drawing on current concepts like attachment and mentalization which take into consideration how persons reconstruct relationship experiences and how they develop their concepts of their own and others’ inner lives. “Present Values and Commitments” asks for information on social engagement and on central convictions and moral orientation. To take content into account in this section, we suggest drawing on moral foundations theory (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009), which contends to expand the “moral domain” beyond justice and care as focused on by the Kohlberg/Gilligan tradition (Haidt & Graham, 2007, p. 100). The fourth section covers “Religion and World View.” Here, we explore the “spiritual,”

Table 16.1 Structure of a Narrative According to Labov and Waletzky (1967)

Orientation	Provides background such as antecedents, place, time and persons
Complication	Central event that breaks with normality, elicits an emotion, defines a goal
Evaluation/attempts to solve	Assessment of the situation/attempts to return the situation to normal
Resolution	Successful or not successful result of attempts to solve complication/adjust evaluation
Coda	Signals end, leads back to the present

religious or worldview-related self-identifications respondents give in the context of telling and reflecting on their development as they see it. Also, issues transcending one's personal existence are addressed, as well as religious or ideological conflict. How respondents handle such conflict is explored by drawing on research and concepts from the study of "wisdom." "Wisdom" or rather "wisdom-related knowledge" was introduced into empirical psychology to get access to culturally based aspects of cognitive development across the adult life span (Dittmann-Kohli & Baltes, 1990).

The FDI traces religious development from personal biography to its immediate social and wider socio-cultural contexts, inviting remembering and reflection. In the next paragraphs we give a more detailed outline of the four sections of the FDI and the evaluative perspectives we use. We have explored ratings of proxies of e.g. mentalization, attachment and wisdom, using scales of their respective dimensions with the new scoring sheet which we use for FDI ratings. When we study narrative and content for the evaluation of single interview trajectories, we also draw on these constructs from a typological perspective. These different perspectives will be drawn together for the interpretation of the single cases.

Life Review: Life Chapters and Autobiographical Reasoning

The first section of the FDI focuses on life review, resembling the "life chapter task" of the research programs of McAdams. Also, comparable to high and low points, as in the format used by McAdams and his team, experiences of crisis and of intense joy are addressed. World view and images of the divine are introduced as potentially important areas of development, to be taken up again in further sections of the FDI. This is a unique characteristic of the FDI which recommends it for the exploration of spirituality in therapeutic and counselling contexts (Keller, Klein, & Streib, 2013). The life review section, especially the question probing for one's life's chapters, invites biographical reconstructions. This allows for the construction of indicators of structure and coherence which we

have added to the scoring of the aspects of faith. These basic narrative characteristics of responses to the FDI are rated with the current electronic scoring sheet which has been created to allow data entry and transfer to SPSS. Stage assignments of aspects, narrative characteristics of the FDI and proxies for attachment, mentalization, and wisdom are evaluated along with a rating of the rater's emotional response to the interview ("counter-transference"). This rating process is completed independent from the narrative analyses. For case studies, we combine these ratings and individual scores on relevant quantitative variables with the detailed analyses of narrative and content (see below in the second part of this chapter). This includes drawing on these constructs again, but from a different perspective, and linking content and ratings using a typological approach.

When working with the FDI as narrative, we also turn to the specific contents which are offered as answer to the "life chapter question" and use these to reconstruct the individual faith biographies. The first step consists in the reconstruction of the trajectory presented by the chapters named. Some respondents offer these in a chronological order, using conventional structures and ordered according to cultural concepts of biography (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Others prefer a different structure, sometimes based on very specific labels for their lives' chapters. We rearrange the chapters mentioned according to timeline, noting the structuring strategy of the person. Also, we note themes addressed. We will return to this "abstract" when we have worked through the interview to compare it with the trajectory as unfolded. Did the respondent cover what was announced? Where there surprising revelations? This supports our understanding of the dynamics of the interview.

We draw on McAdams' work for the identification of typical narrative patterns (redemption vs. contamination). For exploring links between self and (religious) experience, we build on the methods suggested by McAdams (1993), and Pasupathi, Mansour, and Brubaker (2007), thus identifying "religious identity narratives" (self-defining narratives of religious experience). For the evaluation of linguistic characteristics we use the work of Habermas (2006).

Relationships: Probing into Attachment, and Reflective Functioning

This section elicits narratives of personal relationships as currently experienced. With probes for changes in relationships, and inviting reflections on possible causes for changes this section shows affinity to the format of the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). We take this as encouraging exploration with AAI-derived concepts and measures such as attachment style and reflective functioning.

Turning to content in the relationships section, we note: Who is named as important? Do these persons belong to the interviewee's family, are they friends, colleagues, teachers to which the interviewee has or had a personal relationship? Are other persons mentioned such as public figures of influence? To what life phases (present-past, childhood, youth, adult and late adult age) do persons mentioned belong? For interpretation, we turn to two concepts anchored in research on attachment to use the dimensional perspectives they offer. Both have been used as gradual measures with the scoring sheet: attachment (style) and mentalization (mode).

Research on attachment was first introduced by Bowlby (1969). Attachment theory proposes "the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others" (Bowlby, 1977, p. 201). Departing from the, at that time, current mainstream of psychoanalytical thinking which focused on inner conflict, he insisted that the observation of young children and their caretakers be studied. Ainsworth introduced the "strange situation" for the systematic observation of attachment behavior of young children and their mothers. Main has developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) for the exploration of relationship experiences of adults (Ainsworth, 1985; Main, Hesse, & Kaplan, 2005). Evaluation of the AAI is based on adults' narratives and reflections on their childhood and early relationships. These evaluations center on the integration of experience of relationships. They were found to predict the quality of parents' interaction with their children and the security of the children's attachment. Secure attachment results from sensitive

interaction with caretakers, while insecure attachment styles (dismissive or preoccupied) relate to either distant or ambivalent relationships. A fourth classification is a fearful attachment style, associated with unpredictable or even abusive parenting. Attachment has been studied with respect to religious development in the psychology of religion by Kirkpatrick (1992) and, more recently, by Granqvist (e.g. Granqvist, 2010; Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999).

For the understanding of faith biographies we may draw on the distinction between correspondence and compensation of attachment. Correspondence is adherence to the same God or religion as the parents. It has been hypothesized that correspondence is related to secure attachment: In a trusting relationship with sensitive caretakers, the young child is likely to accept their beliefs and to stay with them. Compensation, in contrast, has been used to describe the turn to a God or a world view different from that of one's parents. For offspring with insecure attachment to parents, it may be sensible to not trust their parents' God or belief, but to turn to something that is felt to be more benevolent (Kirkpatrick, 1992, 2005). Granqvist and Hagekull (1999) added the idea of socialized correspondence. They suggest that, in the case of secure attachment, religion reflects partial adoption of a sensitive caregiver's religion. Recently, Granqvist and Kirkpatrick emphasized that their "hypotheses refer to *pathways* to religion and to different modes of being religious, to underscore that we are dealing with developmental issues" (Granqvist, 2010, pp. 10–11, italics in original; cf. Granqvist & Hagekull, 2008). With the correspondence pathway they state

that religion in the case of secure attachment develops from (a) generalized, positive representations of self and other (IWM), and (b) partial adoption of a sensitive caregiver's religion (social aspect). If parents have been observably religious, secure offspring are expected to be as well, in which case their perceptions of God will more or less mirror that of a reliably sensitive attachment figure. Second, with the compensation pathway, religiosity in the case of insecure attachment is held to develop from higher-order distress regulation strategies, characterized by the use of God as a surrogate attachment figure (Granqvist, 2010, 10–11).

The FDI, probing into relationships, allows the assessment of a proxy for attachment, and to establish ratings of secure vs insecure attachment. We have used the taxonomy introduced by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) to guide ratings in the scoring sheet. Based on combinations of a person's self-image (positive or negative) and image of others (positive or negative) four attachment prototypes are defined: Persons who have a positive image of themselves and others are supposed to have a secure attachment style and to feel comfortable with intimacy and with autonomy. They should be open to discussion of relationship and attachment, displaying a realistic forgiving perspective, and vivid descriptions of relationships. Those insecurely attached persons with a negative view of themselves and a positive view of others are supposed to be preoccupied with relationships, and to make great efforts to gain attention and support and to show indications of low self-esteem. The insecurely attached persons with a positive view of themselves and a negative view of others are supposed to be dismissive of intimacy. They are expected to stress independence, emotional distance, and to downplay rejections. The fearful (disorganized) type has a negative view on self and on others and should show negative attitudes and distrust toward self and others.

In narrative analyses we describe attachment styles in the context of the single biography to highlight specific ways of relating to the Divine or transcendent as respondents construct it—which may be complex and, sometimes, inconsistent and conflicting. For further depth of interpretation we may draw on the development of the personal God representation as suggested in the work of Rizzuto (1979).

Mentalization is another concept connected to the study of retrospective accounts of relationship experience and based on the evaluation of the AAI. Mentalization has been defined as “the mental process by which an individual implicitly and explicitly interprets the actions of himself or herself and others as meaningful on the basis of intentional mental states such as personal desires, needs,

feelings, beliefs, and reasons” (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004). Mentalization has also been described as “holding mind in mind,” “attending to mental states in self and others,” “understanding misunderstandings,” “seeing yourself from the outside and others from the inside,” and as “giving a mental quality to or cultivating mentally” (Allen, Fonagy, & Bateman, 2008, p. 3). Mentalization refers to a reflective stance which attends to inner states. The measure of mentalization which is used in most studies, the Reflective Functioning Scale, has first been developed as an AAI-subscale (Fonagy, Target, Steele, & Steele, 1998). The researchers were looking for a method to capture parents' understanding of their children's inner worlds because they assumed that this would contribute to secure attachment. Therefore, mentalization was “examined as potential mediator through which parents, by anticipating and understanding their children's emotional reactions might promote secure attachment” (Rudden, Milrod, Aronson, & Target, 2008, p. 185). Meanwhile, it has been developed into a successful approach widely used in psychotherapy and education (Fonagy, Jurist, Gergely, & Target, 2002; Fonagy & Target, 2007; Fonagy et al., 2009). We suggest using it with the descriptions of one's parents. These descriptions give information on how respondents conceive of others' inner lives.

The Reflective Functioning Scale has been adapted successfully to other areas of research which can be taken as encouraging (see Rudden et al., 2008). A proxy for the gradual scorings of the second FDI section “relationships,” based on the different criteria, is used with the scoring sheet. The operationalization of the proxy we created for the scoring sheet makes use of these basic criteria according to the manual introduced by Fonagy et al.:

- Awareness of the nature of mental states
- The explicit effort to tease out mental states underlying behavior
- Recognizing developmental aspects of mental states
- Mental states in relation to the interviewer.

The Reflective Functioning Scale covers a range from -1 (negative) to 9 (exceptional). The scale turns the observations of the different modes (teleological, psychological equivalence, as-if, integrated) into a gradual measure.

Focusing on content when studying a single interview trajectory, we may use the typological approach. We may draw on the different modes involved in the development of mentalization. Is a person structuring experience in terms of observation of cause and effect? This corresponds to the teleological mode which precedes mentalization. Is there reliance that what is in the mind corresponds exactly to what happens, e.g. in relationships? This speaks to the equivalence mode, in which a child has already realized that there is inner and outer reality, assuming, however, that there is a strict correspondence between both. Is there a disconnection between inner and outer world, e.g. does a person entertain interesting ideas, which are never transferred to reality? This corresponds to the “as-if” mode which children experience while playing phantasy games, thus learning to explore their inner worlds. Has a person integrated the “psychic equivalence” and the “as-if” mode toward being aware that her own and others’ perception of reality are mediated by inner processes? This is meant by mentalization, that is, acknowledgment of inner worlds as mediators of experience. These different modes, appearing in this sequence in cognitive and emotional development, may be related systematically to ways of being religious: When carried into adult life, the teleological mode may find expression in prayer tied to expectations of fulfilment, in keeping rules and rituals which are perceived as parts of a control system. The teleological mode might, if dominant, characterize a characteristic ascribed to a fundamentalist religious orientation: The relationship to God or higher powers may be experienced as involving contingent responses to one’s actions. The equivalence mode, the conviction that what is in the mind is exactly what is out there, may in adult religious life be involved in what is according to Hood, Hill, and Williamson (2005) a core characteristic of fundamentalism: intratextuality. Sacred texts are

understood as referring to realities, perhaps of another time and place, but referring to what is or was. Less mature varieties of the pretend mode may imply inconsequential forms of faith which are restricted to ceremonies and ritual. Also, a complex intellectual engagement with doctrine without consequences for everyday behavior might be understood as “pretend” mode. More mature may be deliberate visits to an “other” realm for enriching one’s inner life. Mentalization should manifest itself in religious matters when persons come to realize their religious life or world view as their own, noting and tolerating that other persons also have their world view, religious or other, which may be different. Securely attached to one’s own appropriation of one’s own tradition or world view one can afford an attitude of genuine interest toward other perspectives (as captured by the construct of *xenosophia*).

Present Values and Commitments: Moral Reasoning, Moral Foundations?

The section three of the FDI, on “values and commitments” explores the wider social context of groups and of concerns respondents engage with, of values and norms as they perceive and negotiate them. We note content, that is, individual descriptions and examples of the concerns in which they invest themselves, how they do that. We also note their current values and commitments as stated. We note what gives their lives meaning, and explore domains of counterfactual thinking. We list moral convictions (right vs wrong), including examples, if these are given.

This section offers much information for the FDI rating of the aspect of moral judgment, which is based on Kohlberg’s conception of moral reasoning. Streib (see above) has been challenging the plausibility of cognitive development as motor of faith development. Recent discussion has referred to the development of the “moral personality” versus “moral intuitions” (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009; Haidt & Graham, 2007). Both approaches explore morality as encompassing

more than moral judgment and embedded in more complex contexts. The model put forward by Haidt and Graham offers descriptive categories for their “moral foundations,” which are applicable to the accounts elicited in this section of the FDI: harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity. They argue that the “moral domain” charted by research inspired by Kohlberg and later, Gilligan (1982) focused on justice and care, but neglected community-related orientations such as loyalty to one’s own group, respect for authority, and purity and sanctity. The anthropological foundation may be debatable; the categories themselves have been shown to differentiate between liberals, who endorse harm/care and fairness/reciprocity, and conservatives, who also endorse the additional three. Also, the notion of moral intuition raises interesting questions with respect to moral behavior: Is this guided by deliberate moral reasoning and/or spontaneous intuition? Therefore, for the exploration of a more encompassing concept of morality, we suggest to complement the original approach by drawing on the taxonomy developed by Haidt and Graham. Different moral attitudes may go along with different self-identifications.

World Views and Religion: Transcendence and Wisdom

In this fourth section, individual versions of lived religiosity and ways of relating to the transcendent are explored. Does the person refer to higher powers, to a supernatural world beyond? This we would call vertical transcendence. Or is the person invested in concerns beyond their own personal life, concerns, which, framed in a theological vocabulary, might be called “ultimate”? Then we would speak of horizontal transcendence (cf. Streib & Hood, 2013; Coleman, Silver, & Holcombe, 2013). Here, respondents explain their religious identity as they understand it in the context of their ideas of the transcendent. They are invited to describe their religious or spiritual practices, take their stance toward traditional religious concepts, and display their ideas

on the boundaries of human existence and understanding—and on what may lie beyond. Also, they are asked how religious conflicts or conflicts due to different world views might be resolved.

Evaluating the content of this section, we record the self-identification with respect to religion and world view, and we note how respondents define whatever they identify with in the context of their faith development as they construct it. We document rituals reported. Also, we note ideas of afterlife or the rejection of such ideas. Addressing the conditions and limits of human existence, of one’s own existence stimulates fears as well as wishes and longings. These are sometimes mixed and conflicted—and their sometimes tentative formulations deserve attention and careful interpretation.

In Fowler’s conception, cognitive development serves as motor of faith development. He had to stretch Piaget’s concepts in order to map the adult lifespan. Meanwhile, the concept of “wisdom” or rather “wisdom-related knowledge” has been explored as culture-related part of cognitive development in adulthood. Linking the cognitive component of faith development with a current concept, we can use wisdom or wisdom-related behavior. Wisdom has been suggested as secular successor of religion (Baltes, 2004). This makes it an interesting candidate in a faith development research context which is based on Fowler’s broad concept of faith.

Wisdom or rather wisdom-related knowledge has been defined as an expert knowledge system dealing with the fundamental pragmatics of life,” and introduced as an option to explore culture-based aspects of cognitive development across the adult life span (Dittmann-Kohli & Baltes, 1990).

The methodological strategy in investigating wisdom as an expertise in the fundamental pragmatics of life has been to ask persons to think aloud about difficult life problems such as, “Imagine a 14-year-old girl who wants to leave home and get married, what should one think about this?” Baltes and colleagues found out that “people high on wisdom-related knowledge exhibited a more complex and modulated structure of emotions and preferred conflict resolution strategies that are

based on dialogue rather than power” (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2006, p. 608).

The FDI question of how religious or world view conflicts might be resolved is close enough to a dilemma task to probe for a proxy of “wisdom-related behavior” which can be rated and which is recorded in the scoring sheet.

Here, we can add content to the ratings of the scoring-sheet and describe in what domains of their lives respondents show wisdom related behavior, drawing on the criteria as suggested by the Berlin paradigm (Staudinger, Smith, & Baltes, 1994):

1. rich factual knowledge about the fundamental pragmatics of life (indicated by a wide variety of themes and depth);
2. rich procedural knowledge about dealing with the fundamental pragmatics of life (indicated by e.g. ability to systematize and to analyze past experiences and to apply this knowledge);
3. life-span contextualism: understanding of life contexts and their temporal (developmental) relations (indicated by consideration of age-related, cultural and biographical contexts);
4. value-relativism: knowledge about the differences in values and life goals (indicated by decentralization, the ability to distance oneself from personal values, and value related relativism while accepting universal values);
5. uncertainty: knowledge about the relative uncertainty of life and its management (indicated e.g. by awareness of unexpected individual or social events and developments).

Wisdom could also be understood, especially with reference to the meta-criteria, as capturing culturally mediated reflective functioning. For case studies, we relate ratings to the contents displayed, thus working toward the integration of structure and content. Concluding our interpretive work, we review the trajectory of the interview, look at events and narratives across the interview and compare this with the “abstract” in the beginning. We note departures from the “abstract,” inconsistencies, and surprising

revelations. Attending to the dynamics of the interview, if necessary taking into account how the interviewer contributed to what was told, will conclude our interpretation.

Evaluation of a Trajectory: The Case of Sarah L. “I Hope that There Is Some Force for Good in the Universe”²

Here, we will demonstrate how attending to the FDI in terms of narrative and content adds to the understanding of religious development. We will illustrate our suggestions with a case study, starting with location in the sample and comparison with the measures of the focus group. Then we will combine narrative analysis and analysis of content with the “classical” faith development rating. In the FDI ratings we also consider the single aspects of faith, and additional ratings of concept such as attachment, mentalization, and wisdom. Thus, we will demonstrate triangulation of data from different methods on the level of the single case. Before we turn to narrative, we introduce the case under study by drawing on the information from the online-questionnaire which guided our selection of interviewees.

Procedure First, we locate the case, “Sarah L.,” in the complete sample, then we narrow our focus and inspect Sarah’s scores on central scales with the means of the focus group of the more spiritual but not atheist Americans. Next, we turn to the semantics of “spirituality” she has used when giving her definitions in our questionnaire and when responding to the semantic differentials we offered. Next we present her Faith Development evaluation, before we proceed to the analysis of narrative and content of her Faith Development Interview.

²From interact 46 of Sarah’s FDI. The interview transcript in full length for Sarah L. is available in Appendix B (B.1).

Introductory Biographical Outline

Sarah L., who in reality has a different name (like all the other people presented in our case studies), is 29 years old at the time of the interview. She describes her childhood as characterized by domestic violence, hurtful, and tells that she left home early. As a teenager, she made an attempt at finding faith with a Baptist church, but did not stay. She has experienced supportive friendships but also losses. At the time of the interview she reports that she has left a demanding job in the health care system and feels that she is “moving on.”

Mapping Sarah L.’s Case Based on Mysticism and Openness

In our map constructed by *openness to experience* and *mysticism* (see Chaps. 14 and 17), we find Sarah L. relatively high in *openness*, however in a more moderate region regarding *mysticism*. From this we would expect her to be open to exploration but modestly involved in matters “spiritual” with respect to our sample. In the questionnaire, she identified herself as “more spiritual,” but not “atheist,” which locates her in our corresponding focus group, and her environment at age 12 as “more religious.” This suggests a movement away from religion.

Sarah’s “Spiritual” Trajectory from the Perspective of Her Questionnaire Data

In Table 16.2 we have plotted Sarah’s questionnaire data against the means of her reference group, those who self-identified as „more spiritual than religious,” but not atheist or non-theist.

We have already observed that Sarah does not score high in *mysticism* when we considered the complete scale as displayed in our *mysticism/openness* chart. Here we take a closer look at the single subscales when we compare Sarah’s scores to those of other “more spiritual than religious, but not atheist/non-theist” participants from the USA. We note: regarding *mysticism*,

she scores considerably lower, more than a standard deviation on the two subscales *extrovertive mysticism* and *interpretation*. Her scores on the subscale *introvertive mysticism* are also lower than the average of this focus group, by half a standard deviation. This raises the question of her “spirituality”: is it so low? Or hard to capture with the instruments she answered?

Attitudes toward God measures positive and negative attitudes toward a personal God. Here, she also scores low, which is plausible as she does not relate to a personal God. Extremely low are her scores on the *truth of texts and teachings* scale of the RSS, which taps into fundamentalism—and which fits to what we already learned about her high scores in *openness to experience*. That her scores on these scales are low, even for this focus group, may not only reflect her deconversion from organized Christian religiosity. It may also speak for a neglect of religious interpretation and ways of experiencing “spirituality” which are tied to powers, agents, or authorities. A close to significantly higher score on *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* of the RSS with respect to other “spiritual” Americans further underlines her rejection of dogmatic religiosity. Her scores on *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* fall in the average range of this group.

So far this suggests: If Sarah invests herself in anything “spiritual,” it will be personally sensed (introvertive) mysticism, with an emphasis on rational choice while rejecting a personal God or any authority in matters of faith.

In terms of *personality* we already noted her high *openness*. She may also be more conscientious, but also more vulnerable, as displayed by her score in *neuroticism*, than the average of her reference group.

On Ryff’s scales measuring psychological well-being, also understood as markers of positive development in adulthood, she scores higher than average in *autonomy* and *personal growth*, with *positive relations with others* also almost significantly higher than the average American self-identified “more spiritual but not atheist” person in this sample, displaying an emphasis. This, in line with her high score on *generativity*, may imply that there is still an emphasis on self-reliance, but that

Table 16.2 Comparison of Sarah L. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Sarah L.	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus group in the US	
		M	SD
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	29	20.6	8.6
<i>Extraversion</i>	31	29.4	6.7
<i>Openness to experience</i>	43	33.3	6.6
<i>Agreeableness</i>	34	32.3	6.1
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	38	32.3	6.3
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)	90	119.9	23.9
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	39	44.1	10.2
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	17	28.4	7.8
<i>Interpretation</i>	34	47.4	8.7
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	31	27.0	4.1
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	27	24.5	4.6
<i>Personal growth</i>	35	29.4	3.7
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	32	27.9	4.4
<i>Purpose in life</i>	26	26.8	4.5
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	23	25.9	4.7
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)	74	60.6	8.5
Attitudes toward God (ATGS)	49	75.1	20.8
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	5	13.4	5.9
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	24	21.8	3.0
<i>Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog</i>	17	18.7	3.9

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

Sarah is also striving toward trusting others and building secure attachments.

Sarah’s Semantic of “Spirituality”

Sarah has also responded to our requests for definitions of “spirituality” and “religion”: She defines “spirituality” as “a sense of something greater than one’s self” and “religion” as “an organized method of worshipping a deity.” Later,

in the FDI she defines herself: “I think I see myself as somewhat spiritual, but not religious, and not faithful” (interact 112).

We have, for the exploration of the semantics of “spirituality” and “religion” used the semantic differential 1. in a version taken from Osgood (1962), Snider and Osgood (1969) and 2. in a contextual version (see Chaps. 4 and 7) (Fig. 16.1).

The semantic differential has been used for the exploration of subjective meanings in clinical case studies by Osgood, Luria, Jeans, and Smith (1976).

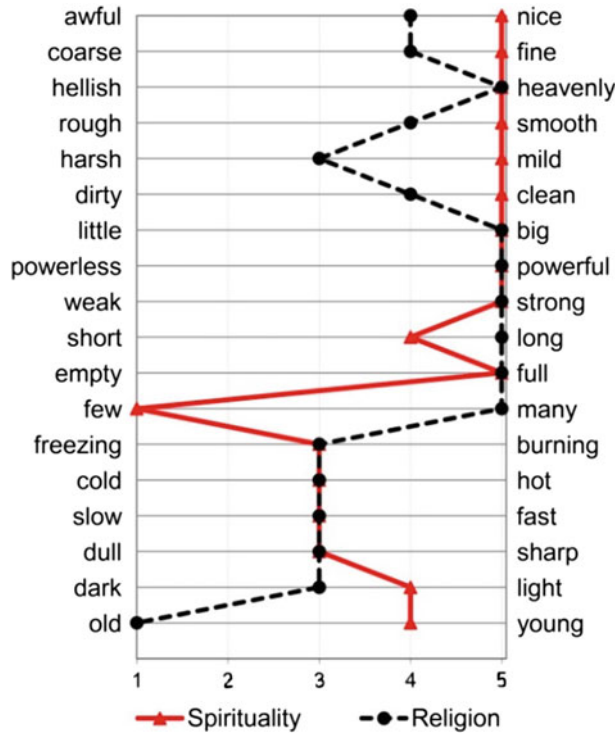


Fig. 16.1 Sarah's Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential

Here, we are interested in linking the participants' responses as indicators of her understanding of the concepts under study with her definitions given in the questionnaire and with her usage of these concepts in the FDI. Sarah's Osgood Differential shows that she evaluates "spirituality" more positively than "religion," while "religion" is seen as a little more powerful (characterized more by "many" than "few," more by "long" than by "short"). Regarding Osgood's dimension of activity, spirituality is seen as more "light" and "young." Altogether, spirituality is also more pronounced in evaluation and power in Sarah's differential compared to that of her focus group (FG3) in the USA (Fig. A.7). Her contextual differential seems more nuanced, compared to that of her focus group (Fig. A.21), where "spirituality" is aligned to "religion," however, leaning more to the right side with more "positive" and "individual" characteristics. Sarah's semantic of "spirituality" in comparison to that of "religion" is stronger characterized as "relaxing," "creative," "calm," "individual," and less as "interconnected," and "sacred." While "religion" is characterized as more "inflexible"

and "old," it is also, according to Sarah's responses, more "healing," "interconnected," "moral," and "holy." There is also overlap of the semantics attached to both concepts regarding "fascinating," "universal," "otherworldly" and "mature." We may conjecture that Sarah's preference for identifying as "spiritual" is linked to her understanding of "spirituality" as more dynamic and individual and less oppressive than "religion" (Fig. 16.2).

Sarah's Faith Development

Now we turn to Sarah's faith development ratings: The rating of Sarah's faith development according to our aspect specific scoring spans from 1 to 5. Aspects A to C oscillate between stage 2 and 3 (excepting Sarah's answer to the relationship to parents-question), aspects E to F between stage 3 and 4.

This means that those aspects focusing on cognition, perspective taking and moral reasoning, taken from psychology, received lower



Fig. 16.2 Sarah’s Ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential

ratings than those capturing the aspects closer tied to Fowler’s broad concept of faith. While this supports doubts regarding cognition (stage 3) as underlying structural whole, this pattern is also the opposite of what we might expect in case of fundamentalism, where (higher) cognitive development goes together with lower ratings in aspects closer related to religiosity and faith. The extreme ratings on the answers exploring “relationship to parents” (stage 5) and what happens to us after death (stage 1) pose questions: Has Sarah, in her life, explored the former more than the latter? Is, perhaps, relationships the area where she has made most developmental gains? Or has she, during the interview, shown more expertise or competency in discussing the former compared to the latter? Is “death” a subject which is challenging for her to discuss in a more developed way according to the scoring criteria? (Fig. 16.3).

Additional Characteristics of Sarah’s Interview

To learn more about Sarah’s faith development, we turn to the additional variables, for which we have created proxies for explorative ratings with the FDI.

In terms of attachment, the interview was rated as showing an insecure avoidant style, a cautious perception of others, which suggests a distant if not dismissive attitude toward others in her life. Regarding reflective functioning or mentalization, her ratings are considered higher than average for “awareness of the nature of mental states,” meaning that she is aware of reality being mediated by different inner worlds.

Her ratings on criteria for wisdom-related behavior show that she is well aware of uncertainty, where she was rated highest, while

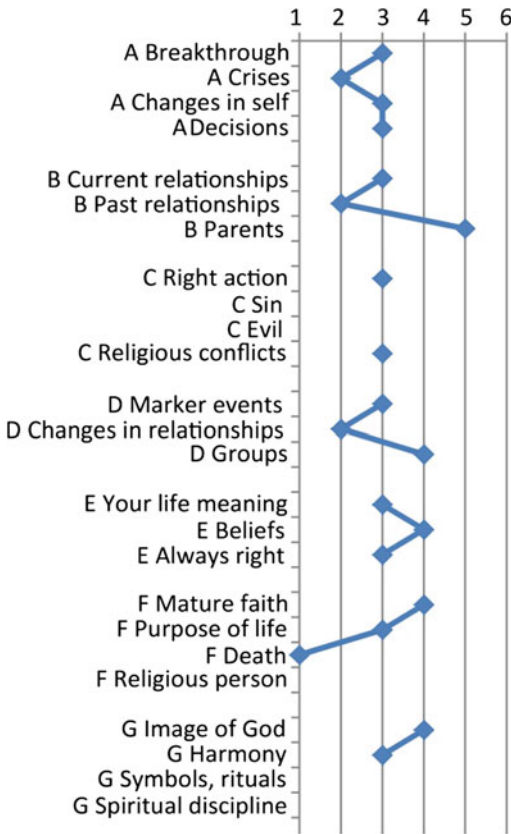


Fig. 16.3 Sarah’s FDI Ratings in the Different Aspects of Faith

knowledge, value relativism and life span contextualism are less present. Her FDI was rated as definitely evoking sympathy, while also some sadness, anxiety, and anger—a mixed response, more on the positive side, however. Taken together we might ask if, in her faith development, relationships, understanding and respecting others and their views play a crucial role—and if discussing “death” opens specifically hurtful issues?

Narrative Analysis and Content

Life Review

Sarah gives an “abstract” of her life, which contains these life chapters in this order (for better understanding explanations are added in brackets):

1. Growing up with fear (until her abusive father left home when she was about 11 or 12)
2. Friendships that really pulled me out of my head: finding my way out
3. First love: “Bill”
4. College, suicide of best friend: grieve and loss
5. Graduation, adult live, living with partner: “John”
6. Extremely work intensive job: the job
7. Moving on and growing (leaving the job, therapy, relationships)
8. Now (current chapter).

We find this information in interact³ 22 in Sarah’s FDI.

The trajectory she offers already follows a timeline, starting in the past and leading up to the presence. The time line structures themes, there is temporal coherence, in line with a cultural concept of biography (Bluck & Habermas, 2000) which contains, in temporal order, family of origin, education, and adult life with the challenges of intimate relationships and work. In terms of thematic coherence the trajectory can be described as finding ways out of crises and hardship and toward growth, or, in McAdams’ taxonomy, a redemption narrative. Temporal coherence and thematic coherence coincide, as moving on in time is aligned with “moving and growing”—in the areas of family, relationships and work. It may be noted that the first chapter “growing up with fear” covers all of her childhood. While she is naming hurtful experience she is also stashing it away by confining the first 11 years of her life to one chapter, followed by chapters focusing on crisis but also stressing her resilience.

There are two narratives, little stories of Sarah’s experience, which can be identified according to the structure defined by Labov and Waletzky in this section. We display these stories according to their narrative structure and provide them with a title. Thus, we identify what is “special” enough to be worth telling in a story of personal experience, which is first to be understood in the context of the single case under

³Interacts are the single utterances of interviewer and interviewee (see Chap. 15, p. 325 and Appendix B).

Table 16.3 Sarah's Narrative Segment "Letting Go of Judeo-Christian God"

Title	Letting go of Judeo-Christian god/theodicy not explained
Orientation	When I was in college I took a philosophy of religion course. And our professor had her masters in divinity from [University F] and she was talking about her personal change. You know, why she believed what she believed
Complication	And she said that no one could explain suffering to her.
Evaluation	If there is a just and loving god, why do innocents suffer? You know, why—you know why aren't our voices heard?
Resolution/Coda	And I think at that moment I kind of totally let go of any sort of Judeo-Christian god. (interact 36) (implicit: and have been without since then)

Table 16.4 Sarah's Narrative Segment "World's Beauty"

Title	World's beauty, reclaiming sensual experience
Orientation	The first time was actually at this place called xy Abbey, it's, you know a working abbey, where monks live. And I had just gone there for a picnic and was with my best friends [Tina] and [Mary] and there was something about the day that was so beautiful and so real and just... I don't know. It made me feel so full of life that I just like that—there's nothing I can really put my finger on. I felt more alive and more in love with the world than I ever felt. Everything was just more beautiful than it had ever been
Complication	And then, um, let me think, um I was in the depths of a horrible depression when I was living in [Town C], [State D] and I was working at a dead-end job that I hated and I couldn't figure out why I had gotten so far away from the things that I loved
Evaluation	And I realized that I had gotten away from the world of the senses. You know that—that what we have in this world, you know, is really beautiful and really wonderful, and the gifts we've been given, of sight, of sound, you know, and of hearing how amazing they are
Resolution	And that, you know, the sensuous world like that can have awakening really made me realize, you know
Coda	But that's always with me. (interact 48)

study, and later, will contribute to the exploration of narratives across interviews (Table 16.3):

This narrative is the conclusion of a longer history of Sarah's desperate efforts to find faith in a loving and benevolent God. Thinking back on how, as a teenager, she had joined a Baptist church and become a born-again Christian, she reasons about her efforts to find faith:

I wanted to believe in a hopeful future for myself, and that there was a loving God, but I never felt it. I never actually felt that there was anyone out there listening to me. Anything larger than myself. And I wanted a reason why I had suffered so much in my life. You know I was probably fourteen at the time, maybe fifteen, and I realized that I was the only one I could depend on. (from interact 36)

She accounts for her leaving what she labels as the "Judeo-Christian" faith. This broad label underscores a definitive statement. She has not

only left a congregation or a denomination, but a large religious tradition. Her personal story of having lived with an abusive father, and a mother who did not protect her, suggests that she draws on her own experience when talking about the unheard voices of innocents who suffer.

The next narrative portrays her as a person who (re-)claims her right to pursue happiness (Table 16.4):

Here Sarah illustrates, drawing on her vivid experience, how she found a connection to a benevolent reality larger than herself. We might call this a mystical experience—albeit without higher powers. This narrative of her reclaiming her right of experiencing the beauty of the world with all her senses may also be read as an experience of horizontal transcendence (cf. Streib & Hood, 2011, 2013; Coleman, Silver, & Holcombe, 2013). It seems to correspond to the

Table 16.5 Sarah's Narrative Segment "Desperately Praying"

Title	Desperately praying for comfort and getting no answer
Orientation	When I was fifteen, right after I had gotten so involved in our church and was really, trying to kind of "walk the right path," and I remember being so upset and so depressed about my parents and my family situation that I prayed
Complication	And you know, Christians pray pretty regularly so that wasn't that weird, but I said, to any sort of god that was out there, that was listening, you know if you're here, why can't you send me some sort of comfort? Why can't you send me something outside of myself, some help, some friend, you know, some one
Evaluation	And it never came
Resolution/Coda	And so I think from that moment on I started closing my heart off to the idea that there was a God with a capital G. (interact 52) (implicit: it is like that since then)

"spirituality" which is very private and experience-oriented as described by Streib and Hood (2011, p. 442). Feeling "alive" and "in love with the world" might also mean that Sarah tells that, at this point in her life, she was starting to overcome the depression she suffered from. Then this narrative might be about a spiritual experience that is also a turning point. And though the experience itself is referring to the world of the senses, and the beauty of this world, the site of its occurrence, an abbey, brings religion at least into the background of the picture.

Relationships

Important relationships named are: the childhood friend she has not seen for 10 years but still dreams about, her first romantic partner, a friend who committed suicide, female college friend "Tina," two other important unspecified relationships, probably in early adulthood, an intimate relationship with partner "John" and, finally, the relationship to her mother with whom she found some reconciliation as an adult woman and before her mother died. Her brother is mentioned as current roommate. She has been able to find and create reliable resources outside her troubled family after she left home at 16. Her family of origin is mentioned last and referring to reconciliation in adult life. There is a role reversal in her current relationship with her father of which she is aware—which may characterize this case.

Crises in this FDI mean: abusive experiences in childhood, friend's suicide at age 19, death of her mother, relationship breakups ("John," "Bill"). There is some sense of being self-reliant

and guarded, which may be interpreted as insecure dismissive attachment style, but also some sense of "earned security," security achieved after a childhood with parents portrayed as distant or unpredictable.

There is a narrative according to the structure defined by Labov and Waletzky in the relationship section (Table 16.5):

This narrative is part of Sarah's answer when asked if she ever felt profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning. It is another account of why she does not believe in a Christian God. This narrative, however, focusses on her personal experience, her personal disappointment with a God who did not respond to her prayers. From an attachment perspective we might ask if she was looking for a compensating parental figure. From a psychoanalytical object relations perspective, as suggested by Rizzuto (1979), the impression is that Sarah's God may have been as unresponsive as her parents. We may speculate that Sarah's parents could not provide that safe area, where play can be taken seriously, while not being confused with reality, the space that Winnicott termed the transitional space (Winnicott, 1953), which she might have used to find and create a responsive God. From the perspective of mentalization, we might assume that neither of her parents could provide the marked mirroring of her and her inner experiences. In all likelihood they did not provide the responses which would have made little Sarah realize that her parents saw her and her needs, that there was an image of her in the minds of her mother and of her father which could help her to understand herself as a person

with an inner life. Neither did they provide the secure environment she might have needed to “play with reality” and, eventually, relate to the God she was addressing so desperately.

Values and Commitments

Here, Sarah mentions Feminism, also loyalty to brother and friends. Her commitments are with Planned Parenthood, Oxfam, and an internet discussion platform where she started a group on body/size acceptance. These concerns and activities might be regarded as related to a progressive or liberal agenda, promoting equal rights and opportunities, minority issues, individual strivings and self-actualization. According to Graham et al. (2009), this social and political orientation goes along with the moral foundations of harm/care and fairness/reciprocity. Indeed, regarding what is right and wrong she argues along the logic of harm/care:

I: Do you think that actions can be right or wrong?

S: Yes.

I: What makes an action right in your opinion?

S: Um, if it doesn't hurt anyone especially someone innocent.

I: What makes an action wrong?

S: Um, that it comes out of ignorance or out of a desire to hurt someone. (interacts 87-92)

There is no narrative according to the structure defined by Labov and Waletzky in this section—which we might note for further evaluation of narrative and content of the FDI. When she explains what makes her life meaningful, she refers to Mother Theresa (“to love and be loved”) and the Dalai Lama (“kindness is the answer”)—both persons, or rather their public personas, might be deemed religious—and immaculate public parental figures (interact 68). Love and kindness are what she probably misses, when looking back on her childhood of “growing up

with fear,” and her choice of these impersonations may refer to her longing for benevolent parental figures. Mother Theresa and the Dalai Lama, examples of celibate lives, of people who, different from Sarah's early parents, put the needs of others first. This corresponds to her “moral intuition” of care, and her empathy with innocents who suffer.

Religion and World View

Sarah explains how she identifies herself: “Um, I think I see myself as somewhat spiritual, but not religious, and not faithful.” Currently she has no religious affiliations, formerly she was southern Baptist. Her answer regarding rituals implies that she understands these as tied to her former faith: “Not any more. I meditate sometimes and that makes me feel, um, really spiritual. I feel really, um, at peace and really calm and not afraid.” (interacts 112–114). Her practice seems to support her self-regulation, calming sensations and feelings.

Does Sarah have ideas of an afterlife? The answer is less than clear cut, of which she is aware: “and I know that part of me wants to believe that because it's comforting,” she says, referring back to thoughts on spirit lingering after death (interact 106) and the end of existence (interact 110).

There is no narrative according to the structure defined by Labov and Waletzky in this section. With regard to the dynamics of the interview trajectory it is worth noting that her brother appears rather late in the interview, in interact 58, where she states that she currently lives with him. We also observe that Sarah mentions her parents in more detail, when she is asked to talk about them in the course of the “relationship” section. Earlier, in the life review section and asked to name persons important for her development she mentions that she got to know her parents only as an adult and after having left home. It seems that Sarah conveys a distance between her and her family when discussing her biography. While she reported reconciliation, her careful if not reluctant handling of information points to a certain guardedness.

Summary of Sarah's Trajectory

Sarah's FDI shows a trajectory from a religious environment to identifying herself as "spiritual." The outline she gives at the beginning when answering the life chapter task is structured by time and developmental tasks, following the conventions of a curriculum vitae. It is unconventional in labelling childhood as 11-year-period of fear, notwithstanding the emphasis on redemption. There are impressions of having worked through hurtful experiences, of having gained insight and "earned security" in relationships. There is identification with liberal causes, with justice and human rights. Sarah's spirituality, which is characterized by individual experience and horizontal transcendence, is seen as linked to her efforts at coming to terms with her abusive and neglecting parents and their disappointing god.

The narratives of "Desperately praying for comfort and getting no answer," "Letting go of Judeo-Christian God/Theodicy unexplainable" focus on loss of faith due to disappointment with her parents and their tradition she grew up with. The narrative "World's beauty, reclaiming sensual experience" points to a body-based "spirituality" which she seems to enjoy when meditating, to which she can connect without having to rely on supernatural powers or higher authorities. This turn toward a self-reliant spirituality characterized by horizontal transcendence follows the pattern of compensation.

If we look at the sequence of these narratives in the trajectory of the interview, we find that first there is the intellectual rejection of "God" discussing theodicy, then a stabilizing account of her own way of being able to ground herself in her spiritual experience before she turns to her personal disillusionment with "God," who did not answer when she was addressing him because she was in need.

Her faith biography involves deconversion (Streib et al., 2009), motivated by loss of religious experience and intellectual doubt, resulting in a privatizing exit. Her quoting Mother Theresa and the Dalai Lama shows, after all, appreciation of a loving mother and kind father.

Sarah's prevailing synthetic-conventional or mutual style may, from what we learn about her understanding of her story, reflect that she felt, as a child, she needed to rely on herself. She tried, but could not relate to her family's faith. Her expectations of mutuality were disappointed. Perhaps her line of development leads from finding self-reliance outside religious tradition to joining concerns worth her engagement to finding like-minded persons. Thus, departing from the trajectory to be expected for this particular interviewee, the mutual religious style may be a challenge at the time of the interview. From an attachment-informed perspective: She may have had to rely on a forced or "pseudo" "individuating" stance when her expectations were disappointed.

Sarah's lowest faith development rating is based on the question concerning death:

S: Um...I'm not really sure. I don't think we go anywhere when we died, um, but I'm hopeful that we might. One of my aunts is a professional psychic and she thinks that our spirits linger and I know that part of me wants to believe that because it's comforting.

I: Mhm.

S: But in my heart I don't—I don't really know.

I: What happens to us when we die then?

S: Um, we probably just die. We probably—our consciousness stops and maybe we reenter some sort of human—they say about going towards the light but maybe there's some sort of bliss beyond this but [if it is?] we don't exist anymore (interacts 106–110).

The rater saw here a blend of phantasy and reality and noted absence of certainty. This response may pick up that Sarah, who grew up with insecure if not abusive, relationships, and who has lost her mother and a dear friend at a relatively young age, has to handle some anxiety when confronted with this question. The blend of hopes, and of what she gathered from hearsay and from common knowledge, may be a response to her trying to cope with an issue which has, in her life, been very real.

While she relies on the not yet mutual perspectives when discussing past relationships and crises, she is able to draw on the reflective and inclusive stance of stage 5 when discussing her parents as she sees them today.

Um, when I moved out and I didn't talk to my mom for several years, like when I was in college, that—when she and I started talking again as adults, I realized that she really was another person like me, that she was as broken and that she'd been trying to do her best and had been basically psychologically terrorized by her parents which explained why and how she became the adult that she became. Um, so that with her, you know, who she was changed in my mind totally. (interact 56).

This may have been supported by her therapy, which, ideally, provides a secure frame and a mirroring environment.

General Interpretation of Sarah's "Spiritual" Journey

Sarah shows the profile of a person who is using her intellectual powers to make sense of her experience and coping to come to terms with the aftermath of a hurtful childhood. Back then she acquired the feeling that nobody and no God cared for her which may have left an imprint on her understanding of "spirituality" as individual. From a psychodynamic object-relations view we might state that she did not have good and reliable inner objects. From the perspective of attachment theory we see an insecure and dismissive attachment style. This may have developed to guard the vulnerability of her personality as indicated by high *neuroticism* scores. Together with her high *openness to experience*, on the other hand, her striving for *personal growth* and *autonomy*, while also caring for others in light of the general insecurity she perceives this may have fed into her self-reliant way of being spiritual. This may, however, protect a deeper yearning for more secure attachments, be it in the real world or in the "spiritual" realm.

We see a redemptive trajectory, a development from a hurtful childhood to a self-reliant but also socially and politically involved adult life. The religious identity narratives focus on "Theodicy not explained," "Desperately praying for comfort and getting no answer" and "Reclaiming sensual experience." These narratives account for Sarah's turn away from "Judeo-Christian" faith and illustrate her turn to a "spirituality" based on experiencing the beauty of this world with all her senses, which we may understand as horizontal transcendence. Her experience of the transcendent is most likely something very personal and, perhaps, more sensed or felt than put into words and concepts—as offered by the scales on which she scaled low, even for an American "more spiritual non-atheist."

What Sarah describes may, however, also correspond to a specific tradition of American religiosity, which Fuller (2013, pp. 93–95) describes as "nature religion" and "unchurched spirituality. Miller (1975, pp. 185) states that "there has always been a strain of American religious life that contains 'an indestructible element which was mystical, and a feeling for the universe which was almost pantheistic.'" For the most part this particular strain of American religious thought and feeling has perpetuated itself outside the nation's churches (Fuller, 2013, pp. 93–94). As another proponent of "nature religion" or "aesthetic spirituality" Emerson is named, who, alone in nature, felt connected to "the currents of Universal Being" (pp. 94).

Outlook

Information on themes and locations of religious identity narratives will go into a synopsis covering all FDIs evaluated in this project. This will give us an overview of what is crucial for the "spiritual" identities under study in both research sites, Germany and the USA. It will also add to our understanding of the interview format and the responses it elicits.

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Part V

Varieties of “Spiritual” Biographies

Barbara Keller, Ralph W. Hood Jr. and Heinz Streib

Abstract

In the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study on “Spirituality,” the qualitative data consists of 102 rated faith development interviews with 54 persons from the USA and 48 from Germany who have been selected according to their focus group membership, i.e. according to their self-identification as “spiritual,” “religious,” both or neither, and as “theist” or “non-theist.” This brief chapter presents an overview of the interviews that were selected for elaboration of the case studies in the chapters to follow. This selection has aimed at presenting the varieties of “spirituality” in their lives as told in the Faith Development Interviews (FDIs). Thus, besides basic demographic characteristics such as country, age, gender, and religious affiliation, “spiritual” self-identification was an important criterion. Further contributions for mapping the varieties of “spirituality” derive from the coordinates “openness” and “mysticism” (Chap. 14). Finally we introduce the organization of chapters, based on this preliminary map of “spiritual” trajectories.

In our study, we have 102 rated faith development interviews, 54 from US, 48 from German respondents. The participants with whom we conducted a FDI have been selected from more than 500 participants in each country who have not only answered our online-questionnaire, but entered their phone number or email address to

indicate their readiness for a personal interview. From this great number, we have selected more than 50 persons in each country and invited them for the personal interview. Selection criteria were, besides gender and age and respective demographics, especially the focus group membership of these participants, i.e. whether they self-identify as “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual” or “neither religious nor spiritual,” and, according to our focus group construction, whether they self-identify as “atheist” or “non-theist.” The focus groups (displayed in

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Chap. 4) differ in size, the “equally religious and spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” and the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” being the largest in both countries.

Basic Selection Criteria for Case Studies

How did we select the interviews for case study elaboration? In line with the research interest of our study it was our aim to present the “spiritual” biographies in the greatest variety possible.

Consequently, we selected cases that self-rated moderately or very high as being “spiritual”; they belong either to the group of “equally religious and spiritual” or to the group of the “more spiritual than religious.” In the selection process, we aimed at balancing the countries (USA; Germany) and age, and have attended to a variety of religious affiliations. We also strived to attend to the differences of the religious landscapes of both research sites. Thus, in Chap. 16, where we introduce our method of case studies combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, we use the example of “Sarah L.,” a “more spiritual” young female, and a deconvert from Christian tradition in the USA. In Chaps. 18, 19, and 20 we present cases from the USA and Germany which offer a broad perspective on “religious,” “seeker,” and what we have termed “quilt” spiritualities. Working through the forced-choice self-identifications, the free definitions, and finally the self-descriptions in the interviews, we refined our understanding of “spirituality” which turned out to be used in many ways and as part of different combinations.

The “more religious than spiritual” respondents were a rather small group in our samples anyway, and not our primary focus. In contrast, we regarded as imperative to present “more spiritual than religious” respondents who, at the same time, self-identify as “atheist” or “non-theist,” like “Brian C.” in Chap. 21. Also, we considered “neither religious nor spiritual” as a special category and as promising for the

detection of an important differentiating profile and thus have included this group—resulting in the choice for “Isabella I.” (see Chap. 22), a young woman from the USA, who claimed to never have been religious.

On the background of this set of criteria, we regard our selection of cases for case studies, presented in Table 17.2 (at the end of this chapter), as reflecting the variety of “spiritual” trajectories in our data. Figure 17.1 presents the interviewees that were selected for case studies in Chap. 16 and in Chaps. 18–22 and 26 according to age and self-rating as “spiritual.”

Mapping the Cases in the Coordinates of Openness and Mysticism

We also used the coordinates, *openness to experience* and *mysticism*, as developed in Chap. 14, for reflecting our selection of cases. This coordinate system has served as heuristic for substantiating the choice of cases to be presented. In Fig. 17.2 we present all of our interviewees in this coordinate system and indicate to which focus group they belong; thereby we highlight the cases which will be analyzed in more depth in the chapters to follow. Also this map is based on the quantitative data. Of course, we can not present all of these interviewees in extensive case studies, but needed to concentrate on the cases that represent our focus group typology. Nevertheless, we presently work on the interpretation of cases that could not be included in this book. Thus, we want to leave this for further publications.

The advantage of this kind of mapping is that it allows visualizing clusters of types of cases on these two dimensions: The majority of the “neither religious nor spiritual” cases assemble in the lower right segment, where *mysticism* is low and *openness to experience* are high. And the “more spiritual” cases, including the “more spiritual atheists and non-theists” among them, can be found in the upper right segment, where both *mysticism* and *openness to experience* are high.

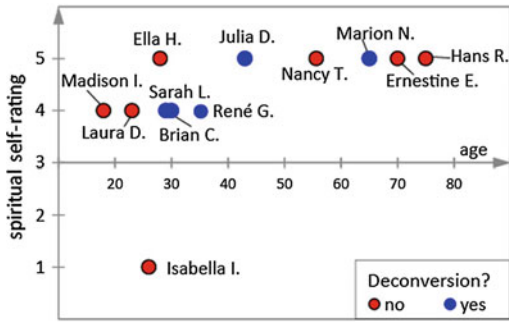


Fig. 17.1 Mapping the Case Study Cases According to Age and Self-rating as “Spiritual”

And the case studies in the following chapters refer to this table for indicating the location of the specific case in the mysticism-openness space.

Attending to Biography and Self-Identification

The quantitative data allow calculations of responses to pre-formulated stimuli, while the interviews elicit answers in the respondents’ own wording. This makes a difference. Here we present a display of the self-identifications in all the FDIs plotted against the self-identifications of the forced choice question in the survey. What is obvious is that the range of the self-identifications given in the FDIs is broader. This is not surprising. In an interview, persons can respond by rejecting, correcting or elaborating the questions an interviewer presents. Responses of interviewees during the deconversion studies showed that a considerable number of persons preferred to call themselves “believers” (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009).

In the current study some respondents came up with other concepts they felt were more appropriate to describe their position in relation to the transcendent. “Laura” from Chap. 18 for example described herself as “seeking”—in the chart summarized with other idiosyncratic self-descriptions.

When looking at all the interviews, comparing the answers to the forced choice format with the answers in the FDIs, we see considerable correspondence, but also some variation. A person may use the category “more spiritual” on our forced choice item, but later, in the context of his or her own reconstruction of personal faith development, explain that he or she is religious. An example for this may be “Brian” who is introduced in Chap. 21.

For an explanation of the differences it is helpful to refer to the work of Schwarz (1999), who explored how subjects use scales as source of information. A forced choice task and an open interview question can be understood as different communicative contexts with different communicative tasks. Respondents do their best to be cooperative communicators. When offered the 4 category forced choice format they analyze these categories. They may, for example, assume that the researchers conceive of the religious field as being defined by being spiritual versus religious. Consequently, they may figure out where they best fit in. Thus, their answers represent the best choice according to their evaluation of the question, and not always, as researchers would like to have it, an accurate estimate of their own ideas. Also, we cannot say if all respondents understand the wording of the question in the same way, or what it means to them to be whatever they identify with.

A question in the flow of a personal interview works differently. It allows interview partners to focus more on one’s own subjective understanding of concepts offered. To encourage this, we have worked on the prompts of the FDI-questions to invite personal views. Evaluating the interviews from the deconversion studies we also included the option “believer” to be offered along with “religious” and “spiritual.” These categories and their varying combinations found in the FDIs are shown in Table 17.1, where we plot forced choice against interview-based self-identifications. However, even if respondents use labels like “religious” or “spiritual”

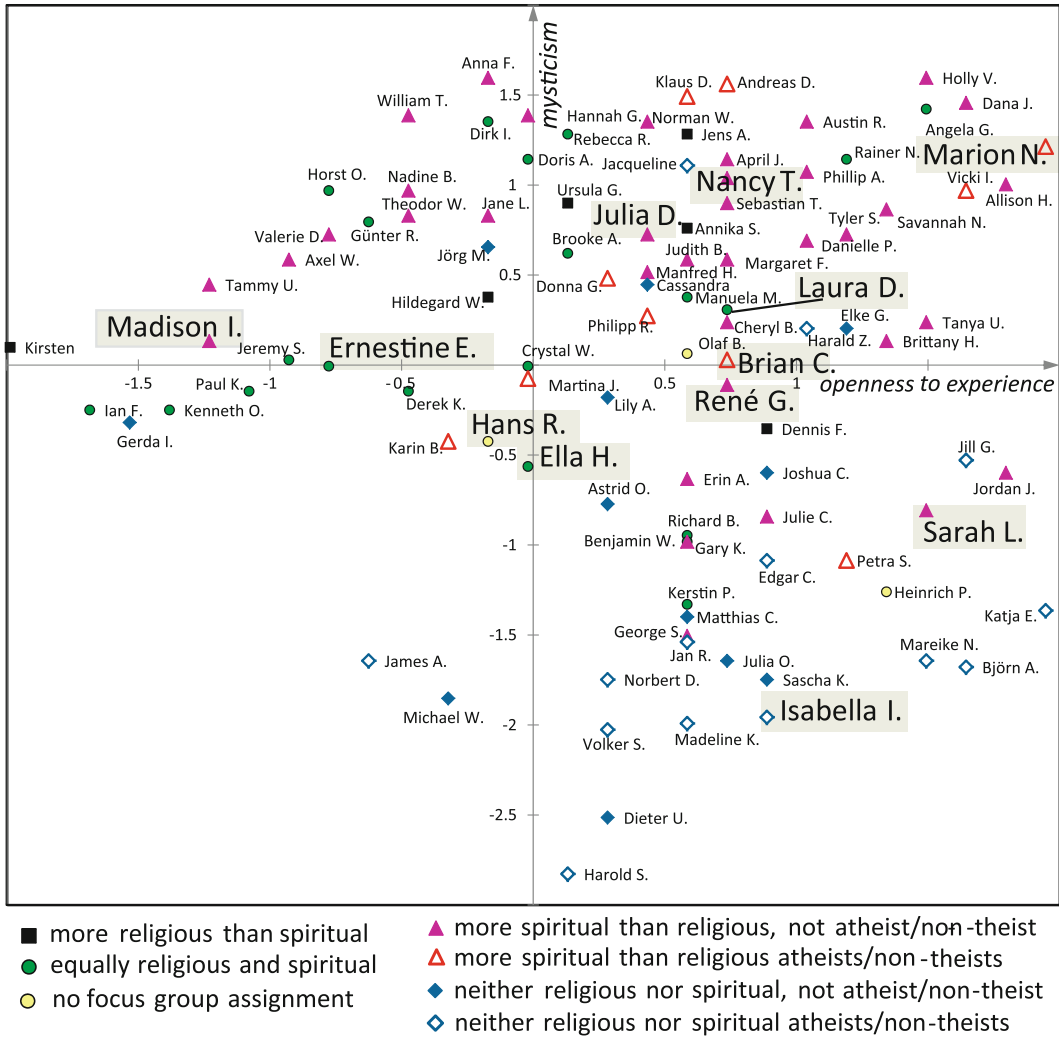


Fig. 17.2 Interviewees and Their Focus Group Membership in the Two-Dimensional Space of Mysticism and Openness to Experience. Note *openness* = z-standardized scores of the NEO-FFI scale *openness to experience*; *mysticism* = z-standardized scores of the Mysticism Scale

consistently across both methods, they may, in the FDI, insist on adding their own understanding.

Therefore, we have, striving at an integration of methods, in the case studies, discussed the self-identifications given as responses to different methods. In some cases, attending to self-identification as explained in the FDI, has opened additional lines of comparison.

Organizing Religious and Non-religious “Spiritual” Trajectories

We assumed that the individual biography allows differentiating between change and continuity on the level of affiliations reported, of self-identifications, and of inner experience as

Table 17.1 Self-identification in the Questionnaire and in the Interview

		I am more religious than spiritual	I am more spiritual than religious	I am equally religious and spiritual	I am neither religious nor spiritual	Total
Self- identification in FDI	Religious	1	3	1	0	5
	Spiritual	1	23	2	4	30
	Religious and spiritual	0	2	4	0	6
	“None”	0	4	1	21	26
	Believing	2	1	0	1	4
	Spiritual believer	0	7	4	0	11
	Spiritual and religious believer	3	3	9	0	15
	Other	0	1	1	1	3
	Total	7	44	22	27	100

Note In two interviews the question was not answered

reconstructed in autobiographical accounts of faith development. On the basis of the typological perspectives reviewed, preliminary categories of “spiritual” biographies were constructed. We looked at self-identification as indicated by focus group and type of affiliation for a first classification of trajectories. However, during the process of analyzing the cases compiled, when we compared trajectories, we already saw the need for further differentiation.

For example, we discovered that the trajectories summarized under the label “religious spiritualities” were rather different. Therefore, we divided this broad category into “religious spiritualities” (Chap. 18), “religious seekers” (Chap. 19), and “quilt spiritualities” (Chap. 20). Thus, we attended to differences between those who stayed with the tradition they were raised in and, in their view, grew in their faith, those who, while affiliated with a tradition, confessed to be seeking their faith, and those who adopted different traditions to “quilt” their personal faith.

It is also noteworthy that the quilt spirituality type of trajectory may correspond to the accumulative heretic, which we have identified in the deconversion study (Streib et al., 2009). We were also interested in attending to “spirituality” outside Christian tradition; see, as example, a Zen Buddhist (Chap. 21) from the USA. To introduce the structure of our case studies and the methods

they are based on, we present, in Chap. 16, a case which may be typical for a turn from a “more religious” Christian environment to a later “more spiritual” self-identification and a “spirituality” which is experience-based and involves being in nature.

This way, the emerging typology reflects one coordinate to map the religious field described in Chap. 2: institutional mediation of transcendence and ultimate concern vs. individual immediacy. In any case, our case study typology accounts for the individual differences of relating to a tradition, while being “spiritual.”

Cases that Relate “Spirituality” and Suffering

Finally, and guided by the idea that religion has been portrayed as buffer against as well as source of suffering, we dedicate Chap. 26 to this issue. There, we present case studies offering subjective perspectives on “spirituality” in coping with psychological crisis. We were interested in the potentially benevolent function, but also the possible drawbacks of “spirituality” in the face of conflict and crisis. In Chap. 26 we report how “spirituality” is conceptualized and used by those respondents who were open to share their experience on spirituality and crisis.

Table 17.2 Some Basic Characteristics of Case Study Interviewees

Pseudonym	Age	Country	Deconversion	Religious affiliation	“Spiritual”/“religious” self-identification	Case study in chapter
Sarah L.	29	USA	Yes	None	2—more spiritual than religious	16
Madison I.	18	USA	No	Baptist	2—more spiritual than religious	18
Ella H.	28	USA	No	Church of Christ	3—equally religious and spiritual	18
Ernestine E.	75	USA	No	Protestant	3—equally religious and spiritual	18
Hans R.	70	GER	No	Catholic	3—equally religious and spiritual	19
Laura D.	23	GER	No	Protestant	3—equally religious and spiritual	19
Marion N.	65	GER	Yes	Zen Buddhist	2—more spiritual than religious	20
Julia D.	43	USA	Yes	Wicca	2—more spiritual than religious	20
Brian C.	30	USA	Yes	Buddhist	2—more spiritual than religious	21
Isabella I.	26	USA	No	None	4—neither religious nor spiritual	22
Nancy T.	56	USA	No	Wicca	2—more spiritual than religious	26
René G.	35	GER	Yes	Sufism / Neo-Advaita	2—more spiritual than religious	26

Note Interview transcripts in full length for all of cases are available in Appendix B (B.1–B.12)

Structuring the Case Studies in the Following Chapters

Each chapter will present case studies based on quantitative and qualitative data, and link scale scores, analyses of semantics of what “spirituality” is to the respective respondent, narrative analyses and evaluation of faith development. Thus, we present and discuss correspondences as well as tensions between data characterizing “spirituality” gained by different methods on the level of the single case.

The concluding chapter of this section summarizes contrastive comparisons (Streib et al., 2009, p. 48) of narratives and biographical trajectories. There, we center on “spiritual” experiences, on religious identity narratives, mini-narratives given during the FDI and, typically, portraying experiences accounting for one’s

current position in matters religious. Based on a summary of narrative analyses and faith development evaluations across the interviews of this study, additional lines of differentiation of types, within and beyond self-identifications, are suggested. As coordinates for redrawing the map in Chap. 23 we use the distinction of horizontal—vertical transcendence and of individual—institutional mediation laid out in Chap. 1.

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“...I Really Did Depend on My Faith in God During that Time ... to See the Meaning in My Life.”—Religious Spiritualities

Michele Wollert and Barbara Keller

Abstract

This chapter looks at case studies of individuals in the research project who show characteristics of being both “religious” and “spiritual” in traditional religious contexts. Self-identification in both categories can occur at different phases of the life span, including young adults who are “coming of age” as well as participants who are further along in the life span. By comparing and contrasting the different case studies, assumptions may be developed regarding the developmental and differential aspects of “religious” spiritualities. For each participant, Faith Development Interview scoring and participant totals on other measures dealing with constructs such as mysticism, generativity, attitudes toward God, and attachment will be examined. Three American case studies are explored in detail to better understand the trajectories of “spiritual” individuals in the more pluralistic religious arena in US culture.

In this chapter, we will introduce people from different age groups and backgrounds who are invested in exploring, consolidating, and celebrating their faith, which, to all of them, is also a religious faith. The cases of two American

young adults and one American older adult, all of whom are Protestants, will be examined. Their different ways of expressing their spirituality in a religious context will be explored in further detail.

From interact 32 of Ella H.’s Faith Development Interview (FDI). The interview transcripts in full length for all the cases in this chapter are available in Appendix B (B.2–B.4).

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“I would leave church not feeling any closer to God; I would just actually feel worse because some other churches can put God in a box.”¹—Madison I.

The case of Madison I. has been selected because Madison’s story is typical for young adults in the process of making their faith their own. In the context of this chapter, Madison I. represents those who say they are more spiritual than religious and shows how a person may “come of age” in sorting through previous teachings while developing critical thought about new experiences. This was the reason to select Madison I. for an extensive case study.

Madison I. is an 18-year-old Caucasian American female living in the Southeast. She is a college student studying to be an engineer who identifies herself as Protestant in the Baptist tradition. She has been involved in church her whole life, although she does not participate as much currently. She says that her home at age 12 was “equally religious and spiritual,” but she describes herself as currently being “more spiritual than religious.”

Mapping Madison I.’s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

As detailed in Chap. 14, *openness to experience* and *mysticism* have been used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig 17.2), Madison is located in the upper-left segment, which indicates her lower *openness to experience* and higher-than-average score on the overall *mysticism* scale.

A more comprehensive comparison of Madison’s individual responses to the questionnaire with the means for the focus group of the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theist” is presented in Table 18.1. Some differences are noteworthy. On the mysticism scale, while in her total *mysticism* score she does not differ much from her focus group, Madison is more than one standard deviation below the focus group mean

Table 18.1 Comparison of Madison I. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Madison I.	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theists” focus group in the USA	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	15	20.6	8.6
<i>Extraversion</i>	26	29.4	6.7
<i>Openness to experience</i>	25	33.3	6.6
<i>Agreeableness</i>	35	32.3	6.1
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	38	32.3	7.3
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)			
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	54	44.1	10.2
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	16	28.4	7.8
<i>Interpretation</i>	47	47.4	8.7
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	33	27.0	4.1
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	29	24.5	4.6
<i>Personal growth</i>	26	29.4	3.7
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	31	27.9	4.4
<i>Purpose in life</i>	27	26.8	4.5
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	27	25.9	4.7
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)			
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	75	75.1	20.8
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	22	13.4	5.9
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	19	21.8	3.0
<i>Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog</i>	17	18.7	3.9

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

on *extrovertive mysticism* and almost one standard deviation above the focus group mean on *introvertive mysticism*; this suggests she is focused upon inward reflection within the confines of her beliefs.

¹From interact 99 of Madison’s FDI.

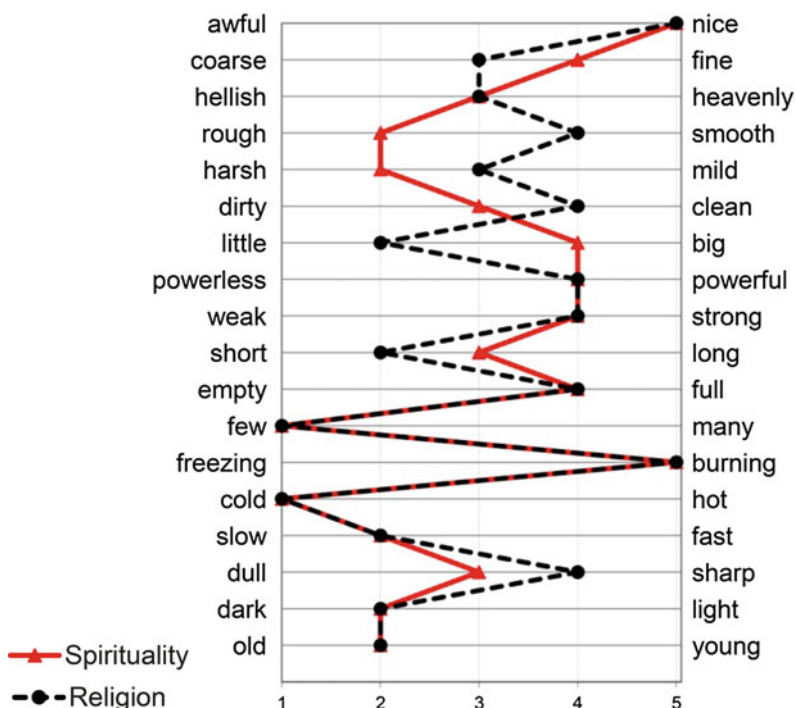
The extrovertive measure looks at unity in diversity ("All Is One") and inner subjectivity (oneness of self with all things, see Hood et al., 2001). She is also more than one standard deviation below the mean on *generativity*, perhaps due to her age (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). As Erikson (1982) conceptualizes it, generativity is a developmental task for middle age. Madison is more than one standard deviation below the mean on the *openness to experience* subscale on the NEO-FFI personality inventory. This is indicative that she may be less daring and willing to think creatively than others in her group (McCrae & Costa, 1987). She is also considerably above the mean on the *conscientiousness* subscale. This, along with agreeableness, has shown to be positively correlated with religiosity (Saroglou, 2010), suggesting that Madison has personality traits that may predispose her toward a religious worldview. It seems that she is comfortable working within boundaries, hence exploring within the confines of her religious faith. On the Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale, she is greater than one standard deviation above the mean on the *autonomy* measure. She is more likely than others in her group to be self-determining and

independent (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). On the Religious Schema Scale, she is more than one standard deviation above the mean on the *truth of texts and teachings* measure. This sub-measure reflects Fowler's stage 2 mythic-literal faith and is negatively correlated with *openness to experience* (McCrae & Costa, 1987; Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010; also see Chaps. 13, 14, and 24).

Madison's Semantic of "Spirituality"

In the questionnaire, Madison has given her definition of "spirituality" as "a sense of looking beyond what is tangible." This shows that Madison's understanding of "spirituality" is in contrast to her definition of "religion" which is "knowing certain norms, criteria, stories, and/or rules of a certain belief." On the Osgood Semantic Differential, she sees spirituality as being more "rough," "harsh," "dirty," and "dull" than religion, which is not true of her focus group as a whole (see Fig. A.7 in the Appendix). On the Contextual Semantic Differential (see Chap. 7),

Fig. 18.1 Madison's Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential

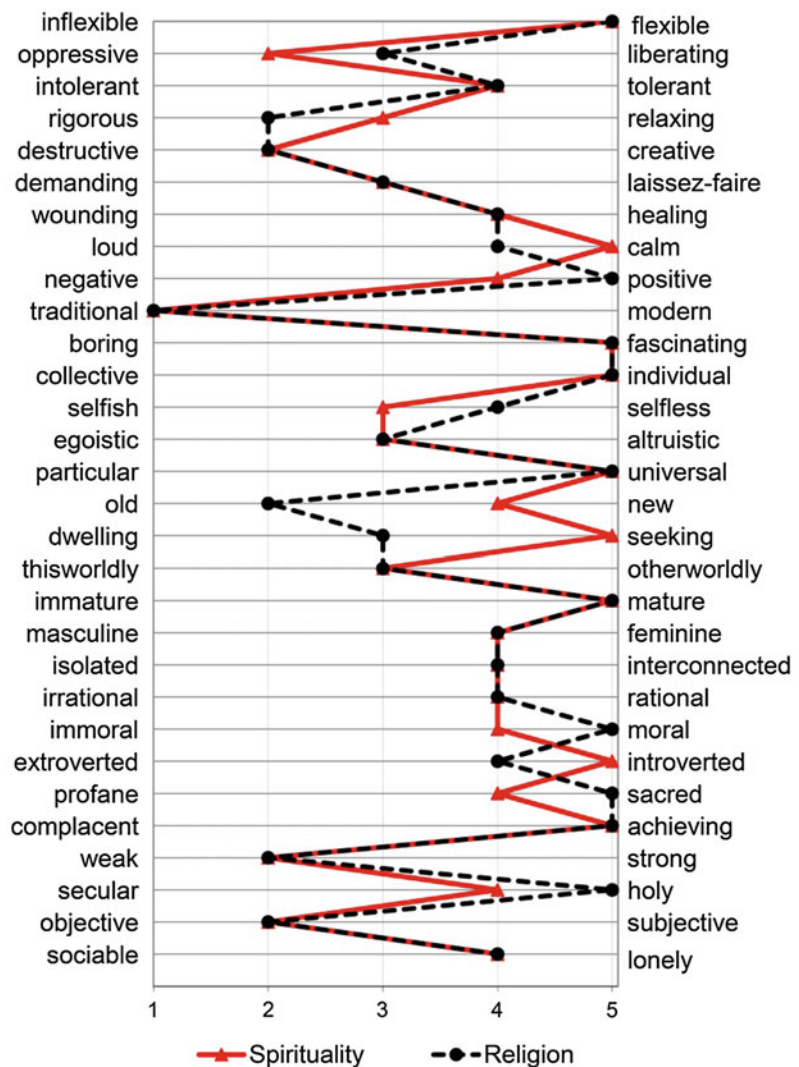


Madison rates spirituality as being more “oppressive,” “negative,” “selfish,” “immoral,” “profane,” and “secular” than religion, which is also not true of her focus group in general (see Fig. A.21 in the Appendix). This suggests that, although she considers herself more spiritual than religious, she evaluates religion more positively in some criteria. This may indicate that she considers herself to also be religious, but she evaluates spirituality more positively in more situations. Figs. 18.1 and 18.2 show Madison’s responses on the two differentials that may be compared to Figs. A.7 and A.21.

Madison’s Faith Development

Based on the faith development evaluation of the interview with Madison I., for which we have followed closely the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, 1981; Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004), Madison’s Faith Development Interview (FDI) shows predominantly an individuative-reflective style. This reflects her attempt to question what she has been taught and come to a more personal system of meaning-making. The stories she tells in the midst of the interview from her own experience

Fig. 18.2 Madison’s Ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential



add depth to one's understanding of her development (Streib, 2005).

The faith development evaluation of Madison's interview is interesting in light of her higher-than-average score in the Religious Schema Scale in the *truth of texts and teaching* measure. This measure correlates with mythic-literal faith, but Madison's responses on the FDI put her more in the individuative-reflective style. For her, the *truth of texts and teachings* measure does not prevent her from also scoring at the average level in the *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* subscale and the *xenos* subscale, which are respectively correlated with individuative-reflective faith and conjunctive faith (Streib et al., 2010).

However, attending to Madison's single responses to the faith development questions sorted by aspects of faith, Madison appears to be rather evenly developed in terms of faith development in individuative-reflective faith in regard to all of the structural aspects, with the exceptions of form of moral judgment and symbolic function.

Form of Moral Judgment Madison evidences more synthetic-conventional faith responses in this aspect than in others. An example is in her orientation toward internal states when describing what sin is: "Sin is such a big word, but I have just been told it's missing the mark, but for me it is whenever I regret what I have done" (interact 294).

Symbolic Function Most of Madison's responses in symbolic function fall in the individuative-reflective stage of faith. However, she does show one example of conjunctive faith when speaking about her image of God in this aspect:

Well I believe that God is more than we can ever imagine or even comprehend and so for some person just put him in a box like ... there's different religions but they all somehow acknowledge the divine. And I think that not all of them are wrong per se because God is such a big complex being or person I suppose that he has different sides to him that maybe one religion has understood more than another... we're all the same and we're all looking for the same thing and so we should ... I think we should all stop fighting and just acknowledge that. (interact 65)

Summary of Madison's Faith Development

Taken together, Madison's faith development may be summarized as typical of a young adult

finding her own way of making meaning in the world. Her form of moral judgment has not totally moved from the objective truth orientation of synthetic-conventional faith, but the power of symbols is helping her move into a more complex way of having faith. Her FDI scores tie in with her high *truth of texts and teachings* score on the Religious Schema Scale with her being conventional regarding moral judgment and more mature regarding symbolic function. This manifests itself by Madison appearing to appreciate her own faith without discounting that of others.

Wisdom and Attachment in Madison's Interview

As detailed in Chap. 15, the evaluation of the faith development interview gains depth and profile when additional dimensions are evaluated. In the interview with Madison, it is particularly interesting that her attachment was rated as "secure" (Keller & Streib, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 1992). She describes a few rough times with her parents in the past, but she seems close to them now and bears no grudges. Her wisdom score was at the lower end, but Madison is at a young age and has lived a somewhat sheltered life (Staudinger, Smith, & Baltes, 1994). She is aware of these facts and tries to broaden her perspective at times. This helps us understand Madison's "spiritual" biography as a quest to incorporate what she has experienced in the past with what she is currently learning of the broader world.

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Madison's Interview

Attending to the narrative dynamics in Madison's interview (see Chap. 16 for a methodological discussion), it is noteworthy that Madison recounts her most detailed stories in the location/town that she disliked the most (below referred to as Town E). She had mononucleosis while she lived there, her family went through a crisis that threatened to tear them apart, and she did not have a positive religious environment for much of her time there. She may be

searching for redemption from the hard things (contamination) she experienced there (McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001). In reflective functioning, Madison shows an awareness of mental states (Fonagy, Target, Steele, & Steele, 1998), pointing toward her individuative-reflective faith style.

Life Review

When asked about her life chapters, Madison constructs them according to places she has lived, although she also mentions the different churches she attended as being sub-chapters. Her baptism at age seven is stated as meaningful, and she describes a later incident by saying that the leaders at one church she attended ended up showing some hypocrisy, precipitating a big shift in her faith. Her life chapters are named after 6 places she has lived in the Southeast of the United States. As she speaks throughout the interview, the chapter/location of Town E is shown to have

the most meaning for her, although not necessarily in a positive fashion.

Narrative Segments

Of special interest are the narrative segments with a clear narrative-dynamic structure according to Labov and Waletzky (1967). The following quotation demonstrates an important narrative segment with a climax from orientation, complication, evaluation and resolution (Table 18.2):

This narrative segment demonstrates Madison's past conflicts with her father and the resolution which manifests itself in secure attachment. She exhibits the past-present comparison that some people elucidate in autobiographical reasoning (Habermas, 2011).

This helps us understand Madison's "spiritual" transformation in which she feels free to be open to exploring further facets of her religious experience but remain basically in the Protestant faith in which she grew up. Thus, she is both

Table 18.2 Madison's Narrative Segment "Learning to Talk to Each Other"

Title	Learning to talk to each other
Orientation	Well one day before when we were living in [Town E] we were all going through like a rough time.... And we were all stressed out... it was just a bad time in that day, and my Dad had come back from being gone for a super long time, and I never talked to him like on the phone
Complication	But anyways that one day, Dad came back, and we were all upset, and so he's like "Well, I'm going to go to [State A],".... And when we don't see him for so long and then he leaves, it would hurt my Mom, and I think they went through a point where they almost got a divorce or things were like super rough... me and my sister were like taking her side because we felt the same that she did
Evaluation/attempts to solve	And so finally instead of just storming off into different rooms as usual we sat down around the table for once and actually had a discussion.... We pretty much just put everything on the table. Dad said how he felt like we didn't even want him to be home, he felt distant from us and like he teared up, and my Dad like never cries. And then my Mom was just over there just all worked up and couldn't even say anything (laughing), and me and my sister were saying how we felt
Resolution	I don't even remember exactly what was said but at the end of it from that point on like we could talk to each other, we were closer, and we knew how each person felt about the current situations that were going on. And from that major point, things have been going up, but before that my relationship with my Dad was not the best, you know what I mean....
Coda	But from that point the relationship with my Mom, my Dad and all of us as a whole, as a family got a lot better but over time, but that was the major point. (interacts 113, 117)

“religious” and “spiritual” and her indication in the questionnaire to be “more spiritual than religious” does not include rejection of “religion.”

Relationships

In Madison’s account of relationships, we may regard as striking that her important relationships are primarily familial, including her current boyfriend. She was home schooled,² and she says that her parents and grandparents were all influential in her development in the past and continue to be involved in the present. She has a sister with whom she has been close, and at first she appears to be closed to those outside the family circle. However, some openness to new experience is highlighted when she talks about her boyfriend whom she met by a wrong number in a telephone call.

Values and Commitments

Madison’s moral convictions are not based on a rigid adherence to rules, and she thinks that what makes an action right or wrong is the consequence (if more good or evil occurs after the action). She believes that everyone should agree that murder is wrong. In a criticism of some behaviors linked to religion, she cites the American reality show *Sister Wives*, which features a polygamist Mormon family, as showing examples of people who do not listen to their conscience.³ She also gives a negative example in the case of Middle Eastern “honor killings” which she thinks people may know are wrong, but she acknowledges that older people may have been indoctrinated in a certain way of thinking that is difficult to change.

²In the USA, parents may teach their children at home, rather than sending them to a public or private school, if they meet certain instructional criteria. This is often done for religious reasons.

³Polygamy is illegal in the USA, but a few Mormon families still find a way of practicing it. The patriarch on this show is legally married to one wife but considers the others to be spiritual unions. Thus, since in the USA only one marriage is legally registered, having multiple “wives” is not illegal.

Madison, however, believes everyone has a conscience, perhaps indicative of her individuated-reflective orientation, and she brings in several cultures as examples. The statements that she makes about her moral theory show her concern with the harm/care moral foundation described by Graham, Haidt, and Nosek (2009), which is more on the liberal end of the spectrum. The inexact nature of deciding what is “sin” is delineated by Madison. Her thinking shows a questioning of simple beliefs:

Like for a long time in the Bible murder is just sin, and Jesus came and said hating is sin just as much as murder is; it turned the black into shades of grey for me, but yeah there is right and wrong. But it is a lot like saying, “Is sex before marriage, sin?” Stuff like that, and then there is also the certain circumstances for each different person ... I do not know, it is so hard to categorize that except for feeling guilty after something. (interact 294)

Her awareness of the purity/sanctity moral foundation of Graham et al. (2009) is also evident in this passage by her discussion of sex before marriage.

Madison has a felt sense of good and evil, which might be termed “moral intuition,” and she seems to have felt a particular sense of evil in the chapter/location called Town E. She experienced a severe bout of mononucleosis and depression while living there, and the episode recounted earlier with her father also took place in that location.

Madison’s values and commitments have to do with her Christian faith, but she has trouble at this point in her life actually enacting her commitments due to spending a great deal of time on school work. She says that sometimes it could be a good thing to step back from church activities that have ceased to be meaningful and re-evaluate one’s relationship with God, but there needs to be a balance. She feels like her commitment right now is just between God and herself, and her relationship with God is not what it could be. Her need for a community is stated:

And that’s where church can help, or people that believe the same as you can help, but I need to like, find that balance, because that is important,

and I haven't really found that yet just because of circumstances. (interact 188)

Religion and World View

Madison identifies herself as "more spiritual than religious" on the questionnaire. When asked in the FDI if she describes herself as religious, spiritual, or faithful, Madison decides upon the word "faithful." She states that "spiritual" is for pastors who know the Scriptures inside and out, and "religion" sounds like nothing but tradition by itself. However, she cites the importance of both the Bible and tradition in her faith in other parts of the interview. It is as if Madison does not think she knows enough to be "spiritual," and the word "religious" has a negative connotation to her. When asked if she had another word she would use, she chose "logical," perhaps an adjective related to her future career as an engineer. This emphasis on rationality is also in line with individuated-reflective faith.

In addition to church groups she has been involved with in the past, Madison mentions "feminism" as a cause with which she identifies. Being in a career field with historically fewer females, as well as experiencing some prejudicial treatment by a few male classmates has nudged her in that direction.

Madison says that symbols and rituals are important to her, and she mentions her baptism foremost as being meaningful to her. She also describes attending an Ash Wednesday service at a Catholic Church and found the application of ashes very significant. She thinks that some religious symbols, such as the cross, have had their meaning diluted, and she does not like empty ritual. The fact that different rituals are more consequential to different people seems appealing to her, and she almost views them as spiritual "learning styles," much as the auditory, kinesthetic, and linguistic intelligences (among others) posited by Harvard University's Howard Gardner (1999) have been interpreted:

We go to church, we stand up, we sit down, we open the Bible, we close it, we get a hymn, hymn [...] we open it, we close it—like, that is not what I am talking about. Like, that can also be the other

end of the spectrum. You have the auditory learners and then you also have whatever the other people are called, but it also can be applied like spiritually; like, you need both. Like, for me I am, like, the person who writes it down. (interact 268)

Madison's ideas of the afterlife are fairly traditional in the Christian belief system, and she has a consequentialist view of how it fits in with morality:

Where does that person soul go? I do not know but there—I believe that there is more to life than just right now; like just this life, otherwise there would be no need for right or wrong for good or evil. We wouldn't have a law at all, there would be no law, there wouldn't be any rules, there wouldn't be any boundaries. There wouldn't be any love or any wanting for love, I think, because we have all these ground rules that seem to be universal you know. The law, if you do this you won't go to jail, if you do this you will have juvenile detention, but if you do this, you will get the Nobel Peace prize. There is a reward or a consequence for everything and death it comes to everybody but because we have the choice of good and evil and right or wrong here on this earth there has got to be something like that in the afterlife, however you want to call that. (interact 250)

She ends with a comparison of religions and worldviews and says that "I think that, like, every religion does have an opinion of what happens to us after we die—we either go to the good place, or we go to the bad place" (interact 254).

General Interpretation of Madison's "Spiritual" Journey

Taking it all together, we conclude that Madison's case demonstrates the journey of a young adult who is questioning some of her ideas about faith from a secure grounding. Her lower scores on moral judgment may indicate she is transitioning from conventional morality, dealing with objective truth, to a young adult moral judgment that is explicit/ideal, showing contextual relativism (Parks, 1986). Madison's high *truth of texts and teaching* scores on the Religious Schema Scale may also mirror where she still shows aspects of conventional morality. Parks (1986) sees this transition as a distinct Stage Three–Four level of faith. Madison is exploring

ideas about God, so she certainly does not want to conceive of the Deity as being "in a box."

"If you can find a church, a church family, then you've got family no matter where you go."⁴—Ella H.

The case of Ella H. has been selected because Ella is typical of how another young adult comes of age in her faith. In the context of this chapter, Ella H. represents a person who has not deviated from the religious background of her childhood and shows that her faith has been very strengthening to her in times of crisis. She characterizes her family at age 12 as being "more religious than spiritual," but she currently sees herself as being "equally religious and spiritual." She thus exhibits a "religious" to "equally religious and spiritual" path. This was the reason to select Ella H. for an extensive case study.

Mapping Ella H.'s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

Ella H. is a 28-year-old American female born in the Southern part of the United States. She had recently completed a Ph.D. at the time of the interview and identifies herself as Protestant in the Church of Christ tradition.⁵ She moved from a state in the Southeast US to a state in the Northeast to take a teaching job after finishing her doctorate.

As detailed in Chap. 14, *openness to experience* and *mysticism* have been used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig. 17.2), Ella is located in the bottom-half segment on the borderline between the two

openness to experience quadrants, which indicates that she is below average on the *mysticism* scale and is average on the *openness to experience* measure.

On the mysticism scale, she is below scores for her focus group of the "equally religious and spiritual" respondents in the USA, and even more than one standard deviation below the focus group mean on *extrovertive* mysticism. Similar to Madison, she is therefore lower on the unity in diversity and inner subjectivity constructs (Hood et al., 2001). A comprehensive comparison of Ella's individual responses to the questionnaire with the means for the focus group of the "equally religious and spiritual" is presented in Table 18.3:

On the Loyola Generativity Scale, Ella is more than one standard deviation above the mean. She does have a child, so that probably affects her results in the upward direction, although not as much as for males, according to one study (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). She was very focused on her child during her divorce. On the Religious Schema Scale, she is more than one standard deviation below the focus group mean on the *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* subscale. This measure is highly inversely correlated with religious fundamentalism (Streib et al., 2010), which suggests that Ella herself is in the fundamentalistic end of the spectrum. Her scores on the *truth of texts and teaching* subscale also indicate this.

Ella's Semantic of "Spirituality"

In the questionnaire, Ella has given her definition of "spirituality" as "the inward belief system of an individual toward a higher power." This is in comparison and contrast to her definition of "religion" as "the outward practice of the internal belief system toward a higher power." On the semantic differential scales, Ella rates both spirituality and religion very similarly, for the most part, reflecting that she sees them as operating together, as she mentions when discussing religion and world view in her interview. This may be regarded as typical of people who consider themselves to be both spiritual and religious (see Figs. A.5 and A.19 in the Appendix).

⁴From interact 44 of Ella's FDI.

⁵This group is part of the "Restoration Movement", a revivalist endeavor beginning in the 19th century in the USA that opposed creeds, which were viewed as divisive. The Church of Christ emphasizes utilizing only the Bible as a rule of practice and does not use musical instruments in worship because that is viewed as being unscriptural (Piepkorn, 1977).

Table 18.3 Comparison of Ella H. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Ella H.	Mean values for “equally religious and spiritual” focus group in the USA	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	18	20.3	8.1
<i>Extraversion</i>	27	29.6	6.5
<i>Openness to experience</i>	33	28.5	6.3
<i>Agreeableness</i>	33	32.8	5.9
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	32	33.1	6.9
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)			
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	36	41.9	9.4
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	17	25.8	7.4
<i>Interpretation</i>	44	47.9	8.0
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	28	25.9	4.0
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	24	24.6	4.3
<i>Personal growth</i>	28	28.3	3.9
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	32	28.3	4.2
<i>Purpose in life</i>	31	27.3	4.2
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	28	25.8	4.6
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)			
	72	60.3	8.2
Attitudes toward God			
	99	89.7	12.7
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	23	19.1	4.3
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	19	21.0	3.1
<i>Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog</i>	10	16.7	4.5

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

Ella’s Faith Development

Based on the faith development evaluation of the interview with Ella H., we see that the interview shows predominantly the synthetic-conventional

style (Fowler, 1981; Fowler et al., 2004). This reflects her grounding in a faith tradition that has not really been questioned.

The faith development evaluation of Ella’s interview corresponds to her scores in the Religious Schema Scale in showing her lower-than-average scores on the *xenos* subscale. This subscale correlates with Fowler’s conjunctive faith (Streib et al., 2010), and Ella does not score at that level in any of her FDI responses. Her FDI responses are shown in Fig. 18.3.

Attending to Ella’s single responses to the faith development questions sorted by aspects of faith, Ella appears to be less developed in terms of faith development in regard to perspective taking, form of moral judgment, and social awareness than the other aspects. She jumps from stage 1 to stage 4 responses across the course of her interview, and her higher responses are on

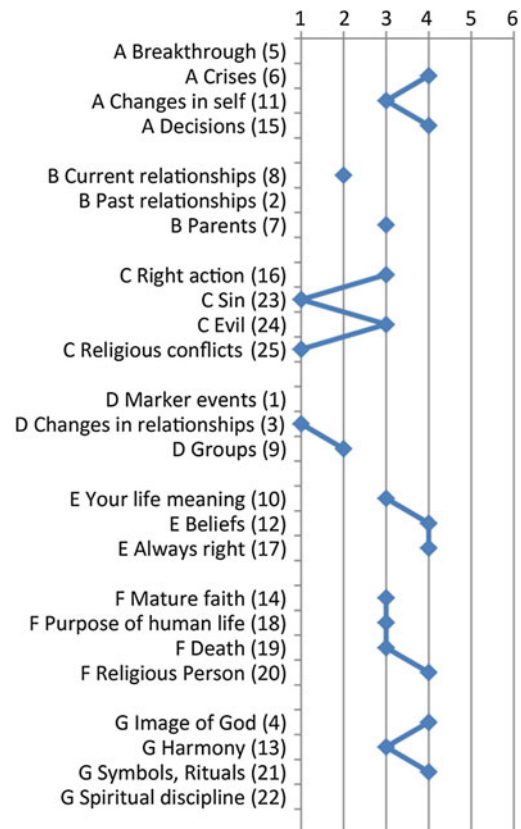


Fig. 18.3 Ella’s FDI Ratings in the Different Aspects of Faith

specific measures, such as the question on crises and the one on symbols and rituals.

Going in more detail, we examine a few specific aspects of faith because these profile Ella's biography and her way of being "spiritual."

Form of Moral Judgment In the aspect of form of moral judgment, Ella has trouble putting herself in the shoes of people with views differing from hers. When asked how people who disagree about issues of world view should try to resolve their differences, she basically says that people need to accept the Bible in the same way she does:

Even people who call themselves Christians a lot of times don't take the Bible at face value, they want to put in their own interpretations, their own desires about what they want the Bible to say and then the interpreted manner and I think that's very dangerous, because I don't think that God will accept them if they do not accept His word and obey it as it is. I think when you examine other world religions, you can see inconsistencies; you can see points where they just don't jar; they don't make sense. And so I think God has given us the path that makes sense and that can be supported, but if an individual is not willing to accept that, then there's not anything you can do to resolve different issues about religion or world view. (interact 110)

This shows one of the points at which her faith development is lowest. A contrast will be viewed in one of her responses in symbolic function in which she shows higher stages.

Symbolic Function Ella translates symbols into concepts and ideas in her responses, but she interprets them in the truth criteria of her world view. An example is present in her description of baptism as an important symbol to her:

I believe that baptism is a really important symbol but a lot of people don't recognize and this symbol is there as a way of becoming a Christian and you're not saved until after you're baptized as evidence that's given in the Bible that people were not saved till after baptism and that is the way to become a Christian, to become part of Christ, is to partake in his death. So baptism has immersion, as you go down you're being buried with Christ and when you come up you're a new person in Christ and you become part of the body, part of um the church family at that point. (interact 100)

Summary of Ella's Faith Development

Taken together, Ella's faith development has a

clear focus on a synthetic-conventional style which is her most frequent rating among the different aspects. She may be showing signs of moving on in her higher scores in *form of world coherence*, *locus of authority*, and *form of logic*. Parks (1986) might say that Ella shows a *locus of authority* moving toward spokespersons or group procedures, a *form of logic* with full formal operations that dichotomizes and collapses, and a *form of world coherence* that is an explicit system of over-against thinking. These are characteristics of the Stage Three-Four faith that may be exhibited in young adulthood (Parks, 1986). Ella's lower scores in form of moral judgment and social awareness are likely related to her emphasis on the church group with whom she identifies so closely. Although that group identification has been beneficial for her in many ways, it may have also constrained her thinking in the religious arena.

Attachment in Ella's Interview

As detailed in Chap. 15, the evaluation of the faith development interview gains depth and profile when additional dimensions are evaluated. In the interview with Ella, it is particularly interesting that her attachment is rated as "secure" (Keller & Streib, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 1992). This helps us understand Ella's "spiritual" biography by showing how she has not really questioned the faith which she was taught as a child. She could be exhibiting the correspondence pathway of attachment and religion, in which a person takes on the religious faith of a sensitive caregiver (Granqvist, 2010).

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Ella's Interview

Attending to the narrative dynamics in Ella's interview (see Chap. 16 for a methodological discussion), it is noteworthy that Ella uses the temporal method of conveying autobiography which is a cultural concept (Bluck & Habermas, 2000). However, she also describes several bad

things that have happened in her life, but she gives the impression that she is in a very positive place right now, overall exhibiting a “redemption” narrative (McAdams et al., 2001).

Life Review

Ella constructs her life chapters in a temporal fashion, according to the schooling she received, but she mentions some important marker events that can be inserted in italics during her chapters: Primary School, Middle School, High School, *Parents’ Divorce*, Bachelor’s Experience, *Marriage*, *Birth of Daughter*, Master’s Degree, *Divorce*, *Second Marriage*, Ph.D., and Epilogue. Ella’s life events thus show an interesting dichotomy: Her titles have to do with schooling, whereas the other portion relates to major emotional life events. The incidents mentioned probably indicate where she constructs meaning in her life, thus exhibiting “biographical relevance” (Habermas, 2011, p. 2).

Narrative Segments

Of special interest are the narrative segments with a clear narrative-dynamic structure

according to Labov and Waletzky (1967). The following quotation demonstrates the pattern they describe (Table 18.4).

As this narrative segment demonstrates, Ella’s faith served a very strong coping function in her divorce. This helps us understand Ella’s “spiritual” transformation in that she felt that God was there for her during a tough time in her life. Her faith and her daughter’s need for her brought her out of the deep depression caused by her divorce so she could see the meaning in her life again.

Relationships

The relationships that Ella mentions as being important to her development are all familial. Her parents were there in her childhood and youth, and her mother is still a present part of her life. Her parents were divorced a few years ago, and she basically has had no relationship with her father or his side of the family since that. Ella’s own ex-husband was influential in her youth and young adulthood, and her current husband is of extreme import in the present. Her daughter, who is from her first marriage, has also been a focus in the past and present. In Ella’s account of relationships, we may regard as striking that the

Table 18.4 Ella’s Narrative Segment “Coping with the Loss of My Best Friend”

Title	Coping with the loss of my best friend
Orientation	He decided after we had been married about three and half years and my daughter was about three that he didn’t want to be married anymore, and at that point he started displaying many symptoms of an individual with bipolar disorder and a manic phase
Complication	And so not only did I have to deal with the rejection of him not wanting to be married to me anymore, but I also had to deal with this person who was my best friend and who had helped me get through my parents’ divorce and who had helped transition to college, him changing into a person that I didn’t even recognize.... I had no clue that it was about to happen. And then the rejection I felt, as well as seeing my best friend completely change, just broke me apart. And to be perfectly honest, the next six months after he decided that we wouldn’t be married anymore, I don’t really remember much of that time. It was just so difficult
Evaluation	I would say that that kind of would be a time when I felt kind of this profound disillusionment about life, and I had real difficulty hanging on to the meaning that I did have in my life. Of course I had my daughter and she was completely dependent on me. And so that...even though I felt...I am sure I was deeply depressed during those time. I had meaning because I had her. She needed me. There was nobody else who could have filled my spot in her life
Resolution	And I think that’s the one thing that kind of brought me out of where I was in this deep, deep depression, was because she needed me. And I really did depend on my faith in God during those times. And I spent a lot of time in prayer, and I spent a lot of time reading the Bible, and I think that also helped me to get through to help to see the meaning in my life, even though I felt so desperate and so alone during the situation.
Coda	So I think that’s pretty much it. (interact 32)

church is also described as her family now, and family is of prime import to her.

Values and Commitments

Ella lists her primary values as being that of God and family. After that comes her commitment to teaching and helping her students. She says more about her moral convictions, and she ties them in very heavily with her religious beliefs:

Yes, definitely, I think that the Bible clearly lines out definite behaviors that are wrong and behaviors that are right. I think that there are other behaviors that are not as clear and in that sense kind of- you partly have to go by a person's intentions, whether it isn't clear whether it is right or wrong, as well as looking at the potential outcomes. So a person could desire to be helpful to another person, but if their help is actually going to hurt that person, then I believe that, that behavior isn't that wrong. (interact 86)

Ella does believe there are certain actions that are always right and always wrong. She mentions giving aid to those in need, especially children, as always being right and intentional killing as being always wrong. She sums it up with the following observation, perhaps evidencing the fairness/reciprocity and harm/care moral foundations posited by Graham et al. (2009), when Ella says:

And so I guess sometimes I settle and just wish people would be kind to one another, and that would be the moral opinion of the day, of being kind and treating others as you would want to be treated. If that moral opinion could be widespread universal, I think the world would be a much better place. (interact 92)

When asked about her definition of "sin," Ella describes it as a transgression against God's law. However, she elaborates with a binary metaphor, showing the authority/respect and purity/sanctity moral foundations outlined by Graham et al. (2009). Ella says:

Another way of understanding sin is that sin is a separation from God, since God is holy and righteous if you have sinned, you can't be with God—they are like polar opposites ends of a magnet. They can't be close together, sin and God. (interact 106)

She sees evil as a consequence of sin and human free will, although not in a direct sense.

For example, she remarks, "I would never ever say that the hurricanes that hit New Orleans were God sending punishment, no. The hurricanes, the bad weather is the side effect of the chaotic nature of our world presently." (interact 108)

Religion and World View

When asked if she is "religious," "spiritual" or "faithful," Ella finally concedes she is all three after discussing what the different words mean. She thinks that "religious" has to do with outward actions such as going to church, whereas "spiritual" indicates an internal feeling:

For me spirituality and religion go hand in hand, you can't be spiritual without religion, without God, without the commandments, without the Bible, you can't be spiritual so in a sense using this kind of inward feeling of spirituality or being in touch with your inner spirit – I don't know if I see that definition of how I might use it for other people.... Then faithful. I would say that I'm very faithful, I have a lot of faith in God. But I also have a lot of faith in people and in their ability to do good. Now as I kind of mentioned in the beginning as time has passed I guess some of my belief and how faithful people are has kind of faded, so understand that a lot of people are never going to be as faithful as they should be. But I guess I still do believe that people can be faithful to one another and faithful to God it's just – it's a hard – it's a hard thing to accomplish. (interact 98)

Ella's primary affiliation is with the Church of Christ, as mentioned earlier. She has always been a member of this particular "denomination,"⁶ although members do not see themselves as one.⁷ Members of a local Church of Christ helped Ella

⁶Denominationalism is a "system in which congregations that share theological beliefs, religious experiences, and religious practices identify themselves by name and organization as a separate part of Christianity" (Foster, Blowers, Dunnivant, & Williams, 2004, pp. 267–268).

⁷This group does not like to be called a denomination, because it views having human creeds and organizations as being sinful. As Piepkorn (1977) remarks, these churches have the view that 'denominationalism' "fails to honor Christ as the sole head of the church; it subordinates divine authority to human authority; it contradicts what to them are plain biblical teachings on the nature of Christian unity" (p. 638). In practice, this

and her husband unload their moving van when they moved to a different state. Ella goes on to say that her church family has been extremely influential:

They are so-so positive and it's made this move so much nicer, uh, and we've had church family, wonderful church families, wherever we've gone, and that's one thing I've basically learned through this time is that, if you can find a church, a church family, then you've got family no matter where you go. There will be people there who are, if they are members of the church, they will help you and they will be your new family. So it's, that's been something that even though the phases have changed, those relationships that I've built have been really strong and really helpful to me across the last...my entire life, we'll just put it like that (laughing)... And when I say church, I mean the Church of Christ. That's name on the building of the church that I go to and they-they are your family. (interacts 44, 46)

Ella goes on to say that the church has been so supportive that

without that stability in my life I'm not sure, I don't think my life would have gone as well as it has, I don't think I would be at the point I am now, with a Ph.D., having my daughter, happily married, if it had not been for the church and my involvement with them over the years. (interact 48)

Ella also mentions students and universities as other groups/institutions with which she has been involved, but their importance is nowhere near as great as that of the church in her life. Her moral reasoning shows the hallmarks of the "binding functions" of ingroup/loyalty and authority/respect, as described by Graham and Haidt (2010). Ella's attachment to her church family is perhaps in reaction to her lack of attachment to half of the members of her family of origin. Parks (2000) would add that it has functioned as a mentoring community for her.

The rituals that Ella finds to be meaningful are worship, the Lord's Supper, singing with other Christians, offering praise to God, prayer, reading the Bible, baptism, and meditating on the

Bible. Her beliefs about the afterlife reflect her traditional leanings:

I believe that death is merely a transition. It's taking us from our temporary lives into eternal life, and for us there is a decision to make during our current lives of whether we want to have an eternal good life or an eternal not so good life. (interact 96)

General Interpretation of Ella's "Spiritual" Journey

Ella can be identified as a late young adult whose faith has helped her through some family crises. She does not appear to question any of her church's teachings, perhaps due to the supportive role of the church family in her life. When asked about crises, Ella mentions her unexpected pregnancy before her first marriage, as well as her divorce. What is incongruent is that those happenings are not sanctioned by her church. However, Ella does not question the church's teachings, she just says that those happenings were difficult for her. There seems to be some disconnection between doctrine and behavior. Her faith appears to be that which was handed to her, although she has perhaps tailored various aspects of it to fit her situation. As she mentioned in the interview, the church is her family. It helps her to know that she has a family wherever she goes.

"I was working in the field, and I had an experience that I felt was extraordinary. I felt like I was being talked to by a spirit... and I realized later that this was God speaking to me."⁸—Ernestine E.

The case of Ernestine E. has been selected because Ernestine is typical for an older adult looking back on a faithful life. In the context of this chapter, Ernestine represents an alternative faith style to those of the younger adults and

(Footnote 7 continued)

prejudice against denominationalism may result in an ironic exclusivism.

⁸From interact 23 of Ernestine's FDI.

shows that other ways of having faith may also be adaptive in facing life struggles.

Ernestine E. is a 75-year-old American female born in the South. She has completed a master's degree, although she mentions doing some Ph.D. work in her interview. She identifies herself as a non-specific Protestant. When asked what she would call her life chapters, she first says she would name them all "Fun" as she enjoyed them all. However, some low points, as well as high points, are later shown to be part of her history. She characterizes her family as being "equally religious and spiritual" at age 12, and she also currently sees herself as being "equally religious and spiritual" (continuously equally religious and spiritual).

Mapping Ernestine E.'s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

As detailed in Chap. 14, *openness to experience* and *mysticism* have been used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig. 17.2), Ernestine is located in the left-hand segment on the borderline between the bottom and top quadrant, which indicates her lower-than-average score on *openness to experience* and her average response on the *mysticism* scale.

A more comprehensive comparison of Ernestine's individual responses to the questionnaire with the means for the focus group of the "equally religious and spiritual" is presented in Table 18.5. There are several interesting items to note. On the Ryff Psychological Well-being and Growth Scale, she was more than one standard deviation above the mean on the *environmental mastery* measure. That means she feels that she is competent in managing the activities around her and is able to choose or create contexts suitable for what she needs (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). She was also high on the *self-acceptance* sub-scale, scoring more than one standard deviation above the mean on that dimension. This reflects her positive attitudes toward herself, including her good and bad qualities. Ernestine also had an interesting score on one aspect of the

Table 18.5 Comparison of Ernestine E. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Ernestine E.	Mean values for "equally religious and spiritual" focus group in the USA	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	20	20.3	8.1
<i>Extraversion</i>	30	29.6	6.5
<i>Openness to experience</i>	28	28.5	6.3
<i>Agreeableness</i>	36	32.8	5.9
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	32	33.1	6.9
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)			
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	40	41.9	9.4
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	26	25.8	7.4
<i>Interpretation</i>	47	47.9	8.0
Psychological Well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	24	25.8	4.0
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	32	24.6	4.3
<i>Personal growth</i>	30	28.3	3.9
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	32	28.3	4.2
<i>Purpose in life</i>	31	27.3	4.2
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	31	25.8	4.6
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)			
<i>Attitudes toward God</i>	94	89.7	12.7
Religious Schema Scale			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	24	19.1	4.3
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	22	21.0	3.1
<i>Xenosophical inter-religious dialog</i>	18	16.7	4.5

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

Religious Schema Scale. On the *truth of texts and teachings* sub-measure, she was more than one standard deviation above the mean. This

subscale correlates with mythic-literal faith in Fowler’s stages (Streib et al., 2010).

Ernestine’s Semantic of “Spirituality”

In the questionnaire, Ernestine has given her definition of “spirituality” as “a feeling within, a good expression from the heart, a self realization.” This shows that Ernestine’s understanding of “spirituality” contrasts to her definition of “religion” as “a body of believers with common beliefs and purposes, a group of worshippers with a guided plan.”

Examination of Ernestine’s responses to both the Osgood Semantic Differential and the Contextual Semantic Differential (see Figs. 18.4 and 18.5) reveals that she does not see spirituality and religion as being as similar as do others in her group. The average of her focus group shows the two lines paralleling each other, with the religion line being on the left (see Figs. A.5 and A.19 in the Appendix). This suggests that Ernestine does not always view spirituality and religion as a

unity, although she says in her interview that she does. She may see them as complementary, as different, but belonging together.

Taken together, Ernestine’s semantic profiling of “spirituality” can be summarized as follows: “Spirituality” is seen as more internal than “religion.” Her generally more favorable view of “religion” may be regarded as typical for the way the word is interpreted by older people of faith. The view of “religion” as being a stabilizing force was perhaps more common in past decades. Ernestine’s view may also show the positive experiences she had with “religion” in her past.

Ernestine’s Faith Development

Ernestine’s FDI shows predominantly a mythic-literal style (Fowler, 1981; Fowler et al., 2004). This reflects her literal, rather non-reflective, experience of her faith. The faith development evaluation of Ernestine’s interview corresponds to her higher scores on the *truth of*

Fig. 18.4 Ernestine’s Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential

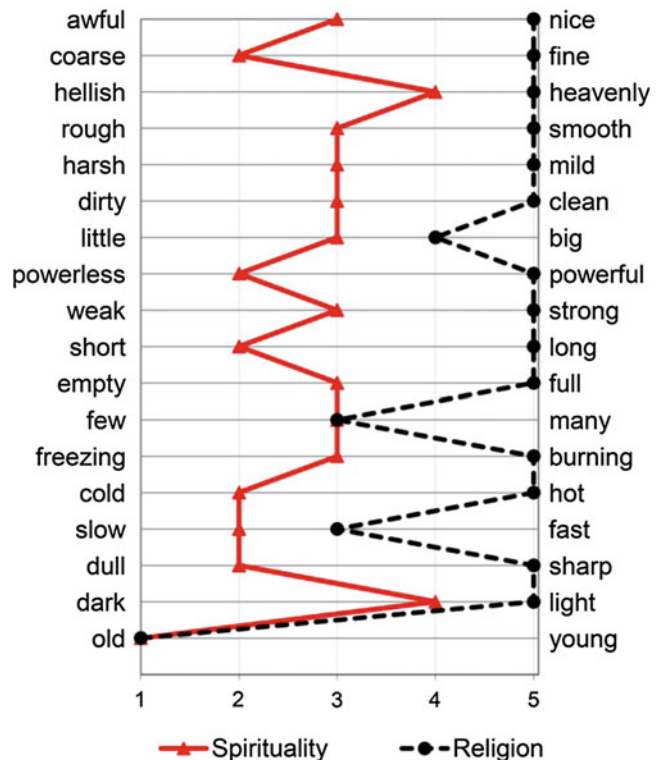
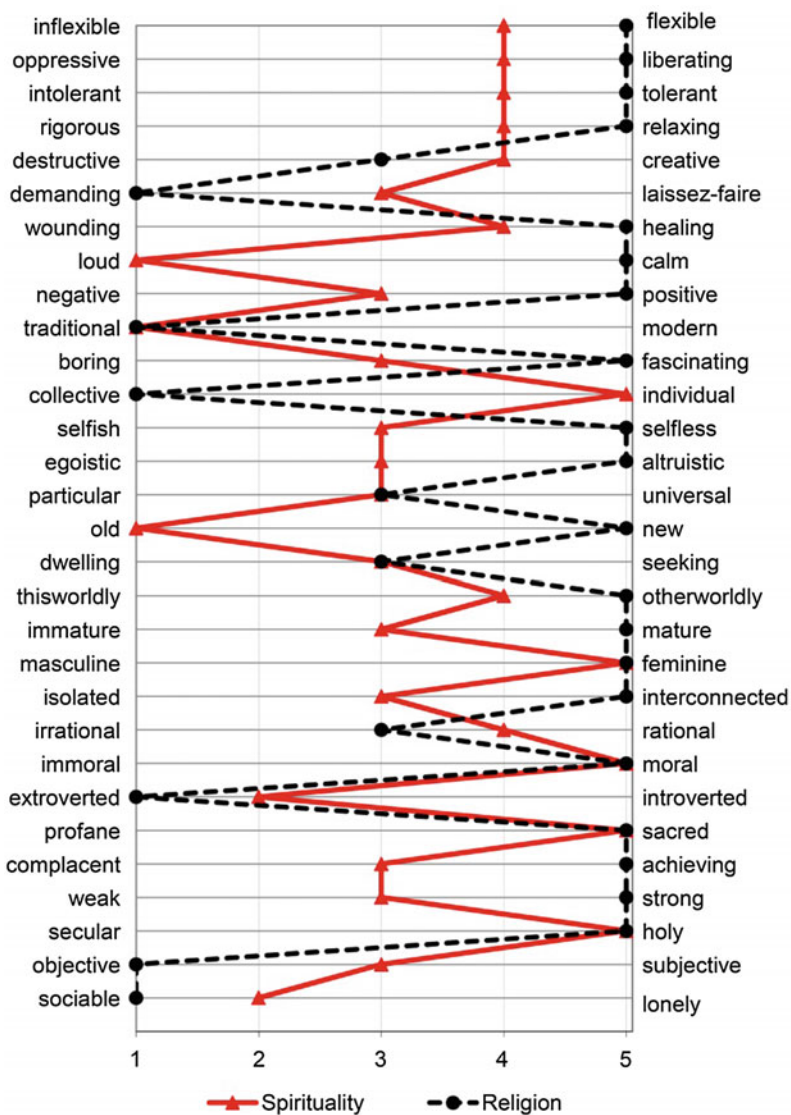


Fig. 18.5 Ernestine's Ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential



texts and teaching subscale in the Religious Schema Scale.

However, attending to Ernestine's single responses to the faith development questions sorted by aspects of faith, Ernestine appears to be more developed in terms of faith development in regard to *form of logic*, *perspective taking*, and *social awareness* than the other aspects. She scores predominantly at the synthetic-conventional level on those measures, whereas she is more at the mythic-literal stage on *form of moral judgment*, *locus of authority*, *form of world*

coherence, and *symbolic function*. Figure 18.6 presents Ernestine's responses to the FDI questions which we have sorted according to their thematic focus: whether they address religious topics or non-religious topics.

Summary of Ernestine's Faith Development Taken together, Ernestine's faith development shows an interesting dichotomy. She is less-developed on the measures containing the more existential aspects of meaning, but more developed on the measures having to do with personal events and relationships. Perhaps

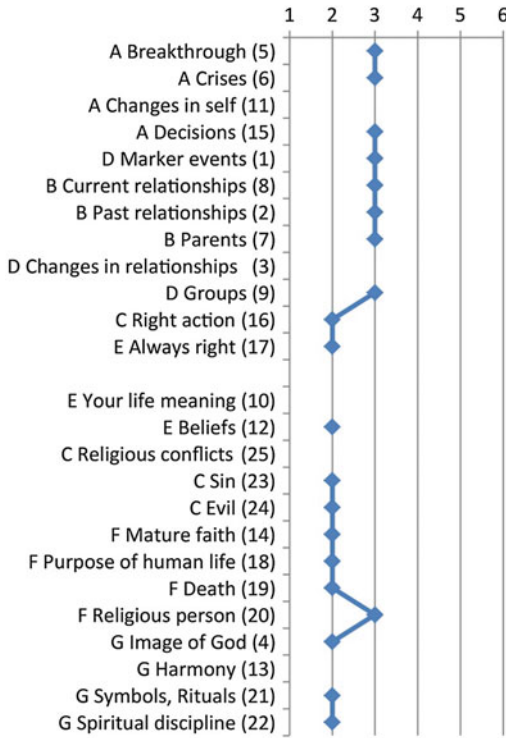


Fig. 18.6 Ratings of Ernestine’s Responses to the Single FDI Questions, Sorted by Religious and Non-religious Questions

Ernestine is not comfortable exploring her thoughts on questions of existence, keeping her overall in a level of mythic-literal faith. Faith for her may not be a matter of thought, but of experience, or perhaps her faith is adequately expressed within the boundaries of her religion.

Attachment, the Narrative Structure, and Content Aspects in Ernestine’s Interview

In the interview with Ernestine, it is particularly interesting that her attachment appeared to be “secure” (Keller & Streib, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 1992). She speaks convincingly about the wonderful childhood she had. This helps us understand Ernestine’s “spiritual” biography as following the social correspondence pathway in which she follows the religious tradition of sensitive caregivers (Granqvist, 2010).

Attending to the narrative dynamics in Ernestine’s interview (see Chap. 16 for a methodological discussion), it is noteworthy that she uses the temporal method of giving her autobiography, according to a cultural concept (Bluck & Habermas, 2000). Similar to Ella, Ernestine talks about some bad things that have happened in her life, but overall she exhibits a positive impression about her life now in a “redemption” narrative (McAdams et al., 2001).

Life Review

Attending to Ernestine’s response to the “life chapters” question in the faith development interview, we see that Ernestine mixes types of titles. Her life trajectory could be laid out in chapters with marker events shown temporally in italics: *Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor*, *Growing up on a Farm*, *At 16 Talked to by a Spirit/God*, *Going to [Name A] School*, *Working*, *Wedding*, *Family*, *Children*, *Son Was Married*, *Grandchildren*, *Lost Granddaughter When She was 15*, *Daughter Diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder*, *Back to School/Worked on Ph.D.* Ernestine recounts an interesting mix of historical landmarks, educational markers, and critical life events or life phases in organizing her life story. She tells a type of “family history” in recounting markers in her life.

Relationships

Ernestine’s important relationships span her lifetime. Her parents are both deceased, so she gives a retrospective on her relationship with them. She mentions her grandfather on her mother’s side as being especially influential in her childhood and youth. Her parents were also pointed out as being significant in her childhood and youth, with her mother being dominant. She paints a picture of a happy childhood:

We had a wonderful loving family. I was the oldest of six and of course I thought I was supposed to take care of the rest of them, but we worked together, and we played together and when I say played, my parents thought you were supposed to play games, card games, board games. Every kind

of game and we didn't just play them, we played them together, and this was to me just ideal love in the way it was supposed to be. But we also knew we had to work hard and as we worked; we worked together and worked hard and as I said, grew up, as I said, in the church, knowing that was where we were supposed to be. And they were just great parents to me. (interact 61)

Ernestine also mentions teachers in her childhood and youth as being important relationships.

Ernestine mentions a person she worked on a project with, as being very influential. Ernestine worked on a project with her as her friend was completing a doctorate at a well-respected Southern university, and this person has encouraged her to go back to school. She talks about her husband as a crucial relationship, and she mentions her sister as being someone she talks with when trying to make a decision.

The death of her granddaughter was a challenge for Ernestine, and it influenced her relationship with her son and daughter-in-law:

It was very hard and very trying when we lost our granddaughter (serious) and of course the way that I interpreted that and the way my son and his wife, the mother and father of their child, was so entirely different. I really had a real hard time with us being on different pages so to speak. I never felt like God left us, but I felt like I just lost all my family rather than just one. (interact 49)

Ernestine had a very difficult time with her son's reaction to tragedy, in addition to the tragedy itself.

In Ernestine's account of relationships, we may regard as striking that she does mention those outside of her family as being pertinent to her life. Her colleague who was mentioned above is part of the outer world, as well as some of her teachers. Her mutual interpersonal relationships are characteristic of the synthetic-conventional faith level, although her overall orientation is mythic-literal.

Values and Commitments

When asked about her values and commitments, Ernestine says that she believes that God is the Supreme Being and in control of everything. Even though there are natural disasters, He is a

loving God and will help people in need. Her moral convictions are stated with respect to a situational scenario:

I do not think I am supposed to do something that might offend you if I am in your presence because I should be a better person than hoping to offend or turn you off, so yes I think my actions can be right or wrong.... Well for all of us present in that particular situation whether if I am going to have a beer and I would have a beer but if it is going to offend you in your presence I would not have a beer. Now some people would say to you that makes me two-faced, but to me it means respecting your rights, because I have discussed things like that with friends, and they think you shouldn't do it. If you do it hasn't.... Well I only do it because I want to respect your rights. (interacts 105, 107)

This is in line with the fairness/reciprocity moral foundation discussed by Graham et al. (2009). Ernestine borders on believing in a natural moral sense when she states, "I almost think it is always right to follow your gut feeling... but that might not be true" (interact 111). She believes that sin is against mankind and against God's will and includes acts a person does against God.

Religion and World View

Ernestine identifies herself as both religious and spiritual in both the questionnaire and the interview and believes they go hand in hand for her. She thinks that prayer can lead persons to the spiritual feeling part of their experience. When asked about the groups and institutions she affiliated with, she mentioned a group that feeds the hungry, a board at a University, a Human Resources Department, and a bridge group. They do have something in common, as she states:

They are important to me because all of these groups that I have mentioned do such wonderful things by helping others, whether it is providing a scholarship at college or whether it is providing school supplies for the boys and girls. Or some adult that has no family to meet their needs. I appreciate being able to help do that and whether there is always hunger in the community, even though I live in a small community. In [...] supply depending on how much hunger there is around, so I like to help with that. (interact 71)

Ernestine says she prays, but she does not necessarily see rituals as being essential to her faith. She says she appreciates the symbols that are meaningful to other Christians, such as the cross and the fish, but she does not feel that she has to have them. She does, however, see nature as being symbolic for her:

I guess when I was growing up in [...] I felt though, when we went up on the mountain at sunrise to see the sun come up and have a service up there that that was such an uplifting spiritual experience even as a young person. I appreciated that and (historic) sunrise services. I just think because they are outside, and you see the sun come up and it just, I do not know; I am in awe. (interact 145)

Interestingly, Parks (2000) says that the natural environment can function as a mentoring community for young adults, and it sounds as if that was the case for Ernestine.

Ernestine's ideas of the afterlife include the idea that humans will have new bodies. She says it doesn't matter what happens to the old body because "death means eternal life; that is just a step towards eternity, eternal life with God" (interact 131).

In Ernestine's interview there is one incident that particularly stands out as unique. She believes that a spirit spoke to her when she was 16.

I remember at 16 we were farmers and I was working in the field and I had an experience that I felt was extraordinary. I felt like I was being talked to by a spirit, except right now I am not sure, but I go on to (say), and I realized later that this was God speaking to me. That was when I was 16. (interact 23)

She relates this to a time of joy or intense breakthrough experience: "I have times either like I said that particular day when I was 16. I was just working very hard in the cotton field that day, and I just felt that wonderful sensation that I needed to listen" (interact 39). This is particularly intriguing in light of the fact that she only scored at the average level on the *mysticism* scale and does not see symbols as being especially important to her. Perhaps for her the symbolic and plain reality are indistinguishable from one another.

General Interpretation of Ernestine's "Spiritual" Journey

Ernestine is an older adult who has been involved with church her whole life. She has not left a religious group to which she belonged, and she seems satisfied with her spiritual experience. Intriguingly, she does not mention her church when asked about current groups with which she is affiliated. She views her religion and spirituality more in non-symbolic personal terms, but she does not mind symbols for others. Ernestine's mythic-literal faith style has served her well throughout the course of her life, partly because she is in a culture that values and respects religious diversity. As was mentioned earlier, she scored high on both the *self-acceptance* and the *environmental mastery* measures on the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being. Even though she has had some difficult times in life, they have not shaken her faith, perhaps because she felt God spoke to her when she was a teenager.

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“Well, Not a Believer, Meaning That I Have Not Found My Ideal Faith Yet. I Am Seeking.”—Spirituality of Religious Seekers

19

Michele Wollert and Barbara Keller

Abstract

There are some individuals whose way of being spiritual includes a “seeker” or “Religion as quest” (Batson, 1976) orientation. Even individuals who self-identify as being “equally religious and spiritual” and who may have a religious vocation may not feel totally settled in their orientation. Some of this may be partially due to cultural issues more present in some settings than in others. A discussion of two German cases will be explored in this chapter in the context of their “questing” orientation.

Some individuals evidence a spirituality that resists a description as a fixed entity. The construct of “Religion as quest” (see Batson, 1976) has provided an important view of some individuals’ religious orientation. Batson and Schoenrade (1991) define this construct as “openly facing complex, existential questions and resisting clear-cut, pat answers” (p. 430).

Although the corresponding Quest Scale has not been without its critics, the concept of quest has continued to garner psychology of religion research. Edwards, Hall and Slater (as cited in Beck & Jessup, 2004) have proposed that there exists both a “hard” and a “soft” Quest. The “hard” Quest may cause individuals to leave their religious traditions and see all world religions as being possible avenues to truth. The “soft” Quest evidences openness, doubt, and growth but operates within a bounded territory. These individuals remain committed to a particular religious worldview yet manifest many Quest-like qualities. One may wonder what these individuals are seeking for and how it affects their spirituality. This chapter will look at two German case studies of religious individuals who show a questing or seeking orientation, primarily in the “soft” sense.

From interact 118 of Laura D.’s FDI (“Ja also gläubig nicht richtig, also in dem Sinne, dass ich eben noch nicht meinen idealen Glauben gefunden habe. Ich bin wohl auf der Suche danach.”). The interview transcripts in full length for Laura and all other cases in this chapter are available in Appendix B (B.5 and B.6).

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**“Ideal Faith for Me Is Critical Questioning, a Kind of Readiness to Engage in Dialogue, with an Unknown Partner.”¹—
Laura D.**

Laura D., 23 years old at the time of the interview and a student of theology, self-identifies as “equally religious and spiritual” in the questionnaire, and her environment at age 12 as “more religious.” She thus exhibits a “religious” to “equally religious and spiritual” pathway. At the time of the interview, she is making plans for the future, exploring options of what to do after finishing her studies.

Laura D.’s narrative is a coming of age story, involving first intimate relationships, and, regarding faith development, traditional Christian conceptions. As a teenager she got interested in “metal,” referring to Heavy Metal music, and a more “pantheistic” faith (interact 26). During this time she experienced first lovesickness, and, in hindsight, she finds that “metal” gave her feelings of doom which she further expressed by wearing black as a platform. This sounds like the “Goth” subculture, which also exists in the United States. Then singing circles provided a breakthrough for her by meeting people from different backgrounds and traveling. Laura has had singing circles as a mentoring community, and, in many ways, is in a parallel with American student Madison I. in Chap. 18. Singing is for Laura also a spiritual practice:

There are moments, like in the singing circle, ... where I have the feeling that everything is happening just automatically but it is like, I am kind of a dreamer and can easily get into a dreaming state, which is perhaps something like meditation ... I welcome this as part of my life and I am happy

¹From interact 88 (“Ein idealer Glaube ist für mich mehr so eine Art ja kritisches Hinterfragen, so eine Art Dialogbereitschaft mit einem unbekanntem Gesprächspartner sozusagen wo man weiß, da kann man Kraft draus ziehen und sich auf dieses Wissen auch verlassen kann, wo man aber nicht einfach sozusagen zu viel rein interpretiert.”).

because these are beautiful experiences (interact 140).²

Laura is questioning the faith in which she was raised and seeking to make her faith her own. Laura is involved in groups outside her family circle and she also mentions the relationship with a teacher as being important. Laura does not want to be pinned down as either “religious” or “spiritual” in her respective FDI responses. She comes up with the word “seeking.” This refusal may point to her claims of her own identity, which has been identified as developmental task of young or “emerging” adulthood (Arnett, 2004; quoted in Seiffge-Krenke, 2012, S. 31).

Mapping Laura D.’s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

As detailed in Chap. 14, *openness to experience* and *mysticism* can be used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig. 17.2), Laura is located in the upper right-hand segment, which indicates her higher than average scores on the Mysticism Scale and the NEO-FFI *openness to experience* scale.

A more comprehensive comparison of Laura’s individual responses to the questionnaire with the means for the focus group of the “equally religious and spiritual” (FG2) in Germany is presented in Table 19.1. Some differences are noteworthy: Laura D. is more than one standard deviation above the mean for her group on the *extraversion* scale on the NEO-FFI. This reflects the amount and strength of energy directed outwards in the social world (McCrae & Costa,

²“Also zum Thema beten, meditieren. Ne also das ist eigentlich, also es gibt schon so Momente wie also im Singkreis, das ist schon ganz richtig, wo ich dann das Gefühl habe, das passiert von selber und es ist aber auch so, dass ich ja eben durch meine verträumte Art oft in so einem Zustand gerate, der vielleicht so ähnlich ist wie meditieren und das passiert aber auch von selber. Also es ist nichts, was ich gezielt tue. Aber ich begrüße es sehr als Bestandteil meines Lebens und freue mich dann immer, weil das auch schöne Erlebnisse dann sind”.

Table 19.1 Comparison of Laura D. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Laura D	Mean values for “equally religious and spiritual” focus group in Germany	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	29	19.3	8.7
<i>Extraversion</i>	38	28.6	6.5
<i>Openness to experience</i>	38	34.4	5.9
<i>Agreeableness</i>	45	34.3	6.0
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	37	32.3	6.2
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)			
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	43	47.4	10.2
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	32	31.5	7.2
<i>Interpretation</i>	47	50.4	7.9
Psychological Well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	18	25.7	3.7
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	29	25.1	4.8
<i>Personal growth</i>	30	29.7	3.2
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	35	27.8	4.2
<i>Purpose in life</i>	29	26.9	4.1
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	28	26.8	4.5
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)			
<i>Attitudes toward god</i>	77	81.5	17.0
Religious Schema Scale			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	14	14.4	4.7
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	24	22.4	2.2
<i>Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog</i>	25	19.7	3.9

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

1987). She is almost two standard deviations above the mean on the *agreeableness* scale, and over one standard deviation above the mean on the *neuroticism* scale. *Agreeableness* shows the

kind of interactions a person prefers, including trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness (Costa & McCrae, 1985). *Neuroticism* shows sensitive individuals who are vulnerable to psychological distress. We can therefore infer that Laura prefers to interact with others in an agreeable way, and that she is prone to psychological stress.

On the Scales of Psychological Well-Being and Growth, Laura is more than two standard deviations below the mean on the *autonomy* scale. This means that Laura is very concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others and uses others' judgments to make decisions more than the average (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). She is almost two standard deviations above the mean on the *positive relations with others* scale. She is therefore concerned about the welfare of others and is capable of strong empathy. On the Religious Schema Scale, Laura is more than one standard deviation above the mean on the *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* scale. This subscale correlates with stage 5 of Fowler's faith stages (Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010).

Laura's Semantic of “Spirituality”

In the questionnaire, Laura says, “Spirituality for me is the alignment with or orientation toward ideals or world views which are based on non-material underlying principles. Spirituality refers to the search for meaning contexts that are beyond the empirically explicable.”³ This is in contrast to what she says about “religion”: “Religion is shaped by ritual expression of personal faith in a divine authority or well-defined higher power. The criteria of this belief are

³“Spiritualität ist für mich die Ausrichtung bzw. Orientierung an Idealen oder Weltbildern, denen Nicht-Materiale Prinzipien zugrunde liegen. Spiritualität meint die Suche nach Sinnzusammenhängen, die jenseits des empirisch Erklärbaren liegen”.

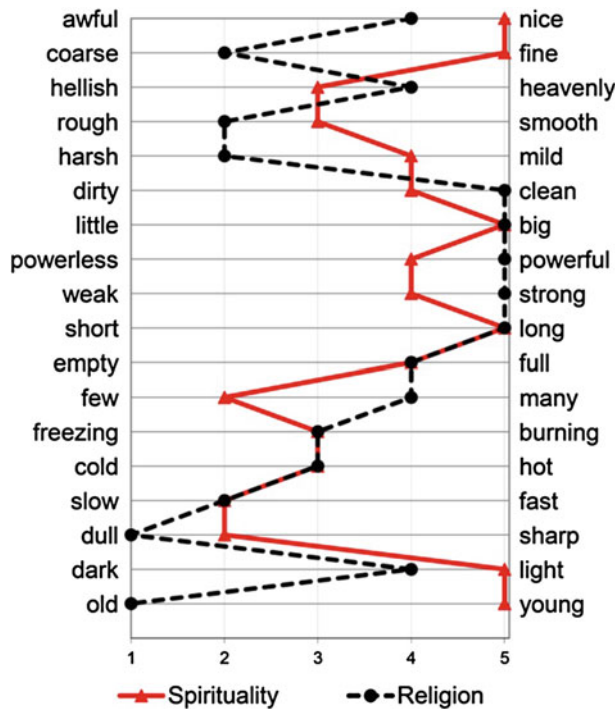


Fig. 19.1 Laura's Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential

usually specified by the respective religious community.”⁴

In looking at the Osgood Semantic Differential (Fig. 19.1), Laura shows some differences from her reference group (see Appendix A).

In general the “equally spiritual and religious” German focus group had its religion line to the left of the spirituality line (see Appendix, Fig. A.6), although the two parallel each other, and on constructs such as “little-big,” “powerless-powerful,” and “short-long” overlay one another. In contrast to this, Laura views “spirituality” as being more “hellish” and “dirty” than religion. A similar group pattern is found for the Contextual Semantic Differential (see Fig. 19.2 and for focus group mean ratings Appendix, Fig. A.20). Laura shows some unique understandings in this measure by rating

spirituality as more “particular” and “thisworldly” than religion and by terming religion as more “irrational” than spirituality. Laura evaluates spirituality significantly more positively than her focus group on several adjective pairs in both the Osgood Semantic Differential, as can be seen in Fig. 19.1 (see her ratings on “nice” and “fine”) and the contextual differential, as can be seen in Fig. 19.2 (see her ratings on “liberating,” “tolerant,” “relaxing” and “creative”).

Laura's Faith Development

Laura's interview shows predominantly a synthetic-conventional style (Fowler, 1981; Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004). However, she does score at the individuative-reflective level on several questions. This reflects her transition from stage 3 to stage 4 faith, often found in young people. In fact, she might be described as being in a separate level that Parks (1986) calls Stage Three-Four faith.

The faith development evaluation of Laura's interview corresponds to her scores in the

⁴“Religion ist die durch Rituale geprägte Ausdrucksform des persönlichen Glaubens an eine göttliche Instanz bzw. genau definierte höhere Macht. Die Kriterien dieses Glaubens sind durch die jeweilige Religionsgemeinschaft meist vorgegeben”.

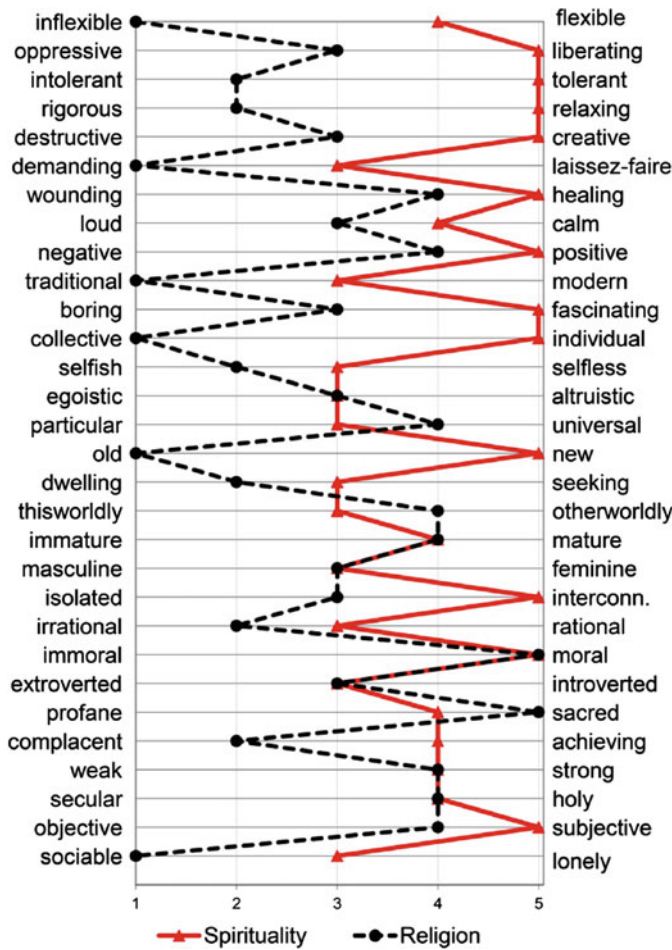


Fig. 19.2 Laura’s Ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Religious Schema Scale by showing that she is open to dialoguing with other religions. Religious fundamentalism is negatively correlated with the *xenos* scale, and Laura scored high on that measure (Streib et al., 2010).

However, attending to Laura’s single responses to the faith development questions sorted by aspects of faith, Laura’s faith appears to be most developed in form of logic and locus of authority than on the other aspects. She scored largely at the individuative-reflective level on those two aspects. Her lowest scores, at the mythic-literal level, were on the questions about past relationships in perspective-taking and marker events in social awareness. Her other responses were largely at the synthetic-conventional level (Fig. 19.3).

Summary of Laura’s Faith Development

Taken together, it appears that Laura is testing new ideas against the background of what she has been taught. She is using formal operations to dichotomize groups, and she is judging authorities and norms that need to be congruent with her own ideology. She is experimenting with perspective taking, as that aspect had the most divergent ratings. Overall, she is in the role of a young adult making her faith her own.

Wisdom and Attachment in Laura’s Interview

As detailed in Chap. 15, the evaluation of the faith development interview gains depth and profile

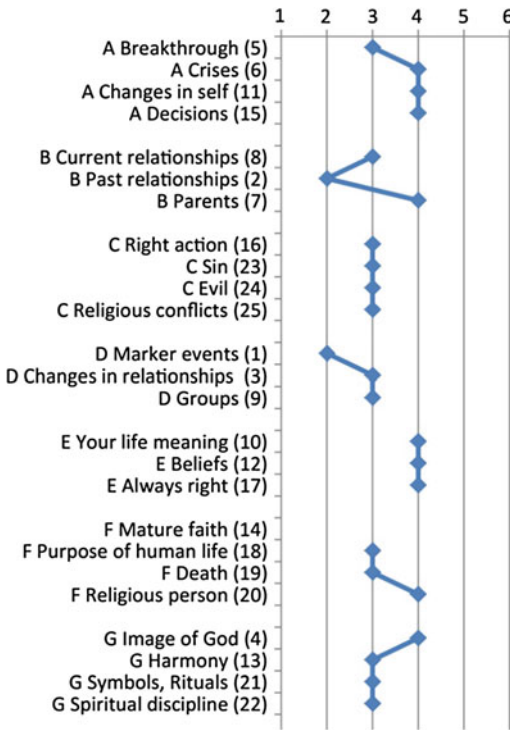


Fig. 19.3 Ratings of Laura’s Responses to the Single FDI Questions

when additional dimensions are evaluated. In the interview with Laura, it is particularly interesting that her attachment was rated as “secure” (Keller & Streib, 2013). She was scored as showing both understanding of life-span context and value-relativism according to the wisdom criteria (Staudinger, Smith, & Baltes, 1994). This helps us understand Laura’s “spiritual” biography as perhaps following the faith route of children of sensitive caregivers (Granqvist, 2010) or of parents providing adequate mirroring (Fonagy & Target, 2007; Rizzuto, 1979) as she is seeking wisdom. She still sees the outward actions/rituals of the faith she experienced growing up as being very meaningful, although she questions some of the inward beliefs behind them.

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Laura’s Interview

Attending to the narrative dynamics in Laura’s interview (see Chap. 16 for a methodological

discussion), it is noteworthy that Laura shows an awareness of mental states in her reflective functioning (Fonagy, Target, Steele, & Steele, 1998). She is also aware of using a temporal model to give her life story (Bluck & Habermas, 2000).

Life Review

Laura explains that she divides her life’s chapters “of course along my education so far” and proceeds: “Yes, first school, elementary school, high school (Gymnasium⁵) and then, decisive turn, taking my diploma (Abitur) and then going to college, this is the second big part, after going to school and childhood, and going to college can be divided again, in studying in Town A and studying in Town B. Yes, and that is where I am at the moment⁶” (interact 2). She is aware of using a traditional framework in structuring her life according to her schooling in a cultural concept of biography (Bluck & Habermas, 2000). Perhaps she assumes that this is the way (“of course”) to do it and complies with what she perceives as her task in this interview, in line with cultural norms.

Narrative Segments

Of special interest are the narrative segments with a clear narrative-dynamic structure according to Labov and Waletzky (1967). Laura recounts a story following the pattern described earlier (Table 19.2).

Laura states that she does not believe in a God who acts as a person and interferes directly in human affairs. The encounter with a different position in the youth group of an evangelical

⁵The German school system has, after elementary school, three tracks, and “Gymnasium” qualifies for further academic education.

⁶“Natürlich entlang meiner bisherigen Ausbildungslaufbahn vor allen Dingen. Ja erst halt Schule, Grundschule, Gymnasium und dann ein wichtiger Einschnitt das Abitur und dann eben meine Studienzeit ist eigentlich der zweite große Abschnitt nach der Schulzeit und der Kindheit und diese Studienzeit lässt sich eigentlich auch wieder in verschiedenen Abschnitte einteilen, nämlich Studium in [Stadt A], Studium in [Stadt B]. Ja und da bin ich momentan”.

Table 19.2 Laura’s Narrative Segment “God, Faith, and Responsibility”

Title	God, Faith, and Responsibility
Abstract	I do not believe that there is a tangible personal God who holds his hand over us and who somehow intervenes (Ich glaube nicht, dass es jetzt irgendwie einen konkreten personell gedachten Gott gibt, der seine Hand über uns hält und der irgendwie quasi eingreift)
Orientation	What I experienced as really shocking, I have, around the time of graduation, I went with a (female) friend who is a member of an evangelical free (non-denominational) church and I have taken a look at that and I am rather open in these things (Also was mich da irgendwie am meisten schockiert hat, ich habe, also grad auch zu Abizeiten bin ich mal mit einer Freundin mitgegangen, die in einer Freikirche ist und die war auch in einer freikirchlichen Jugendgruppe und ich habe mir das mal angeguckt und bin ja dann auch eigentlich sehr aufgeschlossen gegenüber solchen Sachen.)
Complication	And then there was this youth group and everybody took their turn at telling about what happened to them this week and then someone, when his turn came, told that he had just flunked his driving test for the second time, but this is ok, God wanted it to happen (Und dann war diese Jugendgruppe und jeder erzählte dann von seiner Woche im Kreis sozusagen in dieser freikirchlichen Jugendgruppe und dann sagte einer dann, als er dran war, ja ich bin gerade zum zweiten Mal durch meine Führerscheinprüfung gefallen, aber das ist ok Gott, wollte das so.)
Evaluation/attempts to solve	And then I have, this is exactly the opposite of what I think. I really have, I found this alarming (Und da habe ich, also das ist genau das Gegenteil von dem, was ich denke. Da habe ich echt, das fand ich schon ja erschreckend.)
Resolution	On one side of course it is fine if you can just relax into the thought that God wanted something to happen as it did. But I think you have a personal responsibility there, and God is not, I do not conceive of God as someone who intervenes and this is still like that for me (Also einerseits ist natürlich auch gut, wenn man sich da so reinfallen lassen kann in den Gedanken, dass Gott das dann so wollte. Aber das ist überhaupt nicht das, was ich denke. Also ich denke schon, man hat in erster Linie eine Eigenverantwortung und Gott ist nicht, ich denke mir Gott nicht so, dass er eingreift und das ist immer noch so.)
Coda	Yes, and actually I am now not desperately seeking for my faith. I just hope that I find faith someday. But I really think that to find faith is a long process and that does not happen in the instant of a moment and someday perhaps I will find faith, yeah (Ja, ich bin jetzt nicht konkret verzweifelt auf der Suche nach meinem Glauben. Ich hoffe halt, dass ich ihn irgendwann finden werde. Aber ich denke auch wirklich, seinen Glauben zu finden ist ein langer Prozess und das kann man nicht von jetzt auf gleich und irgendwann finde ich ihn vielleicht dann auch, ja.) (interact 28)

church is the challenge, the complication, in this narrative. While Laura concedes in the resolution that it may be relieving to attribute failure to God’s larger plan, she sees humans as having free will and a consequent responsibility for their actions. She does not take the less-conflictual route of the extreme view of predestination that some churchgoers adopt (a personal God meant for everything to happen the way it did). She is clear about what God, to her, is not, and hopeful

to find her faith “someday.” This is an example of her orientation toward open-ended searching, which could perhaps be termed “questing.”

Relationships

Here we attend to how Laura discusses her relationships and her development. Focusing on content we see that there are persons outside her family whom she names as important, and she

gives a narrative on the school teacher of religion who predicted that she would be studying theology one day. Among the changes in relationships she discusses her relationship to her mother which changed when her maternal grandmother died, and she observed how her own mother was struggling with her loss (interact 20).

Values and Commitments

Laura states, regarding values and commitments: “Yes, there is a quite profane belief that every person somehow has a function in society, which has to be fulfilled and which he can fulfill.”⁷ She feels committed to contribute to the functioning of society, and in a way coming as close as possible to her ideals. In Laura’s interview, she states that what harms others is clearly wrong, taking as example factory owners who pollute the environment (interact 100). This corresponds to the harm-care orientation observed by Graham, Haidt, & Nosek (2009).

Religion and World View

In the FDI Laura explains:

I am not a believer, meaning that I have not found my ideal faith. I am seeking ... Because my belief is very critical and not related to any kind of specific God, which then might be there for me personally. I see myself between these three concepts. I am too “down to earth” to be spiritual. ... I do not exercise enough practices to be religious ... and I do not have enough confidence that I have found the faith (Glauben) to be believing (gläubig).⁸ (interact 118)

⁷“Ja, es gibt da einen ganz weltlichen Glauben daran, dass jeder Mensch in dieser Gesellschaft irgendwie eine Funktion zu erfüllen hat und die auch erfüllen kann.” (from interact 80).

⁸Referring to being religious, spiritual, believing as offered in the question (interact 117) she is answering in interact 118: “Ja also gläubig nicht richtig, also in dem Sinne, dass ich eben noch nicht meinen idealen Glauben gefunden habe. Ich bin wohl auf der Suche danach, aber wenn ich dann quasi diesen Glauben gefunden habe, dann würde ich es wahrscheinlich gläubig nennen und andere würden mich nicht gläubig nennen. Also weil mein Glauben ja sehr sehr kritisch ist und sich nicht einfach auf irgendeinen Gott bezieht, der dann da ist für mich sozusagen, das ja nicht. Also, ich glaube tatsächlich, ich bin irgendwo in der Mitte zwischen diesen drei Begriffen.

Laura prefers to call herself “seeking”⁹ (interact 120). She continues to explain:

Religiosity for me is about how you express your belief, therefore, religious and believing for me are strongly tied together and religiosity means to perform specific rituals, which a specific belief with a specific form prescribes, for example the simplest would be to pray or go to church.¹⁰ (interact 124)

Later, she elaborates:

Religiosity is action, so to speak. But acting according to specific requirements, which are prescribed by the belief or by what you believe in. Yes, and belief I have already explained what that means to me, a lot of scrutinizing, of questioning, it is about responsibility toward what you believe in, so to speak, and being spiritual, yes, for me that involves my relationship with the environment, with nature, with the cosmos and with trying to dissolve certain boundaries.¹¹ (interact 128)

Laura reports to be affiliated with singing circles. She was introduced to these what to her was a “liberating experience” (interact 32) when she was 15 years old and sharing music and

(Footnote 8 continued)

Also ich habe zu viel Bodenhaftung um spirituell zu sein. Also ich kann mich jetzt auch nicht so fallen lassen und spirituelle Gedanken und so. Das kann ich irgendwie nicht. Ich kann auch nicht gut, ich müsste es mal probieren beim Meditieren oder so, das kann ich nicht so gut. Ja ich übe nicht genug sozusagen irgendwie Glaubenspraktiken aus um religiös zu sein und ich habe auch noch nicht genug die Überzeugung, ich hätte jetzt einen Glauben gefunden um gläubig zu sein. Also es ist irgendwie ein bisschen von allen drei Aspekten”.⁹“Ich bin suchend”.

¹⁰“Also Religiosität hat für mich halt immer sehr viel mit Ausübung von Glauben zu tun, deswegen hängen gläubig und religiös für mich halt sehr stark zusammen und Religiosität drückt sich darin aus, dass man quasi bestimmte Rituale vollzieht, die einen bestimmten Glauben innerhalb einer bestimmten Form vorschreibt, z. B. das simpelste wäre beten oder in die Kirche gehen”.

¹¹“Religiosität ist halt auch dann das Handeln sozusagen. Aber auch das Handeln nach bestimmten Maßgaben, die der Glaube oder das, woran man glaubt, dann vorschreibt. Ja und Glauben habe ich ja im Prinzip auch schon erklärt, was das für mich bedeutet, auch viel mit Hinterfragen und auch mit Verantwortungsbewusstsein gegenüber dem, woran man glaubt sozusagen und spirituell sein, ja das hat für mich viel zu tun mit meiner Beziehung zur Umwelt und zur Natur und zum Kosmos und damit, dass man da bestimmte Grenzen versucht aufzulösen”.

travel with others means a lot to her. She even compares what she experiences, when singing in a church with others, as spiritual experience (interact 138).

In terms of rituals and symbolic preferences, Laura says:

Yes, this is singing. I find religious rituals very important, even if I do not have adopted that church-related faith myself, but the ritual of christening, for example, I find very important, and I would like to marry in church, later on, and I find it is important for believers to gather and to celebrate their faith and live it, I really like that, that is true. Even though the church is not my main concern, as I said. My image of God is rather disconnected from Christianity. But I appreciate it when people go into a mosque and do their prayers there, I appreciate that a lot, I feel that there is a lot of power in that.¹² (interact 130)

Laura’s perspective on death and the afterlife is interesting, because she seems to struggle with different perspectives, more or less comforting:

The most plausible form is the light goes out. Then, one is somehow, but I do not really know, everything is dark and there is no perception anymore, and then, in the worst case, that was it, really, or you dissolve in something, and now you can call this soul, but something of what one was, some essence, is going to stay somehow. Well, I imagine this, that one somehow goes back. Then I am with this, I do not know, pan-theistic world view, that you go back into the earth as part of nature, somehow a way back into the state before one was born. This is my conception. That life is a short span when you just can perceive things and move around and be active, and then one gets back to the beginning.¹³ (from interact 114)

¹²“Ja, das ist ja das Singen. Ich finde religiöse Rituale sehr wichtig, auch wenn ich jetzt ja nicht unbedingt so diesen kirchlichen Glauben übernommen habe, aber ich finde so ein Ritual der Taufe sehr wichtig z. B. und auch möchte ich gerne kirchlich heiraten später mal und ich finde es einfach tatsächlich wichtig, dann wenn halt bestimmte Gläubige irgendwie zusammenkommen und dann zusammen ihren Glauben einfach auch feiern und ausüben und da habe ich schon ein Faible für, das stimmt das tatsächlich. Also obwohl das eigentlich gar nicht so mein Hauptanliegen ist, also mit der Kirche und so wie gesagt. Also mein Gottesbild usw. das ist ja sehr losgelöst vom Christentum, aber ich finde es auch toll, wenn die Leute in die Moschee gehen und da beten, das finde ich wahnsinnig toll, das hat für mich irgendwie echt so eine Kraft irgendwie”.

General Interpretation of Laura’s “Spiritual” Journey

Taking it all together, we conclude that Laura’s case demonstrates the faith of a young adult seeking to find her own meaning in life. She has had the example of faith in family members, but she is attempting to reconcile what she has seen in her family with what she has seen in others. Her sensitivity to others and her participation in singing circles show her involvement in relationships. Laura does not go with easy answers and struggles with the idea of an all-powerful, intervening person-like God, as was mentioned in the narrative segment. She describes herself as “seeking,” rather than “religious,” “spiritual,” or “faithful,” conceding that she can identify with aspects of all three concepts as she understands them. On the Contextual Semantic Differential, she rates religion as more “dwelling” and spirituality as more “seeking.” This might indicate her need to rather integrate aspects of the different labels in her quest rather than identifying clearly with one. Her singing circles provide her with profound spiritual experiences, and she finds church rituals meaningful. She appears to manifest very much the “Religion as quest” description given by Batson and Schoenrade (1991), mentioned earlier in the chapter.

¹³“Das Naheliegendste ist für mich immer, das Licht geht aus. Also man ist dann irgendwie, aber ich weiß gar nicht, es ist dann alles dunkel und man nimmt nichts mehr wahr und dann, also im schlimmsten Fall war es das wirklich oder man geht dann irgendwo drin auf und ja, man kann es jetzt natürlich Seele nennen, aber irgendwas von einem, irgendeine Essenz von einem bleibt irgendwie da oder so. Also so stelle ich mir das schon irgendwie vor und geht halt wieder zurück. Also dann bin ich wieder bei diesem, ich weiß nicht ob das zu diesem pantheistischen Weltbild gehört, aber dass man dann wieder zurück in die Erde geht und in die Natur geht und dann irgendwie als solches Teil davon bleibt und man geht irgendwie ein stückweit wieder in den Zustand, in dem man war, bevor man geboren wurde. Das ist immer so meine Vorstellung. Dass das Leben so eine kurze Phase ist, wo man einfach Sachen wahrnehmen darf und sich bewegen darf und handeln darf und dann geht man wieder in diesen Ausgangszustand zurück hinterher...”.

“I Have Gone There to Bring Faith, but I Have Found Faith There.”¹⁴—Hans R.

Hans R., German priest and missionary, is an example of Catholic Marian spirituality. His experience in some ways parallels that of American respondent Ernestine E. in Chap. 18. The case of Hans R. has been selected because Hans is typical of an older, religious adult looking back on his life. In the context of this chapter, Hans represents a person who is “equally religious and spiritual,” but who, at the same time, self-identifies as a “non-theist” in the questionnaire.

Hans R. is 70 years old at the time of the interview. He says that his home environment at age 12 was “more religious than spiritual.” In the questionnaire he self-identifies as “equally religious and spiritual.” Thus, Hans’ trajectory describes a religious to equally religious and spiritual turn. But in the FDI, Hans characterizes himself as “more spiritual,” explaining that for him this means looking for his own path (interact 98). He further explains what his being spiritual means to him:

It means to me that I do not try to understand from a rational perspective who I am, where I am going, where I want to go and where I am perhaps invited to go. Not primarily rational, but rather personal, who I am. It would probably be completely different for you and for other people it would also be completely different. But for me it is how I am, Hans R., with his gut instincts, his feelings, and his dreams, yes, that is how I could say it.¹⁵ (interact 100)

With his narrative, Hans introduces himself as missionary as well as someone who sees himself

as seeker. As mentioned above, Hans also identifies himself as an “equally religious or spiritual atheist/non-theist.” Although the rest of the interview does not show him to be an “atheist,” his identification as a “non-theist” means that he sees his relationship with God differently than what might traditionally be expected of a priest. He describes how he experiences God:

When I have the feeling someone is there for me just when I need him or her without being asked, that someone just, I have the feeling I sit or stand or go not alone, there is no control, but someone is there to catch me when I fall or to encourage me or to give advice. I can, when I have a gut feeling or perhaps when I think I have good thoughts or ideas, but perhaps this is the moment when God wants to tell me this or that might be important for you.¹⁶ (interact 16)

To him, God is something he feels when relating to others—a felt presence, not a person, as he explains later (interact 18, see below). In the questionnaire, Hans has given his definition of “spirituality”: “finding oneself, understand each other, peace and quiet, inner conversation”.¹⁷ This contrasts to his definition of “religion” which he sees as “relationship with a personal God, especially Jesus Christ; his spirit can affect my daily life, soothe and change my personal favor.”¹⁸ Interestingly, this appears to contradict Hans’ interview description of God as a felt presence, not a person. Taken together, Hans’ semantic profiling of “spirituality” can be

¹⁴From interact 4 of Hans’ FDI (“Ich bin hingegangen um den Glauben zu verbreiten, aber ich habe da den Glauben gefunden”).

¹⁵“Es bedeutet für mich, dass ich nicht rein rational verstehen versuche, wer ich bin, wohin ich gehe, wohin ich gehen möchte und wohin ich vielleicht eingeladen bin. Nicht rein rational, sondern persönlich, wie ich eben schon sagte, wie ich bin. Das wäre für Sie ganz anders wahrscheinlich und auch für andere Menschen wäre das ganz anders. Aber für mich ist es ja so wie ich bin der Hans R. so, von seinem Bauch her, von seinem Gefühl her und von seinen Träumen ja, so könnte ich sagen ja”.

¹⁶“Also, wenn ich das Gefühl habe, jemand ist für mich da, gerade dann, wenn ich ihn oder sie gebrauchen kann ohne noch mal gefragt zu werden, dass jemand einfach, ich habe das Gefühl, ja ich sitze oder stehe oder gehe nicht alleine, das ist keine Kontrolle, aber es ist jemand da, ja und der fängt mich auf oder der ermutigt mich oder der gibt mir irgend Ratschläge. Ich kann den, wenn mir irgendwas einfällt aus dem Bauch heraus, ja vielleicht meine ich ja, ich habe gute Gedanken oder Ideen, aber vielleicht sage ich ja, vielleicht ist gerade dann der Augenblick, wo Gott mir sagen möchte, das und das wäre für dich vielleicht wichtig”.

¹⁷“Sich selbst finden, einander verstehen, Ruhe und Stille, Gespräch im Innern”.

¹⁸“Beziehung zu einem persönlichen Gott, vor allem Jesus Christus; sein Geist kann mein tägliches Leben beeinflussen, beruhigen und verändern zu meinem persönlichen Gunsten”.

summarized as the inner and interpersonal experience of his faith.

Mapping Hans R.’s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

As detailed in Chap. 14, *openness to experience* and *mysticism* have been used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig. 17.2), Hans is located in the lower left-hand segment, which indicates his lower than average scores on both the *mysticism* scale and the *openness to experience* scale of the NEO-FFI.

As “equally religious and spiritual non-theist,” Hans does not belong to any of our six focus groups. If we wanted to compare him to the “equally religious and spiritual” (FG2), we would find him scoring lower than the average of this group on most scales. He would, for example, score almost two standard deviations below the mean on the Loyola Generativity Scale. To account for this difference, we might argue that this scale addresses items having to do with passing on knowledge and skills to others, doing things that will be remembered as one’s legacy, being creative or productive, and caring for and taking responsibility for other people (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). When McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) were validating the scale, they found that whether a man has ever been a father to a child seems to predict his generativity score. Hans has never literally been a father, so that may affect his response. However, he chose life as a Catholic priest and may define or value generativity differently from those not called to the religious vocation.¹⁹ Compared to FG2, he scores higher or average on *neuroticism*, *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness* of the NEO-FFI, on *purpose in life* of Ryff Scale, and on *ttt* of the RSS. This would picture him as believer grounded in his faith, and, as his comparatively low score on *ftt* suggests, feeling that he cannot endorse equal coexistence of forms of faith due to

his Catholic faith and vocational calling as a missionary.

If we would pick up his being a non-theist as a crucial characteristic, we might consider to compare his scores to those who self-identified as “more spiritual non-theists” (FG4) as closest to his self-identification. Then we might state: He is more conscientious (NEO-FFI) than the average German “more spiritual non-theist” (FG4) in our sample, while also having the tendency to be more agreeable (NEO-FFI). His scores on the Mysticism Scale correspond more to those of the more spiritual atheists. From those he differs again when it comes to the Attitudes toward God (ATGS) where his scores are not much lower than the average of FG2. Regarding the Religious Schema Scale (RSS), his scores on *ttt* are considerably higher than the average of FG4, while *ftt* is lower; however, *xenos* is about average. If we take this group as reference point, we get the profile of an experience-centered religious spirituality with a tension between high affirmation for his specific belief, the intention to appreciate other beliefs (as shown in average scores on *xenos*) and the resistance toward equal acceptance of all religions (as shown in low scores on *ftt*). Hans’ religious quest shares features like an experience-oriented spirituality with the “spiritual atheists,” and others like high appreciation of his own tradition with the “equally religious and spiritual” among our respondents.

Hans’ Faith Development

Hans’ FDI shows predominantly a conjunctive style (Fowler, 1981; Fowler et al., 2004). This reflects his understanding of the complexities involved in one’s meaning making. His overall FDI ratings may be seen in Fig. 19.4.

Attending to Hans’ single responses to the faith development questions sorted by aspects of faith, Hans appears to be on the level of conjunctive faith in the aspects form of logic, form of moral judgment, bounds of social awareness, and form of world coherence. Locus of authority is individuated-reflective; less developed in terms of faith development are perspective

¹⁹His low scores could be also understood as, for example, rejecting the narcissistic gratifications of being remembered as person.

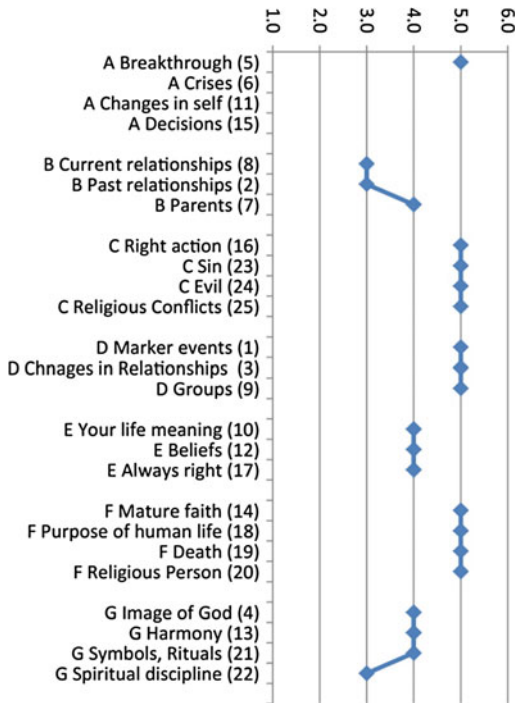


Fig. 19.4 Hans' FDI Ratings in the Different Aspects of Faith

taking, which encompasses current and past relationships, and symbolic function.

Summary of Hans' Faith Development

Hans' lifelong investment of being in the service of his order and church, and his work as missionary has had a definite influence on his faith development. His work as a priest may have enhanced his engagement with moral issues, with social awareness and with elaborating a coherent world view more than the other aspects. *Perspective taking* is based on questions tapping into closer personal relationships and these came after church and order; his ratings are on the synthetic-conventional level here. *Locus of authority* is tied to his commitments, as is *symbolic function*. *Symbolic function*, which includes image of God, is on the synthetic-conventional level. This corresponds to the configuration in the RSS as discussed above, and points to a tension between

striving to feel at home in his own religion and understanding others, however, with the aim of mission.

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Hans' Interview

Life Review

Hans gives long and elaborate answers when asked to divide his life into chapters. As priest and missionary he is used to talking to an audience. He responds by offering reminiscences of his rural upbringing, of early encounters with friars, whose exotic appearance impressed him, of his early interest in mission—which leads to his calling and later life as missionary.

When kindly reminded by the interviewer to name chapters, he suggests to focus on single experience to illustrate important aspects of his life. As themes for chapters he names:

- health problems and being saved from life threatening diseases and accidents,
- personal spiritual experience and “taking breath,” referring to reflection and retreat
- experiencing the care of others while handling health challenges of old age.

Named in this sequence, these themes are chronologically ordered. One might, however, discuss that threatened health is a theme recurring in different stages of life.

Narrative Segments

Of special interest are the narrative segments with a clear narrative-dynamic structure according to Labov and Waletzky (1967). The following quotation demonstrates an important narrative segment with a climax from orientation, complication, evaluation and resolution.

Table 19.3 Hans R.’s Narrative of “Emotion and Religious Intensification”

Title	Emotion and Religious Intensification
Orientation	And I still remember, I was at a mission station, surrounded by several villages, 40, 50, I don’t know (Und ich erinnere mich noch, ich war auf einer Missionsstation, die hatte etliche Dörfer drum herum, 40, 50 was weiß ich)
Complication	And for the last service people gathered and the chairman of the parish council and chief said: Father (Hans R.) is leaving today, but our faith is to stay with us (Und bei dem letzten Gottesdienst versammelten sich die Leute und da sagte der Vorsitzende des (unv. Pfarrgemeinderates?) und ein Häuptling, der Pater geht heute, aber mit ihm geht nicht unser Glaube.)
Evaluation/attempts to solve	Well, you notice that this is still emotional for me (Also Sie merken, dass das für mich noch jetzt emotional ist.)
Resolution	Because, later I have been reflecting on this (Weil, ich habe dann später dann auch reflektiert)
Coda	And I have been telling myself: I have gone there to bring faith, but I have found faith there (Und ich habe mir gesagt, ich bin hingegangen um den Glauben zu verbreiten, aber ich habe da den Glauben gefunden) (interact 4)

Hans stresses the emphasis on emotion tied to the Marian spirituality²⁰ he intuitively turned to as a young man, which, however, he learned to appreciate later, when he was working as a missionary and preparing to take a home leave as this narrative demonstrates in the model of Labov and Waletzky (1967) (Table 19.3).

As this narrative segment demonstrates, Hans feels that the sharing of faith was mutual between him and those with whom he worked as a missionary.

Relationships

The important persons named by Hans R. are his younger sister and his mother, throughout

his life. His sister visited him in the places where he worked as missionary. He stresses that his sister cared about him. His mother was, according to his memories, a faithful believer. The minister who gave him his first formal education on faith and his father are portrayed as harsh and rigid men, demanding obedience rather than engaging in dialogue. It seems that his image of God was first that of an authority he had to obey. Later, when working with the natives and visiting Jesuit spiritual exercises, this changed, and now God is for him the feeling of a presence, of someone being there for him (interact 16, see above). It does not involve a personal God, rather Hans feels like being in good hands, part of a network. He explains:

Yes, I try to capture this perhaps in an image, that I am in a network, not trapped but in good hands. Thus, I cannot, by all means, characterize God as a single person because perhaps more as the triune God, where the relationships are of extreme importance. Yes, and therefore relationship to God is important in this sense. It is not clear by all means what she looks like or what he or she says, but it is the sense, the sensation, and the conscious awareness in the head, or, for me, more a gut feeling that someone is simply there. Must not give any comments (smile) this is not important, only a yes, I am just here. No control,

²⁰This is a type of Catholic devotion that expresses its three fundamental principles of theology and practice: sacramentality, mediation, and communion. The presence of God, shown through Mary, is especially present in the visible and the material, grace is mediated through the church and humans such as Mary, and the saving encounter with God occurs corporately and ecclesially, causing one to be in communion with other Christians, of which Mary is a preeminent example (McBrien 1987).

but if you do not object, we go this way together.²¹ (interact 18)

Hans rejects the idea of an all-powerful God who is permanently involved in world affairs. Instead, his idea of God changes to a trustworthy transcendent counterpart which he does not wish to describe in tangible or concretistic images of God. Interestingly, he explicitly leaves open which gender God may have. Rather, he seeks for a circumscription which symbolically captures the intuitive and receptive quality of his faith. Hans may be a theologian who always includes some reservation in his faith, some notion that “God” is much more than his human thinking may be able to grasp, that “God” is always larger than we may imagine. This resonates with a theologically refined version of “atheistically believing in God.”²²

Hans has encountered crises, either when his health was threatened and he was close to death, or when he was suffering existential emotional ups and downs during Ignatian exercises²³: “And yes, thirty days exercises is also, that is a strain, because, it once was ups and downs, and sometimes from deep down, which has had a deep

psychological impact on me” (interact 24).²⁴ Also, he reports being disappointed by people he trusted (interact 28). He notes that he feels as if he had to apply for his position as priest again and again, and that he needed emotional support when feeling exhausted or disappointed when, for example, he was denied to stay in a position which he had appreciated (interact 34).

Hans is working at coming to terms with his relationship toward his father, whom he describes as being guided by control, discipline and obedience. He remembers how his father also could be protective. While he is critical toward his father, he seems to idealize his mother and his grandmother. He concedes, however, that his mother could also be strict and wonders if he has repressed these sides of her (interact 40). Persons outside his family stay anonymous (“the Dominican”), although he stresses that relationships are important to him.

Relationships give Hans’ life meaning, as he states, while stressing that he strives not to use other persons like, for instance, his sister (interact 54). When discussing values, he stresses mutual respect which is captured by fairness/reciprocity in the taxonomy of Graham et al. (2009). Mature faith is, to him, more process than achievement and varies at different phases in life (interact 68).

Hans R. sees the meaning of human life in depending on each other. Death means to him transformation to another level of existence, characterized by immediate understanding beyond words, and involving the essence of one’s being (interact 96).

²¹“Ja, ich versuche das in einem Bild vielleicht zu fassen, dass ich in einem Netzwerk nicht gefangen bin, sondern aufgehoben bin. So kann ich Gott nicht als Einzelperson unbedingt bezeichnen, weil vielleicht mehr als den dreifaltigen Gott, wo auch die Beziehungen äußerst wichtig sind. Ja und deshalb ist die Beziehung zu Gott in dem Sinne wichtig. Es ist nicht ausgesprochen unbedingt wie sie aussieht oder was er oder sie sagt, sondern es ist das Gefühl und das Empfinden und das Bewusstsein im Kopf vielleicht, aber bei mir mehr im Bauch, dass jemand einfach da ist. Muss nicht irgendwie einen Kommentar abgeben, (Lächeln) das ist nicht wichtig, ist nur, ja ich bin einfach da. Keine Kontrolle, aber wenn du nichts dagegen hast, gehen wir den Weg zusammen”.

²²It may be that Hans is here referring to the work of the theologian Dorothee Sölle, (e.g. Sölle, 1967), which inspired theological discussion in his generation.

²³This typically includes 30 days in retreat, often with solitude and silence, with meditations on different topics intended to bring participants into a closer relationship with God (cf. Gumz, Wall, & Grossman, 2003).

Conclusion

Taking it all together, we conclude that Hans’ case demonstrates the life of a person who has devoted himself to evaluating questions of meaning for many decades. His relationships

²⁴“Und ja, dreißig Tage Exerzitien ist auch, die schlauchen zwar, weil das waren nicht (unv. natianische Exerzitien?), weil mal war ein Auf und Ab und manchmal aus Tiefen geht, ne, und weil es auch dann psychisch mich dann sehr getroffen hat”.

with others are defined by his sense of calling, and his view of the Deity seems to have been shaped both by the relationship with his parents growing up (cf Rizzuto, 1979; Fonagy & Target, 2007) and the interactions he has had on the mission fields. He is complex and nuanced in his descriptions of his experience of faith. His faith has been enriched by those he has served. Particularly telling is his statement that he feels he has had to apply for his position of priest again and again. Straub and Arnold (2008, pp. 357–358) state in their interview study: “Missionaries and their actions cast a shadow that threatens to undermine their own ethical and moral claims. They are caught in an irredeemable, structural paradox.” Perhaps Hans has struggled with this paradox, while he persevered and continued to apply as priest in a true expression of commitment. The study of religious and spiritual atheists and non-theists deserves further research efforts; however, Hans’ FDI shows that one trajectory involves a quest mentored by spiritual traditions (Marian, Ignatian) within religion (Catholic).

Both Laura and Hans are theologians who reject an image of God as almighty ruler of the world but who, however, strive to keep their faith. Therefore, both are seeking for a different symbolization, which is not easy to capture and describe. Laura may hope for such a movement from concretistic activity to experience-based receptivity, Hans seems to experience it. Then their “quest” may be described more precisely as a calm and serene hope (Laura, the young student of theology) or certainty (Hans, the old priest and missionary) that there is a transcendent “Thou” who cares. In this sense, Hans and Laura evidence the “soft” Quest described at the beginning of the chapter in which they search and doubt within a bounded region. They remain committed to their respective traditions yet seek for faith by not accepting facile responses to existential questions. Their spirituality may perhaps be summarized by a quote from Alfred, Lord Tennyson: “There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds” (1983, p. 343).

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“Whether These Gifts Are from God, from Buddha, from the Universe, I Do Not Care, I Do Not Care at All...”— Quilt Spiritualities

20

Barbara Keller and Michele Wollert

Abstract

There are some labels for those lay persons in the religious field who create their individual “spirituality” by drawing on different traditions and practices: “accumulative heretics” (Streib, 1998), “composers of religion” (“Religionskomponisten,” Zulehner, 2001), “pilgrims” (Hervieu-Leger, 2004; Davie, 2001), “spiritual wayfarers” (“spirituelle Wanderer,” Bochsinger, Engelbrecht, & Gebhart, 2009). For their creations there are expressions such as “patchwork religion” (Wuthnow, 1998) or “religion à la carte” (Saroglou, 2006), “religious bricolage” (Luckmann, 1967, 1979) or “hybrid religions” (“Religionshybride,” Berger, Hock, & Klie, 2013). These definitions focus on the parts taken from or time spent within different traditions, taking the individual work of integration more or less into account. Here, we focus on the personal accounts of integrating varied experiences with different traditions of relating to the transcendent (see Chap. 1). We suggest to rather speak of “quilt” spirituality to capture the process of configuring individual appropriations of different traditions, centering on ongoing personal experience. We also want to stress that we consider the products to be individual works of art as well as articles of daily use, which may be altered as their creators go through their lives.

„Das sind Geschenke, ob von Gott, von Buddha, aus dem Universum ist mir völlig egal, ist mir völlig egal.“ (from interact 46, FDI with Marion N.). The interview transcript in full length for Marion N. and all other cases in this chapter are available in Appendix B (B.7 and B.8).

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“The Question If God Does Exist or Not Is Not a Question Which I Deliberately Had. I Never Formulated that Question, I Was Rather a Seeker...”¹—Marion N.

The case of Marion N. has been selected because she scores high on *openness to experience* and relatively high on the M-Scale. We would expect her to be interested in exploring religious options, in experience-oriented religiosity. Marion also represents a type of deconvert from her original tradition who embarks on a life-long quest (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009).

Introductory Biographical Outline

Marion N., 65 years old at the time of the interview, has left conventional Protestantism. Looking back, she characterizes her family as “more religious than spiritual” when she was 12 years old. Marion might be considered a “baby boomer” who studied (after a first marriage and caring for two small children) during the late sixties and early seventies of the last century (“68” being another label for her generation in West Germany). She was involved in demonstrations and wore the purple-dyed overalls (“lila Latzhosen”) which second wave feminists used to wear then in former West Germany. She has been married twice and has worked as a teacher. When the “esotericism boom”² started in West Germany, she went to an ashram in Poona, a large city in India with a spiritual center, guided by the then famous guru “Bhagwan” who was popular among German students looking for “alternative” ways of living. After having worked as a teacher, then in a hospice, she is now doing freelance work as a therapeutic clown in hospital settings, with children or elderly persons suffering with dementia. At the time of the

interview she is engaging in Zen practices. She has a close relationship to a female friend. Both women share projects and visions of what they consider an “art of aging.” She is taking care of her aged mother, “emotionally, not nursing.”

Mapping Marion N.’s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

We have reported (see Fig. 17.2) that Marion scores high on *openness to experience* and relatively high on *mysticism*. A more comprehensive comparison of Marion’s individual responses to the questionnaire with the means for the focus group of the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group in Germany is presented in Table 20.1.

Regarding the scales tapping into different facets of religion, Marion scores higher than the average of her reference group on all three subscales of the M-Scale, by one standard deviation for *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism*, and by half a standard deviation for (*religious*) *interpretation*. Her score on *attitudes toward God* is about average, and on the RSS she shows the interesting pattern of relatively high scores on *truth of texts and teachings (ttt)*, together with high scores on *xenosophia and interreligious dialogue*, with average scores on *fairness, tolerance and rational choice*. Her relatively high score on *ttt* corresponds to what we would expect from “equally religious and spiritual theists” in Germany.

On the “Big Five” personality scales, she shows high scores (besides *openness to experience*) on *extraversion* and *agreeableness*, while her scores on *neuroticism* and *conscientiousness* are a half a standard deviation below the average of her focus group. *Environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others* are the scales with high scores from Ryff’s measure of psychological well-being. Taken together, this profile describes a psychologically stable person with an outgoing, perhaps a little daring, attitude, invested in experience-based spirituality, who also seems to appreciate the tradition she grew up with.

¹„...die Frage, ob es Gott gibt oder nicht, die hat sich mir nicht bewusst gestellt. Ich habe die auch so nie gestellt, sondern ich war eher auf der Suche.“ (from interact 28).

²„Esoterikwelle“.

Table 20.1 Comparison of Marion N. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Marion N	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group in Germany	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	23	18.9	8.8
<i>Extraversion</i>	32	26.5	6.2
<i>Openness to experience</i>	46	35.9	5.6
<i>Agreeableness</i>	37	31.9	5.2
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	25	29.2	6.0
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)	148	112.6	27.1
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	60	44.1	10.8
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	38	27.4	7.9
<i>Interpretation</i>	50	41.1	11.7
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	26	25.6	3.8
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	31	25.3	5.3
<i>Personal growth</i>	34	29.5	3.1
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	33	27.0	3.7
<i>Purpose in life</i>	25	24.9	4.1
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	29	26.4	4.3
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)	51	53.4	7.5
Attitudes toward God	49	51.8	8.8
Religious Schema Scale			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	14	7.8	3.2
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	23	22.2	2.3
<i>Xenosophia/ inter-religious dialog</i>	22	17.4	3.2

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

Marion’s Semantic of “Spirituality”

In the questionnaire, Marion has given her definition of “spirituality”:

To be attentive and empathic in everyday life, be mindful of the moment, self-reflection, daily Zen-meditation, to be there for other creatures (without Mother Theresa-syndrome), to not kill and eat any animals, the middle way of Buddha and Buddhist psychology.³

She defines religion as:

Believing, not knowing, dogma, personalized God (which does not exist according to my view) church, a dead end, too little personal freedom, but new assertive approaches make discussion worthwhile. I welcome comprehensive dialogue.⁴

While critical of dogma, Marion appreciates innovative activities in the church and welcomes dialog. This mirrors her endorsement of her traditional religion along with her seeking and open attitude displayed in the scales reviewed above.

Marion’s ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential (Fig. 20.1) display “spirituality” as neutral, scorings situated exactly between the respective opposites. Assessments for “religion” for most adjectives overlap with “spirituality,” with the exception of “awful,” “rough,” “harsh,” “powerless,” “dark,” “old” assessed as stronger characterizing religion. This renders “spirituality” neutral, while “religion” seems to be evaluated more negatively. Perhaps, different from other German “more spiritual atheists and non-theists” who evaluated “spirituality” more favorable compared to “religion” (Figure A.10), Marion did not feel comfortable to evaluate “spirituality” at all.

Marion’s ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential (Fig. 20.2) also show, compared to the

³„Den Alltag aufmerksam u. emphatisch leben, Achtsamkeit in diesem Augenblick, Selbstreflektion, tägliche ZEN-Meditation, für andere Lebewesen da sein (ohne Helfersyndrom), kein Tier töten und essen, den mittleren Weg des Buddha und budd. Psychologie“.

⁴„Glauben-nicht wissen, Dogma, personifizierter Gott (gibt es m.E. nicht) Kirche- eine Sackgasse, zu wenig persönliche Freiheit, aber neue, offensive Ansätze lohnen eine Auseinandersetzung. Übergreifende Dialoge begrüße ich sehr.“

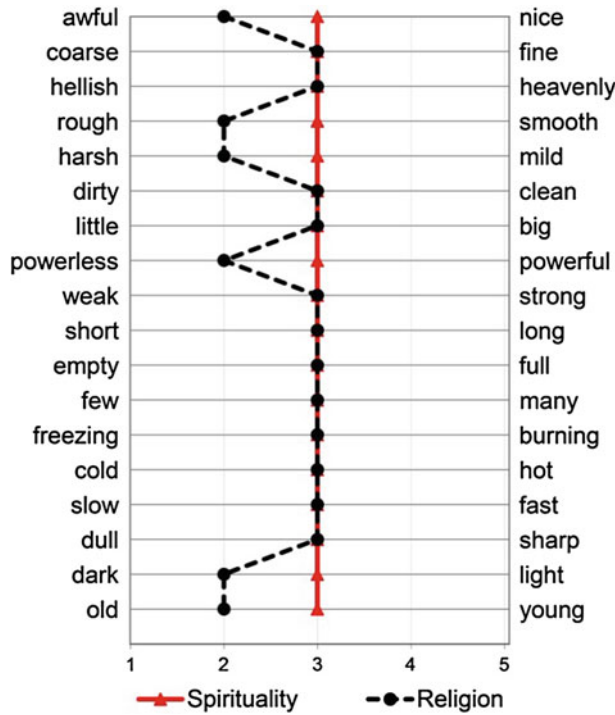


Fig. 20.1 Marion’s Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential

figure with the ratings of the German focus group (A.24), besides a tendency toward the middle, considerable overlap of the assessments of both “spirituality” and “religion.” “Spirituality,” however, is also characterized as more “creative,” “fascinating,” “moral,” more “complacent” than “religion,” and, interestingly, on this differential, even more definitely “old” than “religion,” while “religion” is characterized as more “flexible,” “oppressive,” “rigorous,” “demanding,” “traditional,” “boring,” “selfish,” “masculine,” “complacent,” and “weak.” Here, “spirituality” is evaluated not only neutral, but using the whole range of the scale. Positive and negative connotations are balanced, while religion has more negative, but less extreme, connotations.

Marion’s Faith Development

Based on the faith development evaluation of the interview with Marion, for which we have followed closely the *Manual for Faith*

Development Research, Marion’s interview shows predominantly a conjunctive faith or dialogical religious style. Her scorings span from mythic-literal faith and reciprocal style (found in *perspective taking/relationships*) to conjunctive faith or dialogical style (in the aspects *moral judgment, locus of authority, form of world coherence, symbolic functioning*). It seems that personal relationships are an area of early and more basic notions for Marion, while in other areas such as symbolic function, she shows a higher level of functioning according to FDI-evaluation (Fig. 20.3).

This corresponds to her scores in the Religious Schema Scale, where she shows high scores on *truth of texts and teachings*, supposedly related to stage two, mythic-literal faith or reciprocal religious style, and on *xenos*, which is supposed to indicate stage five or dialogical religious style. This may reflect a basic adherence to early commitments and forms of relating, while at the same time enjoying the wider perspective she has acquired.



Fig. 20.2 Marion’s Ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Summary of Marion’s Faith Development

Taken together, Marion makes the impression of a mature person who reflects on her faith development, acknowledging shortcomings and crises as well as blessings. The range of her FDI scorings and the high scores on the oppositional RSS-scales *mtt* and *xenos* point to what Streib (1998) has called “heterodyning,” the presence of more than one style.

evaluated. In the interview with Marion, it is particularly interesting that the additional ratings of “wisdom” and “mentalization” received high ratings. This corresponds to her attachment status which was rated as secure. Her statements on the problems in her family, which motivated her to seek help in psychotherapy and, later, her affiliations with spiritual traditions (see below) suggest that this may be an earned security.

Wisdom and Mentalization in Marion’s Interview

As detailed in Chap. 15, the evaluation of the faith development interview gains depth and profile when additional dimensions are

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Marion’s Interview

Attending to the narrative dynamics in Marion’s interview (see Chap. 16 for a methodological

discussion), it is noteworthy that early in the interview she makes clear how she wants to be understood:

What is important for me is that I always have been a creative and highly sensitive person and back then, when I was a child, this was more seen as a nuisance, people, or the grown-ups could hardly handle that, and therefore I find it important that I have created a space, not a virtual space, but a space for myself where I could be at home, so to speak. I find that important. External events, I grew up in a petty bourgeois home. When I am telling this with little emotion it does not mean that I am holding back, there are feelings about this, but these are no longer relevant. I have worked through those, therapeutically, and also spiritually, therefore I have to dig this up, these things are not present any more. (interact 10)⁵

She clearly focuses on her spiritual journey, informing the interviewer on how she sees herself and on her psychotherapeutic and spiritual experience. By letting the interviewer know how she wants to be understood she shows awareness of the possible response of being perceived as removed from her emotions.

Life Review

When Marion names her life chapters, she starts with a conventional taxonomy of developmental phases: “childhood, adolescence,” then names in a more idiosyncratic way a “chapter with my personality, kind of estranged, so to speak,” then combines the label of a life phase and an idiosyncratic label for the next chapter: “aging, getting back to myself, to me, as a person” (interact 4).

⁵„Also was für mich bedeutsam ist, dass ich immer ein kreativer hochsensibler Mensch war und zu meiner Zeit, als ich Kind war, war das eher störend, also die Menschen oder die Erwachsenen konnten kaum damit umgehen und darum finde ich das wichtig, dass ich mir einen Raum geschaffen habe, also einen sozusagen nicht virtuellen, aber einen eigenen Raum geschaffen habe, in dem ich dann zu Hause war sozusagen. Das finde ich bedeutsam. Äußere Ereignisse, also ich bin aufgewachsen in einem sehr kleinbürgerlichen Haus. Wenn ich das mit wenig Emotionen erzähle, liegt das nicht daran, dass ich da was zurückhalte, also dazu sind Gefühle da, durchaus, aber die sind nicht mehr relevant. Also ich habe die therapeutisch und in meinem Leben verarbeitet, u. a. eben auch spirituell, deswegen kann ich das auch, ich muss das hoch holen, das ist nicht mehr in mir präsent in dem Sinne.“

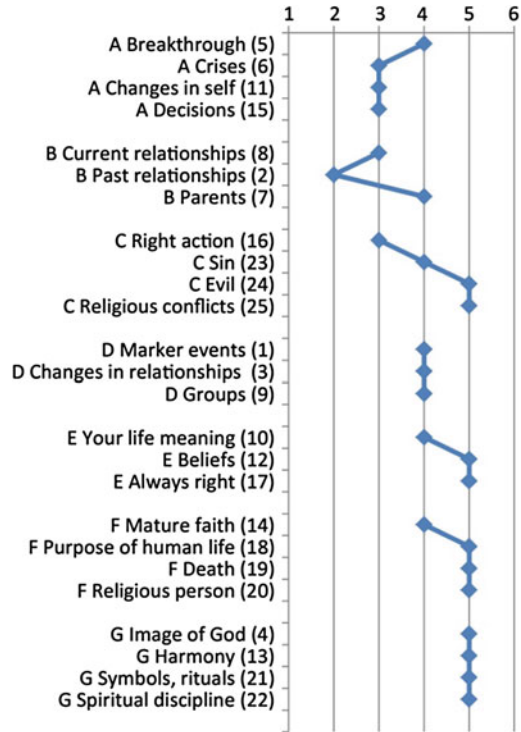


Fig. 20.3 Faith Stage Assignments to Marion’s Answers to the FDI Questions

Her combination of conventional life phases and personal issues points to her awareness of conventional trajectories and personal developmental issues. Attending to her response to the “life chapters” question in the faith development interview, we see that Marion sees her development as a movement toward finding her destination, toward individuation. Growing up in a petty bourgeois environment and being close to her mother, she married for the first time when she was 18 years old. In hindsight, she claims that she “fell into” marriage and family, and only later became aware that she had other tasks in life. She has known crises: to work through the separation from her first husband and father of her children she sought psychotherapeutic support. A second crisis occurred when her son had a mental illness at age 18 (interact 10). This seems to have been an existential challenge which led her to critically look at the situation of her family and to ask big questions of guilt and atonement, of what it means to be human (interact 12), motivating a spiritual

Table 20.2 Marion’s Narrative Segment “Surrender and Loving Myself”

Title	Surrender and loving myself
Abstract/orientation	<p>Many small experiences, but one is really special. When I was in Poona, it was about surrender, let’s say. There is a really big hall, for 5000 people, and I saw people of every nation, men and women, too, who did not show any signs of dependency and they went to the front after the event and they lay down or they bowed in front of a poster of Osho, on the floor, and I often had watched that...</p> <p>(Sicher viele kleine, aber es gibt einen ganz besonderen. Als ich da in Poona war, da sah ich, da ging es um diese Hingabe sage ich mal. Das ist eine riesige Halle wo 5000 Menschen reinpassen und ich sah Menschen jeglicher Nationen, auch Männer und Frauen, die keinerlei Abhängigkeiten zeigten, die nach dieser Veranstaltung, die dann da stattfand, nach vorne gingen und sich vor diesem, ich sag mal Poster, ich sag das mal absichtlich so platt, so einem Poster von Osho da auf die Erde legten und verneigten und das habe ich mir oft angeguckt...)</p>
Complication	<p>And when you are in this atmosphere you can easily get the feeling I have to watch myself, have to take care not to run after a guru and give up everything else. I had this feeling and I was fascinated anyway. Then I thought if these people radiate such self-confidence then something different must happen, and I waited a long time, and then I want, it is a nice story, and I do not want to go into the details, and then I dared and it was like the walk to Canossa, like there, in front, is the end of the world and when I do this and lay down and bow I will be dependent forever, I do not know on what, but I did it. There is something very personal which I need not go into...</p> <p>(und wenn man in dieser Atmosphäre ist, dann hat man schnell das Gefühl, ich muss aufpassen, dass ich hier nicht irgendwie so auf eine Weise hinter einem Guru herflattere und alles aufgabe oder so. Also ich hatte das Gefühl und es hat mich trotzdem fasziniert. Da dachte ich, wenn diese Menschen, die ein Selbstwertgefühl ausstrahlen, dann muss da was anderes passieren sozusagen und ich habe lange gewartet und dann will ich das, also das ist eine schöne Geschichte, aber die will ich jetzt nicht weiter ausführen, sondern eben halt nur so im Kern und irgendwann habe ich es gewagt und das war für mich wie ein Gang nach Canossa so psychisch gesehen, da vorne ist jetzt die Welt zu Ende und wenn ich das mache und mich dahinlege und mich verneige oder irgend so was dann, dann bin ich für immer und ewig abhängig von keine Ahnung was und ich habe das gemacht und das sind auch sehr persönliche Gefühle, das lassen wir jetzt mal außen vor...)</p>
Evaluation/attempts to solve	<p>But when I got up and turned around, there was something that had made an imprint on my life. And this was: the world keeps turning. No one had taken notice. I had thought everyone would stare, here is she walking, but everything around me just went on and for humankind nothing much had happened</p> <p>(Aber als ich aufstand und mich umdrehte, da gab es etwas, was mein Leben von da an geprägt hat und das war, die Welt ging weiter, niemand hatte mich zur Kenntnis genommen, vorher hatte ich so ein Gefühl, alle gucken jetzt, wie die dahingeht, also um mich herum ging alles weiter wie bisher und es war eigentlich für die Menschheit gar nichts passiert)</p>
Resolution	<p>All of a sudden I realized that I had had an encounter with myself, and to me, this is, if am allowed to use that expression, something divine also</p> <p>(Und ich wusste mit einem Mal, ich war mir selbst begegnet und das ist für mich, wenn wir diesen Begriff schon gebrauchen wollen, auch göttlich.)</p>
Coda	<p>From then on I have loved myself</p> <p>(Von da an habe ich mich selber gern gehabt) (interact 40)</p>

quest. Later, living in an ashram in India had an impact on her development, and then, again some years later, leaving teaching and starting to work as a clown in health care settings (interact 28).

A third crisis, some years prior to the interview, was related to the loss of her grandchild due to the separation of the parents. Marion tells that this made her turn to a church for support, and she

Table 20.3 Marion's Narrative Segment "Celebrating Being an Old Fool"

Title	Celebrating being an old fool
Orientation	Genius locus, the initiation of an old crow or of an old fool, we went to that place, to celebrate being old, the two of us, and were you have not, and the correct expression is genius loci. I do not want to lecture you, but in poetry this is the genial location, were you, well, a place with a spirit, translated, and we wanted to create something sacred, something beautiful, and the funny thing is, in that moment my belly started to rumble (Also Genius Locus, die Initiation einer alten Krähe bzw. einer alten Närrin sagt, wir sind an einen Ort gefahren und haben das Alt sein gefeiert, wir beide und das, wo man das dann nicht, eigentlich heißt dieser Begriff ja Genius Loci, also ich will Sie nicht bevormunden, aber in der Dichtkunst ist das der geniale Ort, wo man eben, na ja eben übersetzt ein genialer Ort und (Lachen) wir wollten nun das auch alles ganz schön heilig gestalten, also so einfach schön gestalten so und der Witz ist, in dem Moment grummelte es bei mir im Bauch)
Complication	Everything was sacred and I needed to find a toilet (laughing). (alles war heilig und ich musste zum Klo (Lachen))
Evaluation/Attempts to solve	And this is the fool, it is the fool who finds this funny, but also friendly and funny in a loving way (So, und das ist dann die Närrin, das ist die Närrin die das so komisch findet, aber auch so freundlich und liebevoll komisch)
Resolution	I would never think "now the ritual is ruined" or something like that, I just thought, "yes, this is exactly what is also part of it all" (Also ich käme nie auf die Idee, das ganze Ritual ist im Eimer und so was, sondern ich habe nur gedacht, jawoll das genau gehört dazu.)
Coda	And this is what belongs to a whole life and to me this feels liberating, again, and I will tell this story until I am 90, provided I get this old. (Und das ist das was eben zum ganzen Leben gehört und das finde ich wieder mal befreiend und das werde ich, wenn ich solange lebe, noch mit 90 erzählen.) (interact 136)

began to pray again. What saved her, however, was her work as a clown, who turns to the sick and demented, giving love and laughter, and who, to her understanding, is a representation of the idea of the fool (interact 46). The religious identity narratives identified in her interview focus on her experiences in India (see Table 20.2) and on her way of being spiritual as an old fool (see Table 20.3).

Narrative Segments

To the question exploring breakthrough experiences Marion responds with a narrative structured according to Labov and Waletzky (1967), with orientation, complication, evaluation and resolution, as shown in Table 20.2. As this narrative segment demonstrates, Marion centers on her change of perspective from concern with her

appearance in the eyes of others to her own individual development.

Relationships

When asked to discuss relationships which were important to her development, she responds: "Yes, in any case my mother. And then I did not engage in relationships. Excepting, not, in a spiritual sense. I have never, ever adored anyone, relationships, yes, but not in a spiritual sense, there I was always alone on my way." (interact 14).⁶ Later, she explains that her second marriage ended when her husband did not share her

⁶„Ja also auf jeden Fall meine Mutter. So und dann habe ich mich nicht auf Beziehungen eingelassen. Also außer, also jetzt nicht im spirituellen Sinne. Ich hatte niemals, ich habe niemals jemanden angehimmelt, auf Beziehungen ja, aber nicht im spirituellen Sinne, da war ich immer alleine auf dem Weg.“

spiritual interests and that her spiritual journey led her to the (non-sexual but close) relationship with another woman which she enjoys at the time of the interview (interact 18). In her view, situations have had more of an impact on her than people (interact 16).

Values and Commitments

It is important to her, since she gave up work in the hospice, that she has no obligations to groups or causes but has the freedom to decide where she wants to invest time and energy. While she strives to be mindful, she concedes that she is not a saint and prone to failure. Human rights are important to her—she thinks about the Ten Commandments and comments that she would not accept all of these. She displays a harm-care orientation (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009) (interact 96).

Religion and World View

Asked if she considers herself to be religious, spiritual, a believer or if she would prefer a different description, Marion comments that she feels that for her these concepts converge. She uses the traditional figure of the “fool,” which, for her, is involved in how she understands her work as a clown:

The traditional fool has all three elements and I would burn it down to this, or actually, it is an extension. I am allowed to be curious, to get away with everything, everything is there, and at the same time I am mindful and loving even with rough jokes, and therefore the concept of the fool is the figure, which, in a spiritual religious sense, is a unification of all this.⁷

Marion describes her practices of Zen meditation as “reduced to the elementary, no-frills”

(interact 78). Rituals, however, are important to her, and she displays her view in another narrative.

Marion plays with language here, “Lokus” being used in Germany as an old-fashioned expression for “toilet.” She contrasts her spiritual and ritualistic aspirations and dignified Latin vocabulary with the mundane condition of needing to use the toilet. Thus, she illustrates that her approach to “spirituality” includes very earthy aspects.

Marion’s perspective on death and afterlife is interesting because she is very aware of mortality. She does not believe in an afterlife, argues that she is open to what she perhaps cannot grasp yet, and claims not to be afraid of death. She has already made arrangements to be buried in a forest which serves as a cemetery, at the roots of a tree. Telling this, she comments that this is how she feels about these ultimate questions now, that it may be different when she is getting there. Her answer to the question on how to solve religious conflicts is very practical. She suggests that this would have to be a bottom-up process. If every person in the world would talk, like in the interview that is about to end, for about two hours about God and the world, that might promote peace in the world, adding that she doubts this to happen, but enjoys the fantasy (interacts 158, 160). Her fantasy for solving religious conflicts shows her, albeit skeptical, belief in dialog.

General Interpretation of Marion’s “Spiritual” Journey

Taking it all together, we conclude that Marion’s case might be a biography typical of the generation of ‘68 in Germany: leaving a conventional life to embark on a quest that includes political engagement (demonstrations) as well as inner development, nowadays called “spiritual” (Ponona, Zen). Perhaps she might be called an “accumulative heretic” as suggested by Streib (1998) (see also Streib et al., 2009). The “accumulative heretic” describes a person who engages in different communities, keeping something valuable from each affiliation with which they have been involved. Marion states: “I am still a

⁷„Ja, ich würde wenn dann alle drei nehmen und z. B. in dieser traditionellen Närrin sind alle drei Elemente drinnen und wenn dann würde ich das darauf reduzieren oder eigentlich ist es für mich eine Erweiterung. Dann darf ich neugierig sein, mir alles gestatten, da steckt alles drinnen und gleichzeitig gehe ich achtsam und liebevoll selbst mit den derben Scherzen um und darum ist für mich dieser Narrenbegriff im spirituellen, religiösen Sinne die Figur, die für mich das alles vereint.“ (interact 122).

sannyasin with heart and soul, not dependent on any guru, but I have grown beyond that” (interact 32).⁸ It is striking that Marion reports that her second marriage ended when her husband could not understand her spiritual interests. She seems to have put her spiritual development first, and have chosen relationships accordingly. Her disengagement from hospice work and turn to very personal work on aging corresponds to Fowler’s conception of a turn inward in later midlife (Fowler, 1981, p. 274), and resonates with C.G. Jung’s ideas on individuation (Jung, 1971). The religious styles-conception of faith development helps us to understand the co-existence of different ways of being “spiritual” acquired at different times and places in her life and part of a pattern she continues to work on.

“I Am Religious, but I Don’t Know What My Religion Is.”⁹—Julia D.

The case of Julia D. has been selected because Julia is typical for a person who, although she has made an exit from one type of belief, also incorporates aspects of it into her current belief system. In the context of this chapter, Julia D. represents a person who combines notions and rituals of the Catholicism she grew up with the Wiccan tradition in which she sought training as an adult.

Julia D. is a 43-year-old American female born in northeast United States who is living in one of the northern states at the time of the interview. She is in school working to complete her bachelor’s. She identifies herself as a pagan in the Wicca tradition, although she has been a member of the Catholic Church in the past. Currently Julia D. describes herself as “more spiritual than religious.”

Table 20.4 Comparison of Julia D. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Julia D.	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theists” focus group in the USA	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	19	20.6	8.6
<i>Extraversion</i>	27	29.7	6.7
<i>Openness to experience</i>	36	33.3	6.6
<i>Agreeableness</i>	26	32.3	6.1
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	28	32.4	7.3
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)	134	119.9	23.7
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	51	44.1	10.2
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	31	28.7	7.8
<i>Interpretation</i>	52	47.4	8.7
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	28	27.0	4.1
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	26	24.5	4.6
<i>Personal growth</i>	29	29.4	3.7
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	26	27.9	4.4
<i>Purpose in life</i>	29	26.8	4.5
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	27	25.7	4.7
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)	56	60.6	8.5
Attitudes toward God	73	75.1	20.8
Religious Schema Scale			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	13	13.4	5.9
<i>Fairness, tolerance & rational choice</i>	23	21.8	3.0
<i>Xenosophia/ inter-religious dialog</i>	22	18.7	3.9

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

⁸„...ich bin mit Leib und Seele Sannyasin nicht abhängig von irgendeinem Guru, aber ich habe mich darüber hinaus entwickelt.“

⁹From interact 205 of Julia D.’s FDI.

Mapping Julia D.’s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

As detailed in Chap. 17, *openness to experience* and *mysticism* have been used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig. 17.2), Julia is located in the upper right-hand segment, which indicates her higher than average scores in both openness to experience and mysticism.

A more comprehensive comparison of Julia’s individual responses to the questionnaire with the means for the focus group of the “more religious than spiritual, not atheist and non-theist” (FG 3) is presented in Table 20.4. She was near the mean for her focus group on the vast majority of measures. However, a few differences are noteworthy: Julia is more than one standard deviation below the mean on *agreeableness* in the NEO-FFI, and she is almost one standard deviation above the mean on the *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog* measure of the Religious Schema Scale.

Julia’s Semantic of “Spirituality”

In the questionnaire, Julia has given her definition of “spirituality”:

Spirituality is internally driven - the need to connect with Deity comes from within the Seeker; connecting with the Divine for one’s own sake regardless of the outcome.

This shows that Julia’s understanding of “spirituality” contrasts to her definition of “religion:”

Religion is a structured way to worship –constructed by humans to define and dictate what is believed, and how that belief should be expressed.

On both the Osgood and the Contextual Semantic Differentials for the “more spiritual than religious” focus group, the spirituality line is to the right of the religion line, small overlaps notwithstanding. In Julia’s case, she shows some differences on both differentials. Her Osgood Semantic Differential shows that she views spirituality as being more “slow,” “short,” and “old” than religion, a pattern not exhibited by the overall group. On the Contextual Semantic Differential, she views

spirituality as being more “dwelling,” and “complacent” than religion, again in a pattern not exhibited by the focus group (for comparison, see Appendix A, Figures A.7 and A.21). Interestingly, she rated religion and spirituality the same on several measures. For example, on the Osgood differential, they were rated the same on the “harsh-mild,” “dirty-clean,” “little-big,” “powerless-powerful,” “weak-strong,” and “empty-full” measures, among others. Julia’s overall responses on this scale may be seen in Fig. 20.4.

Her Contextual Semantic Differential responses do not tend to parallel each other, as noticed in Fig. 20.5. This suggests that the way Julia views the words “spirituality” and “religion” is different from the central tendency in her focus group.

Julia’s Faith Development

Based on the faith development evaluation of the interview with Julia D., for which we have followed closely the *Manual for Faith Development Research*, Julia’s interview shows predominantly a synthetic-conventional style (Fowler, 1981; Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004). This rating may reflect her religiosity, which draws on intermingling Catholicism and Wiccan traditions.

The faith development evaluation of Julia’s interview corresponds to her scores in the Religious Schema Scale by showing her near-average. Responses on the three sub-scales do not pull her strongly toward mythic-literal, individuated-reflective, or conjunctive faith styles. Her almost one standard deviation above the mean response on the *xenos* subscale, however, may set her, again, apart from the average “more spiritual than religious” person in this focus group, and, perhaps, point to a different profile of development (see Chap. 24).

However, attending to Julia’s single responses to the faith development questions sorted by aspects of faith, Julia appears to be less developed in perspective taking, social awareness, and symbolic function than in the other aspects. Figure 20.6 shows the differences in her ratings. She appears to be more developed in how she

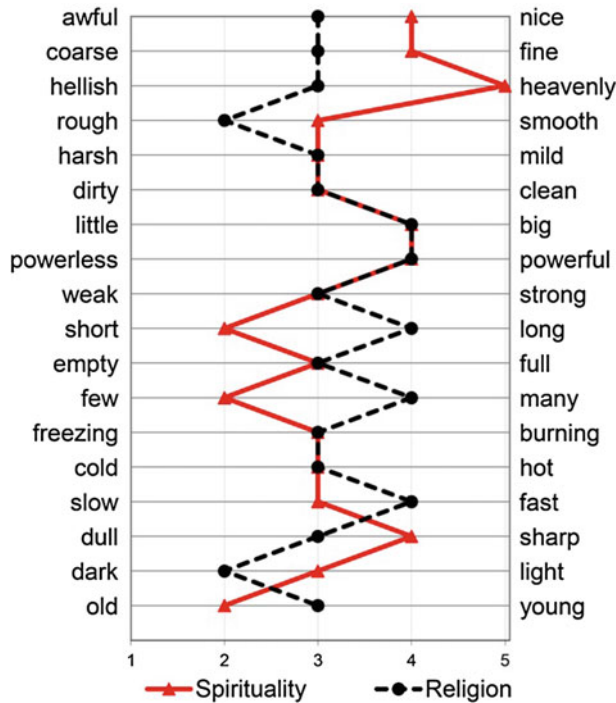


Fig. 20.4 Julia’s Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential

thinks about existential questions than in how she deals with others. As can be seen, she scores at the individuative-reflective level on several questions, but her perspective-taking is at the mythic-literal level.

Summary of Julia’s Faith Development

Taken together, Julia’s faith development aspects show a higher appreciation and sophistication concerning ideas about faith than in applying those ideas to other people. That may indicate her willingness to try unconventional religious expressions such as Wiccan practice. However, her responses to several questions about sin and evil show that she still has some of the conventional views to which she was exposed while growing up.

Wisdom and Attachment in Julia’s Interview

As detailed in Chap. 15, the evaluation of the faith development interview gains depth and profile when additional dimensions are

evaluated. In the interview with Julia, it is particularly interesting that her attachment was rated as “insecure/avoidant” (Keller & Streib, 2013). As she mentions in her interview, she cut off contact with her parents at one point. She seems to have an average view of herself, and she is not extremely forgiving of her father. This type of attachment would have a definite effect on Julia’s religious journey (Kirkpatrick, 1992). On the wisdom criteria, Julia seemed average in most respects, but she appears above average in looking at the developmental dimensions of her life and value-relativism (Staudinger, Smith, & Baltes, 1994). This helps us understand Julia’s “spiritual” biography. She did not rely solely on the religion of her caregivers due to her attachment not being secure, but gravitated toward New Age spirituality (Granqvist, Gransson, & Hagekull, 2009). Luhrmann (1989) places those who practice magic under the New Age broad cultural ideology, further delineating them into four broad groups such as Julia’s: witchcraft, Western Mysteries, ad hoc ritual magic, and non-initiated paganism. Julia’s appreciation of

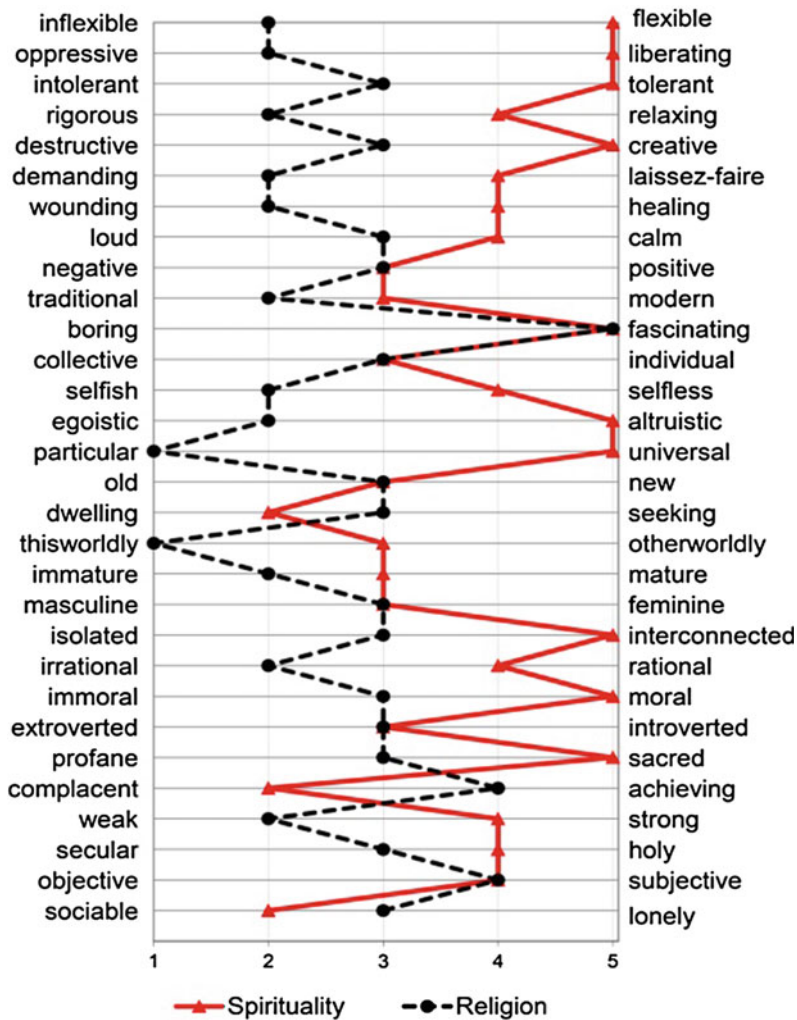


Fig. 20.5 Julia’s Ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential

value-relativism can help explain her willingness to try out pagan religious expressions.

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Julia’s Interview

Attending to the narrative dynamics in Julia’s interview (see Chap. 16 for a methodological discussion), it is noteworthy that she uses the temporal method of giving her autobiography, according to a cultural concept (Bluck & Habermas, 2000). The chapter titles are location-based, another common way of organizing narratives.

Life Review

When asked about her life chapters, Julia gives them four state names: one in the Northeast, two in the South, and the one she currently lives in.¹⁰ She ties them to different developmental milestones in her life, however:

And what stands out I guess, I just, I moved, I was born in a [State E, northeast], and then I moved to

¹⁰One of these Southern states is famous for its Cajun/Creole population (French combined with African influences), which is known for dealing in voodoo/mojo/gris-gris. The state she lives in has a substantial pagan community, as is discussed later in this chapter.

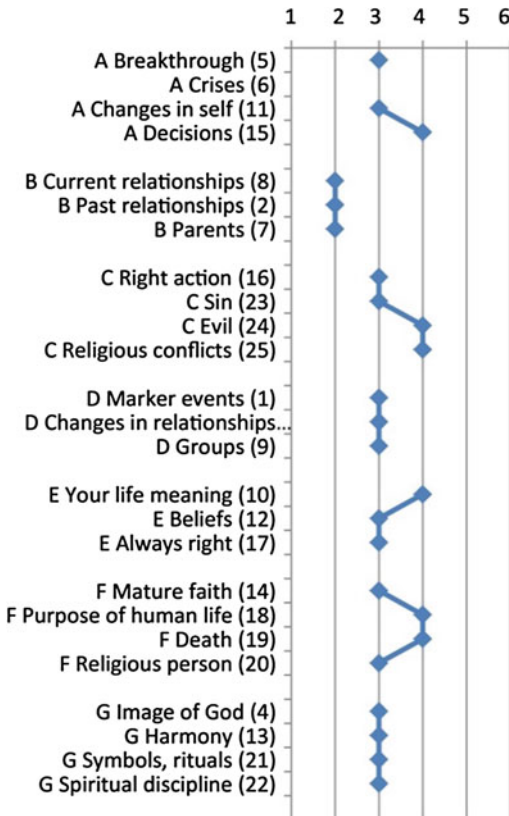


Fig. 20.6 Julia's FDI Ratings in the Different Aspects of Faith

[State A in the south of the USA], kind of a critical time you know, I was like seven, which you know just starting school and that kind of developmentally, I guess a significant time of awareness, and then I was there until I was in my early '20 s. Then I moved to [State D], which was very formative as far as independence from my parents. I lived in the big city, I lived in [City B] which was (...), it is a big city by any standard especially from [State A], you know. And then [State C in the north of the USA] was a big...I guess I got here when I was 26, so that was kind of the beginning of your real adulthood in a lot of respects, so that's how I would kind of divide that. (interact 21)

The question about exploring “breakthrough experiences” elicits a narrative in her FDI, focusing on her experience of being one with everything during meditation while being an initiate. She seems be aware of her problems of giving words to what for her has been a breakthrough experience, meaningful to her but for others perhaps “crazy,” as is shown in Table 20.5.

Relationships

Here we attend to how Julia discusses her relationships and her development. Focusing on content, we see that Julia mentions several relationships that have been influential in her life. Most of them are in her family, although she

Table 20.5 Julia's Narrative Segment “Being One with Everything”

Title	Being one with everything
Orientation	But in meditation I was in a coven, I think it was the (...) witch and you spent a year and a day in training with a particular group coven—usually it is the priest and priestess lead the group, and you have to train with them for a year and a day, which is a year and a day of once a week discussions, there is assigned readings, they had to write papers; it is...it is hard to get into, easy to get out of is what they, you know, that is our joke it's an anti-cult and so in a meditation during the outer court ritual I was again an initiate
Complication	I had an experience where I was one with everything, I mean it just was so brief, it could not have lasted more than a split second but it was a divine
Evaluation/attempts to solve	I do not know what level of connection there was, I do not know which divine it was, I do not know if I just was in its presence or if it was inside of me, it does not matter, I am sure. But in that moment I knew everything, you know. And it just was—it was like a lightning bolt flash, but I can remember being in that moment still and I felt my whole being expanded and contracted at the same time—I do not even—
Resolution	It sounds crazy but it was deeply meaningful for me
Coda	And I did not take anything away from it, it's not like I felt like I was (...), I felt the drive home, I felt the work that day—you know like nothing changed on the mundane level, but I just- it was moving. (interact 39)

does reference a few people who are not related. She mentions her deceased parents, although she was estranged from both of them for five years at one point, and her father for longer. Her ex-husband is also a significant figure from the past, as well as a couple of her mother’s older women friends. In addition, there was a music teacher who was also a nun that Julia gravitated to as a child. She has a brother with whom she still is close, and she mentions her husband and her extended Irish Catholic family out East as being of special import in the present. Julia’s children are also crucial relationships, although she finds them at times to be annoying, and she has several close friends.

In Julia’s account of relationships, we may regard as striking that she speaks a bit deprecatingly about the pagan community of which she is a part:

They love me, but they all (look), you know it’s a lot of fat girls in broom stick skirts and guys with long hair, even though they are bald on top, and you know, just Google “pagan festival,” and that’s what we all look like the world over . . . We have our yearly gather once a year . . . so I identify with that that (...) group, but they irritate me at the same time. (interact 79)

This may be reflective of her lower than average score on the *agreeableness* scale.

Values and Commitments

When asked about her values and commitments, Julia states that religion is a very strong value for her. However, she expresses this in an irreverent way:

My commitment to exploring religion is important to me even though I’m now forbidden to major in religion by my husband who I (giggling) love and he- I understand his point. I wanted to go to college and major in religion and get a Master’s in Divinity. There’s a super hippie seminary right in the next town. I think it’s hippie; it’s probably not. But it’s not Baptist you know (giggling) or Lutheran . . . Because I have always been attractive to people who seem to be hurting, I don’t (laughing) seek some help, I don’t maybe, I don’t know what that means. . . And so that’s what lead me to - to be a chaplain because I thought why I should, well, I should learn how to do it right, and I really

wanted to be an interfaith chaplain. My husband (*not wanting me to finish?*) up a \$60,000 master’s degree to work as a chaplain where you can at best make 25 grand a year wasn’t helpful, and he is right (laughing), you know, like that. (interact 101)

Julia’s other commitment is to her family. As she states, “helping my family stay stable, then, that is a big commitment, that’s an everyday thing, that’s important too” (interact 105).

Julia has quite a bit to say about her moral convictions. Her first discourse sounds like the Hippocratic Oath:

Well, you’ve got to look at harm. To me, if your action harms someone, but you feel good from that temporarily, then that’s absolutely prob- you know, you made a wrong choice, and it’s easy to rationalize actions . . . Actions can be wrong. And they can be right. Harm is the measure. Or whom does it serve? Who’s being served by that action? That’s another good question to ask. (interacts 155, 157)

This is a direct exposition of the harm/care foundation listed in moral foundations theory, and it puts her at the liberal end of the spectrum (Graham et al., 2009). She believes that people can agree on some moral opinions, such as “murder is bad” (interact 159) or that hunger is wrong, and we need to preserve life. She talks quite a bit about the death penalty and how she disagrees with it. She reminisces that she even had a scrapbook about Gary Gilmore (a convicted American killer who was executed in 1977 following the reinstatement of the death penalty) when she was young, much to the concern of her parents.

Julia’s definition of “sin” is fairly traditional, and she talks a bit about her grandmother’s way of looking at it. Her summary of her own view is as follows:

Sin is something- sin is an act for which you must atone. So penance- you have to be sorry; I know that there is a list of sin, but I think any- basically any action that is craven, that is purely feeding the will of a pers- the want of a person and not the will, an act that causes you or someone else, that causes you or someone else to become separated from the divine. (interact 219)

Although Julia says she does not believe in evil in the Christian sense, her personal definition does not stray very far from Christian belief:

Because there are people in the world and that people are what make evil...people are what makes things evil. It's actions, it's the Holocaust, it's – it's the desire for prophets for people that's evil. If you are willing to hurt or step on a person to further your own gain. For just to gain to further your own ego, that is evil. There are of course degrees of evil; like the (...) there is without darkness we wouldn't have anything to measure light by. (interact 229)

Religion and World View

Julia's religious self-identification is distinctive in that she considers herself religious, but not in the traditional sense. She speaks about her beliefs to others in ways to cause them to not explore her beliefs too thoroughly:

When people ask if I'm religious I say "yes," even though I am positive that what I mean isn't what they mean, but it shuts them up, you know. . . . And then they keep talking about their own . . . I don't want to hear about your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ you know like- Although I am a huge fan of Him, that's probably a cheeky way to put it, but of deeply religious people, and I'm still fascinated by nuns. (interacts 99, 101)

She confesses she does not like the "McDonald's kind of spirituality" (interact 197), even though she has an ironic awareness of how she combines what appeals to her from the different traditions. She intersperses her pagan beliefs with a Christian prayer. She switches between monotheistic and polytheistic language in her expression of her viewpoint:

I mean I practice it like it's so (amazing?), but I believe it is important to have a form. I like the idea of rote prayers; I think that there is power in words that have been used by millions of people for hundreds of years. I think that-that words and things gain power from that. You know, that collective devotion of people, people add to that, when you say the Saint Francis prayer you feel something in your body, and that is because: a) it's a beautiful prayer, b) it's asking for the right things of the gods. You can't just- you can't ask God for crap that you can get yourself. In the Craft, we say, "Where are the hands of Gods? At the end of your own arms." Meaning if you want the gods to do something, you have to meet them more than halfway. (interact 201)

However, her status is best summarized when she finally states, "I am religious, but I don't know what my religion is" (interact 205).

Julia is affiliated with a pagan group, and she identifies herself as a witch. She is not as involved with that community as she was at one time, though:

I think probably 10 years ago I would have very strongly identified as a (...) witch and the only reason why I would have really even talked to you about. . . . But it's less often now, and in fact I- it's one of the last things I tell people, you know I tell- I normally would not, "hey I'm a witch" (laughing). . . . If you saw me, you'll be just be like, oh no, because I'm just like this chunky, middle-aged woman that lives in the suburbs and drives a minivan (laughing), completely you would not. Like I don't have any tattoos or piercings or- I'm kind of square looking. . . . (interact 79)

Julia rather jokingly also defines herself as a Socialist, but she less flippantly identifies herself with being a writing tutor at her college.

Julia's use of symbols and rituals is also a mixture of different religious beliefs and practices.

We all go to this very remote state park it's a group camp. In a state park and it is like 20 miles off the trail. It's fabulous out there is no street light, there is no airplane, there is no cell phone reception nothing, and they always bring a little bit of weed up to that, and I will get naked outside by myself and I do the bath ritual I will have like my one little puff Then you shower outside, and let the sun, you know, dry you off and the wind and you are all by yourself and you are on the blankets which is important to bring and I will meditate and I pray and sometimes it makes me cry. (interact 115)

She admits that she is still a bit Catholic, even though she also says she is a pagan:

In times of crises am still a bit of a Catholic somewhere down inside. Lots of pagan are Catholic, ex-Catholics, maybe is all that chanting and incense, mass and rituals, but maybe it is just because there are so many damn Catholics, but they are. There is a part of me that is still very drawn to want pray the Rosary I have my Mom's rosary, it's a beautiful cut glass one and...but I don't pull out the rosary and make a novena or even just pray the rosary because for the same reason why I don't; because I'm lazy. (interact 123)

Julia’s interest in things Catholic does not limit itself to wanting to pray the rosary. She is still very interested in nuns, even fantasizing about becoming one herself one day. She describes an incident in which she really pushed the Catholic boundary:

I don’t think it’s blasphemy for me to pray the Rosary. I went to a funeral Catholic mass, and I took communion even though that is a sin to them. They think that is very-very bad, there is no witness . . . like alarm that goes off when you walk in church where it says “this person had communion.” But technically by the rule for the Catholic Church, I cannot take communion, but I did, and it was beautiful, and so I was kind of cheeky and blasphemous in that way. (interact 217)

As a pagan, Julia participates in a Gardnerian ritual¹¹ every month at the full moon that is based on universal symbols. She thought that mojo and gris-gris were interesting in the southern state she lived in, but she sees prayer and meditation as being most important.

Julia’s ideas of the afterlife are again a mixture of traditions. What is most important to her is that she believes life does go on:

What I hope happens is that we can continue with our- we can continue maybe the work of our life if we have a higher calling in our life, but we can continue that work without the hindrance of the body, but the souls or the spirit or the mind potential remains. And you can add to this collective pool of energy and idea and inspiration and thought if you made it through your life without like say you only got half way there. Maybe you get to do some of that for a while, and then you get to come back do it again. It is kind of what I hope happens. (interact 189)

General Interpretation of Julia’s “Spiritual” Journey

Taking it all together, we conclude that Julia’s case demonstrates a partial deconversion from the Catholic faith to the pagan belief system.

¹¹This is a form of Wicca that comes from the practice of Gerald Gardner, an English Witch who founded contemporary witchcraft as a religion. It includes an emphasis on the Goddess and claims that modern witchcraft lies in an unbroken heritage of organized paganism (Guiley, 2008).

However, she keeps pieces of her former religious ideas. Her trajectory could be described as a heretical exit, according to the schema of Streib et al. (2009). She was exposed to pagan practices in above-mentioned southern state, and her atheist ex-husband piqued her interest in alternative practices when he bought her tarot cards (interact 35). Since pagan practices are not looked upon favorably in the South, in general, Julia did not begin truly embracing that belief system until she moved to the northern state she now lives in, which is called “Paganistan,” a term coined by an anthropologist in that pagan community (interact 37). One gets the sense that she has not switched to paganism, but rather combines pagan and Catholic practices, joining rituals of both communities as she feels the need to do so. While from a strict Christian perspective her engagement with paganism might be seen as fall from faith, she herself does not seem to see it that way, although she seems to be aware of how devout Catholics might see it. She does talk about commonalities between the two ways of being religious, and she talks about how many Catholics become pagan. After conducting a study of contemporary witchcraft in England, Luhrmann (1989) states: “My findings suggest that the people who turn to modern magic are searching for powerful emotional and imaginative religious experience, but not for a religion per se” (p. 337). This may well describe what is going on in Julia’s case, who appreciates, as common elements of Catholic and pagan practices, “chanting, incense, mass, ritual.” For Julia, the journey is what is important, rather than the organized belief system. That is perhaps why she is religious without knowing what her religion is.

Conclusion

Quilt religiosity might build on the concept of accumulative hereticism. From a developmental perspective, it might be seen as covering, by definition, also a range of stages of faith (Fowler) or religious styles (Streib), ranging from very early or basic to more sophisticated. We see such

a range in both case studies, spanning from two to four in Julia's, from two to five in Marion's case. For further evaluation of faith development, we look at the most frequent stage assignment, which is three for Julia. Fowler et al. (2004) discussed "simple moral relativism" for moral development and "simple and uncritical pluralism" for the aspect of world coherence (pp. 42 and 54). Here, this may refer to Julia's way of adding different practices in her life, e.g. being Catholic (going to mass) with the Catholics and meditating with the witches. That she states to be religious without knowing what her religion is indicates the implicit character of stage three. However, there are indications of individuated-reflective faith, and Julia's reservation to present herself as identified with the pagan tradition may point to some kind of moratorium or space she needs to reflect on her individual way of being religious.

Marion, whose responses in the FDI were most frequently rated as stage five, seems to be more aware of what she has kept and what she has grown beyond when she revisits the traditions with which she has lived. As the narrative featuring the old fool demonstrates, she cultivates a sense of irony and an awareness of the mundane. This reflects multiple perspective taking and a humble approach to her own way of crafting her spiritual practice.

This chapter shows that both women are not only combining, but interweaving, elements of different traditions linked to different times and places in their lives when they create their personal ways of relating to the transcendent. Thus, while working on their own spiritual "quilts" they work on their own "spiritual" identities by adding to the traditions they draw on.

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“Experimenting with Ideologies...”— A “More Spiritual Than Religious” Zen Buddhist

21

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Abstract

Identity is complex; the cultural milieu of possible worldviews, and accompanying identifying terminology said to represent such a worldview, even more so. Just as this book demonstrates, a *simple* term such as “spirituality” can refer to a multiplicity of understandings, which may even wholly contradict one another. In our present study, Brian C. has found comfort “experimenting with ideologies,” and identity tinkering over the course of his life. As his case will demonstrate, the process of identity formation is exemplified by its disunity. To this point, Brian identifies as an atheist Zen Buddhist, who is not only “spiritual,” but also “religious.” Raised in a religion (Christianity) he identified with until adolescence, Brian had been a practicing Buddhist for several years at the time of the interview.

“I Think It’s also Important to Recognize that Actions Have Consequences and in Buddhism That’s the Concept of Karma.”¹—Brian C

The case of Brian C. has been selected because Brian represents an individual who, while rejecting traditional Western belief orientated

religious frameworks, nevertheless finds guidance in life through Buddhist practices and doctrine. Moreover, Brian is an excellent example of an individual who is comfortable tinkering with his own identity, and identity labels.

In the context of this chapter, Brian represents a typical worldview for a Zen Buddhist, as the concept of a god is wholly rejected. While strictly speaking Zen is aconceptual, the term “worldview” is not inappropriate as within Zen Buddhism there is an appreciation for ritual and certain transcendental ideas such as karma, and other life guiding concepts. This was the reason to select Brian C. for an extensive case study.

¹From interact 88. The interview transcript in full length for Brian is available in Appendix B (B.9).

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Brian—Biographical Outline

Brian, 30 years old, and recently married at the time of the interview, is a graduate student in a psychology PhD program on the East Coast of the United States. He characterizes his family as “great,” but “fairly politically and socially conservative.” While many members of his family are rather religious and conservative minded, however, that’s not Brian. Brian identifies as being a “more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist” according to the survey, and as a “Buddhist” during the interview portion of the study.

Looking back, Brian was raised in a religious setting by a mother he identifies as “mainstream Presbyterian,” and an extended family he labels as “total Jerry-Falwell² kind of people.” However, Brian started questioning the belief system he had been taught “at some point” in his late teens, and by college he was exploring “different philosophies, different ways of thinking” (from interact 30).

Brian does not speak too fondly of experiences early in his childhood. In fact, he does not have much to say about his years spent growing up other than to state that his “childhood was pretty... typical in most ways,” then immediately proceeding to state that his “parents divorced when [he] was nine.” He “went through sort of a typical adolescence identity crisis” as a teen, where he was “trying on... different sort of identities and roles... [in] that sort of classical Eriksonian sense” (all quotes from interact 18). Disillusioned with the Christian tradition he was raised in, Brian knew he wanted a better, different, more open, world framing system that was free from what he saw as the societal obligation and expectation to identify as a Christian, which he found in Zen Buddhism.

²Jerry Falwell was an American evangelical Southern Baptist pastor, appearing on TV regularly, with rather conservative views. He was known for making extreme and inflammatory remarks towards any viewpoint or ideology that did not align with his own.

Mapping Brian’s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

As detailed in Chap. 14, *openness to experience* and *mysticism* have been used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig. 17.2), Brian is located, slightly, in the upper right segment.

A more comprehensive comparison of Brian’s individual responses to the questionnaire with the means for the focus group of the “more spiritual than religious, atheist and non-theist” is presented in Table 21.1.

As a “more spiritual than religious” atheist-Zen Buddhist, some noteworthy differences appear in Brian’s scores when compared to his focus group. With regards to personality (NEO-FFI), his scores fall largely along his focus group means with the exception of *neuroticism* and *extraversion*. Here, his level of *extraversion* is a half deviation above his group means. However, most notable is his low *neuroticism* score, which places him a full deviation below his group mean. This is telling, as we might interpret the significant absence of neurotic personality characteristics (such as anxiety and worry) as a result of his adherence to Buddhist doctrine and practice, which seeks to acknowledge that suffering is an inevitable part of life.

Regarding *mysticism* (Hood, 1975), Brian scores below the group means for all subscales. While he states that he has used psychedelics, Brian goes on to mention that they did not produce what he would label as “mystical insight.” While this may seem a surprising finding given the role that psychedelics can play in facilitating mystical experience, it is consistent with research on Buddhists which suggest that many Mysticism Scale items fail to capture the experience of self-loss that is associated with impermanence in Zen Buddhism (Chen, Zhang, Qi, & Hood, 2011).

Across the Psychological Well-being and Growth scales, Brian not only scores above his group mean for each construct, but typically scores almost a whole standard deviation or more above the mean. Noteworthy here, and as we might expect for a Zen-Buddhist, *environmental*

Table 21.1 Comparison of Brian C. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Brian C.	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group in the USA	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	9	20.8	10.2
<i>Extraversion</i>	32	27.9	6.8
<i>Openness to experience</i>	38	38.7	4.9
<i>Agreeableness</i>	31	30.6	4.8
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	32	30.7	6.7
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)	114	117.1	22.4
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	37	45.7	9.6
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	29	28.3	8.4
<i>Interpretation</i>	48	43.1	7.5
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	28	27.5	4.0
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	29	24.4	4.5
<i>Personal growth</i>	31	30.2	3.3
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	32	28.0	4.4
<i>Purpose in life</i>	29	25.3	4.1
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	29	24.9	4.2
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)	60	59.3	8.5
Attitudes toward God	49	49.0	12.0
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	9	7.6	4.2
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	22	22.3	2.5
<i>Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog</i>	16	16.2	2.1

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

mastery, purpose in life and *self-acceptance* appear as psychological constructs in his life that are well developed and strongly present.

Brian's Semantic of "Spirituality"

...it sounds like... the way these questions are worded is-is-is, um, they were either written by or intended for somebody who is kind of like a traditional, Western, theistic, sort of a, sort of world view. (interact 122)

What is Brian's understanding of "spirituality"? Well, and as his quote above alludes to, it is certainly not in the "traditional, western, theistic" sense. Indeed, in the questionnaire, Brian has given his definition of "spirituality":

In the Zen Buddhist tradition to which I belong, the term 'spirituality' isn't really used, but I suppose I could say that it refers to the experience of our essential nature in everyday life.

Here, "spirituality" is seen as the core, essential, and desired phenomena. However, it is not accepted without caveat—it is reinterpreted (see Coleman, Silver, & Hood, Chap. 22) in a rather "secular" context, and viewed through his Zen Buddhist background.

In the questionnaire, Brian gives his definition of "religion" as: "Those aspects of human behavior which surround 'spirituality'—ritual, tradition, and community." This, when compared to his understanding of "spirituality," positions religion in such a way whereby religion surrounds, but perhaps does not 'touch' the core experience of "spirituality." Moreover, and for Brian, religion appears as a sort of Durkheimian "religious glue" (Coleman, 2013), as functional phenomena primarily concerned with experience, and not substantive phenomena concerned primarily with *belief*.

Brian's semantic profiling of "spirituality," reveals "spirituality" to be largely flexible, liberating, tolerant, healing, thisworldly, and interconnected, when compared to "religion," which appears as largely antithetical to these descriptors. When taken together, Brian's view may be regarded as typical for the "more spiritual than religious atheists and non-theists" (see Appendix A,

Fig. A.23) In this group, and as Brian demonstrates, they may be willing to identify with, and even use, a semantic of "spirituality," however, they *do not* view this concept as "religious," or belonging to 'religion.' In other words, you may hear a more spiritual than religious atheist speak of "spirituality," but don't confuse that for 'religion' in any traditional or *transcendent* sense—at least not in their view (Fig. 21.1).

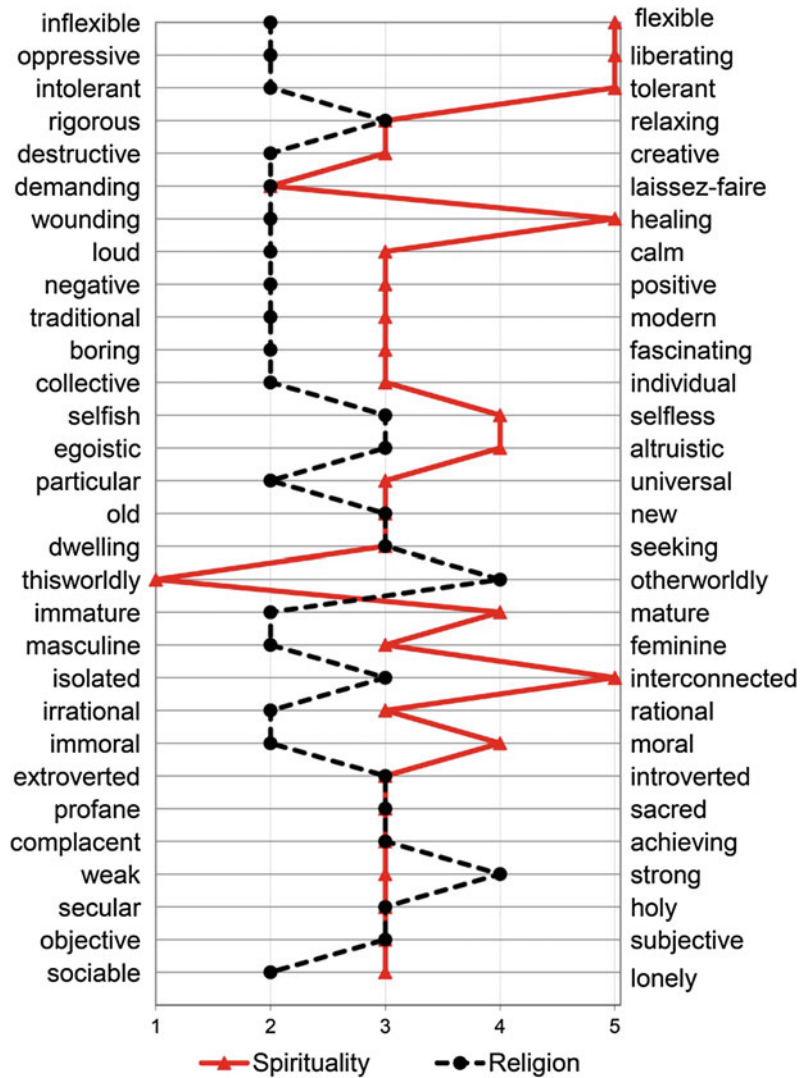
Brian's Faith Development

...as a Buddhist I don't believe in God or-or anything like that... (interact 34)

Does Brian have a 'faith' style? Well, yes, as long as we don't confuse this with a belief in any type of 'god.' Based on the faith development evaluation of the interview with Brian C., for which we have followed closely the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004), Brian's interview demonstrates a predominately individuated-systemic style (Streib, 2001). This reflects his scores on the Fowler faith development interview, which overall, find Brian at a stage 4.

Attending to Brian's single responses to the faith development questions sorted by aspects of 'faith,' Brian appears to be more developed in terms of faith development in regard to non-religious structural aspects such as logic, perspective taking or moral judgment, than in the existential aspects. However, this trend is not without the occasional detractor, as certain, more, perhaps quasi-religious or theological questions, do receive an affirmative response from Brian. Important to note, however, is that these aspects are largely channeled through his functional understanding of 'religion,' and his own Buddhist beliefs, which place a value on ritual, symbols and discipline. Although the aspect *image of god* was rated a stage 4 for Brian, this appears contradictory to his response, when being asked to discuss his image of God or the divine; Brian responds as such: "How does m-my what?" (interact 32) As the narrative segment in the next section will demonstrate, Brian doesn't

Fig. 21.1 Brian’s Associations to “Spirituality” on the Contextual Semantic Differential



really know how to answer the question, and is even caught off guard as to why anyone would be asking him (a Zen-Buddhist) about something they don’t believe in. It is this rejection that lays at the base of Brian’s identification as more a “more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist.”

As mentioned previously, Brian filters the ‘religious or spiritual ideas, symbols, or rituals that may be important to you’ question through his Buddhist beliefs and can easily answer such a “religious” question. The following narrative section will explicate how Brian handles this question in the context of his worldview.

Summary of Brian’s Faith Development

Overall, Brian responds well to the aspects of the faith development interview (FDI) and channels his answers to any ‘challenging’ questions that may be too tinged by Western theological notions through his own personal worldview and Zen-Buddhist doctrine. While well developed in terms of the more ‘secular’ questions attending to structural logic on the FDI, the remaining discussion of Brian’s case will speak to some of the specific aspects of the FDI, such as his views on ‘image of god,’ ‘religion and worldview’ and ‘symbols and rituals.’

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Brian's Interview

In attending to the narrative dynamics in Brian's interview (see Keller & Streib, 2013; see Chap. 16 for a methodological discussion), we present a condensed life 'abstract' below containing the key periods in Brian's life, followed by a series of narrative segments displaying how he answers some of the FDI questions.

Life Review

...When my parents divorced that was kind of one of those major, um, world-view changing things. (interact 28)

Attending to Brian's response to the "life chapters" question in the faith development interview, we see that Brian largely breaks up his life into segments displaying temporal coherence in keeping with Bluck and Habermas' (2002) cultural concept of biography that correlate with his time spent in school—a move that might be most familiar for anyone currently holding an advanced degree. That is, school, specifically a graduate program, takes a lot of devotion and determination in one's life. Specifically, it is likely the very center of one's life when you are currently enrolled in a program such as Brian. The life chapters are presented as follows (a better understanding of his explanation is added in brackets):

1. Childhood (parents divorced at age 9, major impact on Brian)
2. Adolescence (exploring different identities)
3. Undergrad (failed a bunch of classes, didn't do so well)
4. In-between undergrad and grad school ("crappy job," met his wife)
5. Grad school (where he is currently in a "period of professional development")

During the interview, Brian mentions that his parents' divorcing was very much a life changing moment, and notes that it "involved a change in

[his] world view" (from interact 18). In speculating as to precisely *how* this was a formative moment in the course of his life today, perhaps it played little to no part? Maybe it factored into something not discussed in the interview? Or, and perhaps more likely, discovering the impermanence of human relationships, that often appear so stable and sure to us children, was a key experience that led to his comfort in the Zen-Buddhist worldview? In fact, in addressing his parents' divorce he states that it was "unexpected," and that this "change...came kind of early," when he still thought his parents were "infallible and perfect." After the divorce, "[he] started to see at that point that [his] parents are fallible" (from interact 52). Elsewhere during the interview, Brian states: "everything is impermanent and everything is, always changing" (from interact 140). Brian learned a central Zen Buddhist concept at an early age.

The time in Brian's "In-between undergrad and grad school" life chapter likely contains several formative moments in the course of his life, specifically the use and experience of psychedelic drugs, as Brian mentions elsewhere in the interview. But here, Brian does not go into any real depth to discuss this time other than to say that during school (which he seems to blend with this in-between period), he "was at a strange college with nobody that [he] knew, far away from everybody that [he] knew. [He] was pretty depressed." Ever the psychologist, however, Brian goes on to state that he is "not sure [he] would have actually met diagnostic criteria for depression but it was pretty bad." (from interact 42) Regardless of whether or not he was 'clinically depressed,' Brian pulled himself up, and overcame that period of his life.

Narrative Segments

The FDI has elicited rich 'mini-narratives' that help to display Brian's worldview and version of "spirituality" following the narrative-dynamic structure according to Labov and Waletzky (1967), with a trajectory from orientation,

Table 21.2 Brian’s Narrative Segment “Zen Buddhists Don’t Believe in God”

Title	Zen Buddhists don’t believe in God
Orientation	[After responding to the interview question asking about his image of god] Well, as a Buddhist I don’t believe in God or-or anything like that so I don’t really know how to answer that
Complication	I guess when I grew up I-I was told that there was such a thing and I wanted very much to believe in it, but I don’t think I <u>ever</u> really did on a core level
Evaluation	That really hasn’t changed
Resolution/Coda	...I guess I thought it was like something I <u>had</u> to believe in before or, you know, bad things would happen And,... <u>now</u> I <u>don’t</u> think that (interact 34)

complication, evaluation and resolution. As mentioned in the previous section describing Brian’s ‘faith’ development, the following vignette beautifully illustrates Brian’s *current* ‘image of god.’ However, we should further explore the “it,” i.e. the God that was rejected (Table 21.2).

Brian is no stranger to what he terms as “peak experiences.” As an individual who has experimented with some psychedelic drugs during his life, and as a currently practicing Zen Buddhist, Brian notes that both meditation and drugs have facilitated these peak experiences in his life. It is likely that Brian’s “peak experiences” are not especially mystical, at least not mystical as measured by the Mysticism Scale, as the focus appears to have been upon interesting altered states of experience and not on the experience of ego loss or impermanence. In this sense, Brian’s experiences with drugs simply confirm the illusory aspect of all experiences of the world (Table 21.3).

Even with these very interesting moments of peak experiences in his life, however, Brian goes on to note that, for him, there are problems with these types of experiences—they have to end sometime (Table 21.4).

As a Zen Buddhist, and admirer of the more communal, orthopraxic, and ritualistic aspects of religious traditions, Brian explains that some traditions are worth keeping—if only for their semiotic value, and importance for the individual.

...there are, you know, the-the-the symbols or the system of symbols of the kind of the, you know, um, the Buddhism, the Bodhisattvas and these other kind of mythical Buddhist figures who I don’t think represent, you know, real beings that

are sitting in some land or some heaven realm, somewhere, um, you know, ‘cause I don’t think it works that way. Um, I don’t have any reason to believe that it does. But there’s some [...] importance, symbolic value. Um, you have to feel a connection to the Buddhist tradition, people who have been doing the same practice that I have for-for 2500 years and I believe that, you know, um, you know, some-some-some traditions are worth keeping and some are not. Um, but for the most part, you know, they develop these things ‘cause they were valuable to them and they supported them and [...] in their practice, so I respect those things even though I don’t always completely understand them. (interact 152)

What does death mean to Brian? Is there an afterlife? After alluding that death simply means ‘death,’ and nothing more, he goes on to state that “I don’t know what happens to consciousness after we die. Um. I don’t think anybody knows that.” (from interact 142) However, and rather paradoxically after that statement, he goes on to tell us precisely what he thinks happens to consciousness after we die (and in a rather *Chalmerisk* fashion³ Chalmers, 1997):

...I don’t think consciousness just goes away. I don’t think, you know, it’s like turning off a switch and there’s no light there anymore. I think that it, you know, that it-it-it’s taking a different form of sorts. Um, you know, things—no-nothing ever really stops existing, it just changes form. It’s elements come apart and they go to other places.

³In Chalmers’ view, consciousness is a fundamental property of the universe very much like the postulation of *space* and *time*. This is, however, and for example, not to say that rocks are conscious, only that the physical material that constitutes the rock has the potential to exhibit the properties of consciousness in certain configurations such as the higher primates.

Table 21.3 Brian's Narrative Segment "Peak Experiences, Psychedelic Drugs, and Mystical Insight"

Title	Peak experiences, psychedelic drugs, and mystical insight
Orientation	I've had some-some peak experiences. Um. Meditation produces those <u>occasionally</u> but, um, not really the focus, and, you know they—you know, you might be-be sitting, you know, you're-you all of a sudden you feel strange and you're in an altered state of consciousness. Um, but, you know, it's transitory, and goes away and it doesn't especially mean anything. Um, and you know, I think any-any decent meditation teacher will tell you, "You know, those things aren't really verified effective practice. They're not—they're not the goal"
Complication	...when I was younger, um, you know, I was taking Psychology and I was curious about these things, so, um, you know, I tried a couple of different psychedelic drugs and those [are] <u>definitely</u> good at producing peak experiences
Evaluation	Um, and it was, you know, and- and of course at the time I really wanted to attribute meaning to those things, um, but, I—you know, I don't think they were especially meaningful
Resolution/Coda	They were fun, um, but you know I don't think they were, you know, um, some kind of—I wanted to believe that they were producing some kind of mystical insight or something like that I think that was—(laughing) probably very wishful thinking. (from interact 40)

Table 21.4 Brian's Narrative Segment "The Problem of Peak Experience"

Title	The problem of peak experience
Orientation	...the problem with the experience is, I suppose, is that, you know, you have a peak experience that's really wonderful...
Complication	...but really you have to kind of come down from the peak experience and-and back to, you know, normal life
Evaluation	You can-you can have a peak experience where you feel you're receiving some kind of, um, you know, special cosmic experience, but then you still have to do the laundry, you know?
Resolution/Coda	That can be depressing if someone is attached to those peak experiences or seeking them out So, you know [...]. (from interact 40)

And the atoms, after you die, the atoms in your body will go on to do other things. You know, they'll be a different object or whatever. (from interact 144)

As these rich narrative segments and interview excerpts help to demonstrate, Brian's "spiritual" worldview as a nonbeliever bares little resemblance to the often visible and studied so-called 'New Atheists' (Coleman, Silver, & Holcombe, 2013; Cotter, 2011). Brian has had mystical (peak) experiences, and acknowledges the value and closure that such experiences can provide in one's life (Hood, 2014). Furthermore, he recognizes that, as much as one can enjoy and escape reality through such experiences, this escape is, at least for Brian, fleeting and impermanent. Here, and perhaps unfortunately, there is always

a return to reality "par-excellence" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Brian demonstrates, and recognizes, a great appreciation for ritual (Xygalatas, 2012), even resembling Silver, Coleman, Hood and Holcombe's (2014) 'type' of Ritual Atheist Agnostic, and also recognizes that 'consciousness' will not be reduced to a mere semantic mistake (Dennett, 1991), or as simply a dated term that will be replaced with the language of neurophysiology (Churchland & Churchland, 1998; Deacon, 2012). For the reader, and for Brian who views consciousness as a process of dynamic change in an impermanent world, consciousness is here to stay—it just might be a fundamental property of the universe (Chalmers, 1997).

Relationships

...you know, relationships do change and that's - um, the nature of them... (interact 26)

Here again, as the above quote demonstrates, and as seems to be a reoccurring theme that underlies Brian's narrative, the impermanence of all things—the acceptance of constant change—especially in relationships, is recognized.

In attending to how Brian discusses the important relationships in his life, and focusing on content, we see that Brian lists three romantic relationships as “formative.” However, perhaps not surprisingly, his wife is the only one explicitly mentioned. He goes on to indicate that he is “actually friends with both of them [past romantic partners] right now” (from interact 24), and notes with a gentle laugh, that this is likely rather “abnormal.” Elsewhere, he lists unnamed friendships that he characterizes as “here and there” over the course of his life. His relationship with his “Zen teacher” is also listed as important to Brian.

In focusing on the present, we see that Brian's relationship with his “parents is pretty good.” However, the same cannot be said for the past. Brian goes on to state:

...it's better than it was for many years. Um, you know, um, we-we-we—I think we kind of, um, I-I think many years kind of our friction, um, was-was caused by, you know, they didn't know what I was gonna do with my life. They didn't know how I was going to turn out and they were understandably concerned for me and, um, they responded to that concern in the way many parents do, you know, by being maybe a little overbearing... (interact 46)

In returning to the present, as Brian explains

...I think they've seen, you know, um, by mid-twenties that I was, you know, kind of, um, capable of being a serious person and looking forward to my future and things that. Especially since I started, um, working towards grad school and things like that, you know. I think that instilled in them a lot of comfort” (interact 46)

Brian's relationship with his parents is great, provided he avoids all discussion of “politics and religion and stuff like that” with them, which is

something he has learned to avoid as he has grown older: “We also know that there are certain [laughing] topics we just shouldn't talk about, you know?” (from interact 46).

Values and Commitments

...the promotion of mental health, um, it's really important to me, I think that, you know, our-our society in general is doing kind of a bad job of-of-of understanding and promoting mental health treatment. (interact 66)

In Brian's interview, he lists a strong commitment to his specific lineage of Buddhism, White Plum Asanga, noting, “there's a sense of connection there”:

...lineage is sort of like a family in many ways, and um, you know through my-my, you know, my teacher, and other people that I practice with, I'm connected to this-this bigger organization, this, you know, lots of, um, lots of, you know, teachers and monks and nuns and priests and [...] from all their students and all the practitioners. (interact 62)

Regarding Brian's other commitments, and in diving into politics, he guesses he's a “political liberal.” However:

I wouldn't call myself really a big fan of the Democratic Party at this point in time. Um, I tend to vote for them 'cause they tend to be a, you know, kind of less terrifying than the Republicans are. (interact 64)

In contrast, however, “[he] wouldn't, like, wear that label with any kind of comfort so [he] wouldn't say that [he's], you know, [exaggerated tone] Democrat” (from interact 66). Putting a single label on his political beliefs is difficult for Brian, as he explains that he believes in a lot of “causes.” An important gastronomical-culinary commitment Brian mentions is being a vegetarian:

I've, been a vegetarian for the most part for the last ten years. Eleven years, um, and it's not something that, you know, I'm-I'm actively out, um, trying to promote to others, but it's something that does matter to me a lot. (interact 66)

Does Brian believe there are certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any

circumstance? Well, perhaps yes, and no. In his own words:

No I don't think any action is always right or always wrong under any circumstances. You can say that certain actions are—are, you know, right or wrong most of the time, but there is an exception to every rule, right? I mean you could, for example, okay, like I-I-I think what we could talk about here, very briefly, would be the Buddhist precepts. Um, you know, I mean the first precept is, um, is-is “not killing.” And when you actually—if you actually take the precepts in a formal ceremony, um—which I haven't done because we don't really—we don't really do a whole lot of ceremonial stuff, but if you actually take the precepts in a, um, um, ceremonial sense, the first precept is, “I vow not to kill but to cherish all life.” And, um, you know, that doesn't mean, I mean—okay so, that sounds pretty straightforward. You know, killing's bad, right? But, um, you know of course chances are you're going to break that precept. I mean walking down the street you're going to step on a bug or something. So, first off, you know, there's, um – i-it's impossible to keep that precept, absolutely. It's the same case for almost all of them, really. Um, and secondly, you know I'm-I'm pretty sure we can invent, um, you know, a hypothetical situation in which killing is the-is the correct thing to do. It prevents the most suffering. You know? Um, if you, if you could go back in time and kill Hitler, you know? I don't know (laughing), um a lot of these become very, very, you know, hypothetical and stuff like that, but certainly, we can, you know, we can think of a circumstance in which, um, killing somebody to save others would be the correct thing to do. But, you know, for the most part [killing...] –yeah, yes, it's-it's not correct to, it's not, um, ethically correct to kill, you know? (interact 84)

Religion and World View

The atoms in my body are, you know, made of the same stuff as the atoms of, you know, the chair that I'm sitting in. It just happens to be in different configurations right now, but there's really no dividing lines between them... (interact 116)

In examining Brian's “religion” and worldview, we find he is comfortable using religious terminology in his self-identification. This likely stems from his more Durkheimian (1915/1965) understanding, and view of the role of religion in society. As a practicing Zen Buddhist, Brian does

not give primacy to a Western Protestant conceptualization of ‘religion.’ Therefore, using terms like “religion” or “spirituality” is acceptable, as they are divorced, in his view, from referring solely to substantive phenomena, such as belief in God. Despite identifying on the survey portion as “more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist,” here, Brian tells us he *does* think that he is a “religious person”—in the ritualistic-orthopraxic sense, that is. Regarding his Buddhist tradition, Brian notes:

So, so I do think I'm a religious person, but I don't think that means the same thing, um, as maybe when some other people say that. I mean a different thing like that. I mean that there's a, a system of practice that sort of a guiding principle for me in life. And you know, that guiding—in-in-in Buddhism we have, you know, some very religious kind of looking things that we do. We, um, get together at certain times. And we, um, have certain rituals that we follow. And, you know, there are people who might wear funny clothes as part of this, and um, you know, whatever. It looks very religious and it's got that kind of religious aspect of, of ritual tradition and so forth. Um. You know, I-I, but on the other hand, you know, I, I don't believe in—[...] Buddhism doesn't concern itself with— [...] Buddhism says, there's no such thing as God... (interact 148)

However, and to further demonstrate Brian's understanding of ‘religion’ as a functional concept that need not refer to a god: “*Faith* to me indicates to an extent, um, a belief in something you don't have a reason to believe...” (from interact 96). Brian's ‘religion’ does not involve any kind of faith, at least as he conceives of it. Although this statement seems more like an indictment of belief in God in general by Brian, some scholars, such as Exline (2013), Exline and Rose (2013), and Luhrmann (2012), point out that faith isn't necessarily an all-or-nothing commitment on the part of the believer. Here, and contra stereotypes of the ‘unwavering believer,’ having faith can involve constant questioning, or repeated reassessment and doubt. Interestingly, Brian states, “that we should always be okay with questioning [Faith]. ... and it's not always a pleasant or comfortable experience...” (from interact 96). However, and in further exploring Brian's previous understanding of faith, defined

as “something we don’t have a reason to believe,” to what extent an individual engages in a repeated “questioning” of their faith, only to arrive back at faith, seems rather strange under Brian’s view of faith. After a thorough questioning(s) of one’s faith, don’t they then have a reason to believe? We take this as further data to indicate that when Brian uses “religious” or “spiritual” terminology, he is attempting to divorce it from any and all traditional metaphysical connotations (Stone, 2012).

Purpose in Brian’s Life

While Brian does not “think that human life has a purpose,” he is surely not without such purpose and meaning on an individual level. Here, he states that “everybody [can] kind of decided what their own purpose is,” and that “it’s very individual; people decide what their own purpose is and what they’re going to do and why they’re going to do it” (from interact 134). In fact, Brian thinks that (just as our other atheist case study, Isabella I. in Chap. 22, does), “meaning is constructive” and that there’s not “some-some external meaning out there for us to find” (from interact 98)—in the sense that *meaning* is somehow a physical, natural aspect of the universe. In other words, meaning and purpose is not decreed by divine fiat, religious doctrine or dogma, and is best understood as a personal process that involves learning (Luhmann, 2012, 2013). Moreover, and to echo Brian’s view, scholars such as Frankl (1988), Hood, Hill, and Spilka, (2009) and Park (2013) have also indicated, and converged on, the idea that “meaning is constructive,” just as Brian knows. Furthermore, and as Brian demonstrates, meaning can be sought in ways that do not involve the need for an Absolute transcendental reference point. That is, meaning, value, and purpose—to the extent that the sciences can measure these constructs—is not merely limited to the pious, it is also there for the atheist’s taking, or construction rather (Coleman & Arrowood, 2015; Coleman & Hood, 2015).

Harmony with the Universe: An Artificial Distinction

When does Brian feel most in communion or harmony with the universe? For Brian this question presents a synthetic, perhaps even Western Protestant, distinction that fails to articulate his Buddhist worldview. That is to say, and in his own words: “This notion that we’re separate somehow from the universe being everything else there is an artificial distinction.” He further explicates his position by rejecting any notion that “the world is out there and I’m in here...” According to Brian, these distinctions are “artificial...constructed, and it’s, you know, part of it is language.” (from interact 116) In other words, Brian indicates that it is a semantic mistake to demarcate oneself from the universe in the first place. A product of, perhaps, a very self centered—egotistical—outlook on the world that he explicitly seeks to lose, in keeping with his Buddhist worldview, yet he notes “we have a tendency to feel that way.” Brian realizes that although this distinction is rather intuitive, meaning most people *may* make it, it does not, by his count, factor into his position. That is to say, his Zen Buddhist training likely has very real ontological implications for how he sees the world. Brian views himself not apart from the universe, but as a part of the universe. As such, he is *always* in harmony with the universe. In further explanation, he appeals to Buddhist orthopraxy stating:

I think that the whole point of the practice of meditation—not the whole point but a point of the practice of meditation, is to break down that separation or that-that-that feeling of separation between, you know, the self and everything else because, um, you know, like as a I-I-I don’t think there really is a separation there. (from interact 116)

As a part of the universe, Brian does not view himself as separate from “*events* ... happening in the universe” either. That is, everything is indeed connected. Brian is a part of the universe, and as such, is part of its complex casual chain. Moreover, “the things [he does] aren’t separate, but... they extend beyond... [his] physical body, [his] consciousness....”

Again, we may ask, when is Brian most in communion with, or in harmony with the universe? His answer to this would be that he *was* in the past, he *is* at this very moment, and *will be* in the future.

Brian's "Religion" and "Spirituality" Aren't About Belief: A General Interpretation of His Journey

...do I believe there's a supernatural force influencing me? No. I don't. I don't-I don't see any reason to. (interact 136)

In tying it all together, and in hindsight of Brian's identification as a "more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist" in our survey portion, and even as "religious" during the interview, we conclude that Brian represents a very interesting case that speaks to the often fuzzy and disputed categories of not only "spirituality" (Zinnbauer et al., 1997), but also of "religion" (McCutcheon, 1997, 2007). Here, Brian expresses a functional understanding, and usage, of spirituality and religion. That is to say, these terms, which are used by Brian at various points of his life, and during the interview, can be viewed as a form of identity tinkering. This process is complex, contextual, and always fluid (Bayart, 2005). Brian's particular case demonstrates this nicely.

As a young child, Brian identified as a Christian, and attempted to believe in God, because if he didn't, he felt that "bad things would happen" (from interact 34). As an adolescent, he realized that he could try on different identities, almost like one tries on a new suit, to see what fit him best. Brian "can't think of a particular moment" when he realized that "this belief system [(Christianity) he'd] been taught" didn't particularly fit him (interact 30). However, the *suit* that Brian seemed to decide fit him best was Zen Buddhist philosophy and practice—at least at the time of the interview, that is.

Brian's religion, spirituality, and worldview have no place for the supernatural, and certainly not a god. As such, he represents a rather interesting; yet tricky, population that seems to be

comfortable navigating life using, and identifying with, "religious language." This should give researchers and scholars who interpret and design surveys reason to pause, as they interpret not only generic categories such as "no religion," or "non religious" (Lee, 2014), but also the *presumably* more specific categories such as "religious." These categories may be thought of as equally generic, to a large extent, and in constant need of scholarly exploration and critique.

For instance, can we interpret those who identify as "more spiritual than religious" as believing in a God or a higher power? Not in Brian's case. Or, and for that matter, does identifying as "religious" mean that you believe in a god? Again, not in Brian's case. How many more "Brians" are there? For example, and in the current study, we had 26 individuals in the "more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist" focus group in the US sample and 40 in this focus group in the German sample (see Chap. 4). This, however, is by no means a large number, but further exploration of this category could turn up more. The difference between 'data' and a 'data trend' is only one of degree and magnitude, of course. Taking this into consideration, and as no surprise perhaps, providing a wider range of 'identity options' on social scientific surveys will likely prove to be an interesting, maybe even exciting, direction for researchers to take in the future, as the categories we like to *provide* for our participants to use may become more complex (Coleman, Hood, & Shook, 2015).

Such complexity (that is, and in our case speaking of a 'religious atheist') may not make things easy on the part of the researcher. However, it may present a more ecologically valid approach to demographical research, and what it means to assume an identity for an individual in society today. In a sense, this current project has served to make the disunity of identification on a survey become evermore salient. This fact can be seen in every chapter of this volume, as almost every mention of "spirituality" appears in quotation (scare) marks.⁴ Furthermore, other scholars such as La Cour and Götke (2012, p. 97)

⁴The current project has taken a thoroughly emic approach (see Chap. 9 and the chapters in Part Two).

advocate for “never us[ing] the term spirituality without a notion or some keywords framing the meaning of the word in a specific context.” We couldn’t agree more, and perhaps, this might be a good model to follow for the term “religion” as well, again as Brian’s case demonstrates.

Clearly Brian falls somewhere within what Streib and Hood (2013) conceptualize as “the religious field,” however, and as they note along with Coleman et al. (2013), such a “religious field” does not always begat “religion.” Or, and as Belzen (2010) points out from a cultural psychological approach to religion, there is no such thing as this platonic category of *religion in general*. Indeed, and as Taves (2009, p. 17) has argued regarding “religious experience,” there is really no such “distinctive thing,” only experiences deemed as such.

The most inclusive, and explanatory, understandings of religion seem to reside at the level of cultural phenomena (Beit-Hallahmi, 2015; Belzen, 2010; Vergote, 1997), or as a process of “cultural learning” rather (Gervais, Willard, Norenzayan, & Henrich, 2011; Henrich, Boyd, & Richerson, 2008; Norenzayan, 2013). In this view, some (many? most?) people are enculturated into whatever the dominate “religion” of their culture happens to be and typically identify with the “religion” of their parents (Beit-Hallahmi, 2015).

However, and as we feel wholly compliments and conceptually sharpens the above briefly mentioned approaches to religion, making a distinction along the lines of belief in a transcendent culturally postulated superhuman-agent (CPS) (McCauley & Lawson, 2002) (e.g. Allah, the Angel Moroni) should be the researcher’s primary reference point of demarcation. Here, such a distinction between transcendence that is horizontal (i.e. no CPS) and vertical transcendence (i.e. CPS, Transcendence with a capital *T*) can provide a useful heuristic inline with cultural and “ascriptive”⁵ approaches to

religion (Coleman & Arrowood, 2015; Taves, 2009). But, where is Brian positioned in relation to horizontal and vertical transcendence (Coleman et al., 2013; Streib & Hood, 2013)?

In keeping inline with the simple initial distinction of belief in a CPS for horizontal or vertical transcendence, Brian fits squarely on the horizontal axis. Although Brian typically uses terms such as religion and spirituality as a marker of identity, he does not describe these terms in his interview as “holy,” “sacred,” or “other-worldly” which are adjectives often referring to religion and/or spirituality. Brian’s semantics, as used in the interview, however, does fall in line with the Primary Component Analysis as outlined in Chap. 9. Here, and as the previous sections of this chapter demonstrate, Brian uses terms to describe *his personal* “religion,” and “spirituality” that are largely representative of a horizontal transcendence with terms/ideas such as (all) connectedness, inner search, ethics, and the *mind*.

This chapter, just as this book, has proved to clarify the notion of spirituality by creating conceptual space for other versions of “spirituality,” and special things (Taves, 2009) that may or may not be like spirituality, by providing a more accurate reflection of the phenomena through the use of qualitative methods complimented by quantitative. However, and to emphasize, Brian is a reflection of such an approach. Brian, by his own admission, is an atheist Zen Buddhist, who is not only “spiritual,” but also “religious” in what we term as his horizontal transcendence.

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(Footnote 5 continued)

“religion.” Taves’s methodological framework is ripe for utilization in nonbelieving populations.

⁵Taves’ “ascriptive” approach shifts the scholars’ focus from the problematic nature of defining “religion,” and places the foci on who, what, and why something is being deemed as “religious”, or being marked as something “special.” Here, many (most?) religious *things* are special, but not all “special things” are religious, or equal

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“...if the Universe Is Beautiful, We’re Part of that Beauty.”—A “Neither Religious nor Spiritual” Biography as Horizontal Transcendence

22

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Abstract

27-year-old Isabella grew up with her parents on the Eastern Coast of the United States. She describes her life as “pretty boring” and “normal.” However ‘boring’ and ‘normal’ her life may have appeared to her, it is the worldview that Isabella takes—and has always had by her count—that draws great interest. Typically, many individuals who currently identify as an ‘atheist’ also used to identify as ‘religious’ in their youth (Silver, 2013). Isabella stands out in this regard, she has never believed in a god or gods. What Coleman, Silver, and Holcombe (2013) have termed as “religio-spiritual frameworks” played no part in Isabella’s worldview. As this chapter shall demonstrate, Isabella was able to ask questions about life, make sense of her environment, and find meaning and purpose not in the confines of a religious or spiritual worldview, but, in a worldview that retained a similar sense of awe, wonder and meaning in the absence of any spiritual or religious structure—a worldview we term as ‘horizontal transcendence.’ This chapter will situate the role of the Faith Development Interview in the context of the ‘faithless’ while drawing attention to the role of narrative in horizontal transcendence.

From interact 86 of Isabella’s FDI. The interview transcript in full length for Isabella is available in Appendix B (B.10).

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**“...as an Atheist, no One Hands You a Book that Says Here’s the Meaning of Life ... You Kind of Have to Figure It Out for Yourself...”¹—
Isabella I**

The case of Isabella I. has been selected because she may serve as an exemplar of a worldview that, among our sample, best illuminates an individual who self-identifies as “neither religious nor spiritual.” Despite self-identifying as neither religious nor spiritual, Isabella can be located (as noted in Fig. 14.5 in Chap. 14) above the mean scores on *openness to experience* but low on *mysticism*. While she does not use the term *horizontal transcendence*, it is appropriate, we think, to characterize Isabella as a person with an established worldview of *horizontal transcendence* (c.f. Coleman & Arrowood, 2015; Coleman, Hood, & Silver, 2013; Streib & Hood, 2013).

As she makes clear, Isabella’s life story takes place outside of the acceptance, or need for, any religious or spiritual frameworks. Yet, this does not mean that, having been exposed to religious and spiritual frameworks, her life escapes their influence. In this sense, Isabella’s story falls under the category of a “special thing” that she could, but chooses not to, associate with either “religion” or “spirituality” (Taves, 2009).² As Isabella recalls several times throughout the interview, she has never believed in a God, and from the moment such a choice (to accept or reject belief in God) was presented to her at age 8, such a belief has remained largely unintelligible to her. We may therefore take her repeated emphasis as a ‘neither nor’ throughout her life to be an important *self-defining memory* (McAdams, 2008; Singer & Salovey, 1993).

¹From interacts 100, 102.

²Taves’ (2009, p. 3) *building block* approach allows for scholars to avoid setting “religious experience up as the epitome of something unique or *sui generis*”. Although her “ascriptive approach” (p. 18) is focused on the study of ‘religion’, Taves’ framework allows the researcher “free to compare things that have features in common, whether they are deemed religious or not” (p. 19). Thus, this allows us to compare (in our case explore) things that may be ‘religio-spiritual like’ (i.e. Horizontal transcendence) with explicit religion or spirituality.

In fact, once she learned what the word atheist meant, she finally had a label to describe the view that had always seemed so natural and intuitive to her. If Isabella sees belief in God as ‘unintelligible,’ viewing her life experiences through her claim that she is neither religious nor spiritual is integral to our understanding of her. Additionally, not viewing Isabella through a religious or spiritual lens prevents us from “artificially stabiliz[ing]” (Taves, 2013, p. 139) religion and spirituality while avoiding obfuscated arguments as to what may constitute ‘religion’ (McCutcheon, 1997) or ‘religious experience’ (Taves, 2009, 2013). Our intent here is not to mold the labels of spirituality and religion around Isabella, but to allow espoused nonbelief to be understood on her own terms, yet recognize that she certainly has ‘special experiences’ that are comparable to what others may identify as ‘religious or spiritual experience.’

Isabella’s life contains special and deeply meaningful experiences—experiences (and a worldview) we may label fairly as horizontal transcendence. Both Isabella’s biographical narrative, and her psychological characteristics, provides data for the study of meaning, values, and exceptional experiences in nonbelievers understood as horizontal transcendence, a term Isabella never uses. Before exploring Isabella further, the following section will briefly outline horizontal transcendence as a means of understanding Isabella in light of her self-identification, which is “neither religious nor spiritual.”

Horizontal Transcendence

Horizontal transcendence is a concept mentioned only briefly by Hood, Hill, and Spilka (2009). It has received little exploration in the social scientific literature. This concept has been used in an effort to bring individuals who *do not* identify as ‘religious’ and/or possibly ‘spiritual’ under the theoretical purview of the social scientific study of religion. Ideally, it sets the stage for looking past the one thing an atheist or nonbeliever doesn’t believe in (i.e. a God) and towards positive affirmations of personal experience and

identity formation that an individual does not frame religiously.

Hood et al. (2009) conceive of horizontal transcendence as sharing the qualities of "interconnectedness" (p. 282) and a search for 'meaning' (p. 286). Streib and Hood (2013) build on this approach yet consider horizontal transcendence to be a "variant of religion" (p. 142). In terms of our explicit discussion in Chap. 14, we can locate Isabella within the two dimensional space created by her mysticism and openness scores and see that her relationship to transcendence requires neither us, or her, to make reference to God or to explicit spiritual claims. Thus, as we try to understand her own *understanding of herself*, and as has been argued before (Coleman, Silver, & Holcombe, 2013), referring to horizontal transcendence in discussing Isabella ought not be seen as forcing her under the umbrella of 'religion' (either explicit or implicit) or of fuzzy notions of 'spirituality' (Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

Streib and Hood (2013) provide a formative starting point for exploring horizontal transcendence noting that it refers to "key concepts" such as "*transcendence* and *ultimacy*" (p. 139, emphasis in original)—'transcendence,' meaning going beyond the everyday world, the mundane, and 'ultimate concern' as that which one is ultimately concerned with. While Streib and Hood take these conceptual starting points as underlying the 'religious field,' these concepts, as the authors' note, are not in and of themselves 'religious concepts.' And as such, we argue that when combined, these concepts do not necessitate the label of 'religion'—implicit or otherwise. Building on Taves' "ascriptive approach" in *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (2009, pp. 17–55), there is no such thing as 'religious experience', only experiences deemed to be 'religious' by an individual. This enables religion to be compared with other 'like things,' or, to use her terminology, "special things." In this sense, we argue for horizontal transcendence as being a priori neither religious nor spiritual, but as indicating a spatial location of *something special*. A special thing may be conceived as 'spiritual like' or 'religion

like,' but, itself is a concept that, true to the very title of this chapter, is 'necessarily neither spiritual, nor religious.' We feel this 'neither-nor' conceptualization of horizontal transcendence best adheres to calls for "methodological agnosticism" (Hood, 2012), moving us away from 'methodological theism' or "the will to religion" (Beaman, 2013), and as we will argue below, best captures Isabella's own refusal, and need, to identify herself as either religious or spiritual. Thus, our case study of Isabella will build on Streib and Hood (2013), and identify Isabella's own experiences in terms of horizontal transcendence. As we shall see, they reflect a profound sense of interconnectedness that is both exceptional, and wondrous, while requiring no religious, spiritual, theistic framework or narrative (Coleman & Arrowood, 2015; Coleman et al., 2013). Isabella's own narrative reflects this, in that she rejects religious and spiritual discourse as she narrates her own life.

Isabella—Biographical Outline

Isabella's mother was a "pretty staunch" Lutheran who made her "go to church every Sunday." Her mother did not explicitly force her, but the persuasion and norm was implied. In fact, on Sundays, she was "just [there] because [she] had to be." She was "jealous of the other kids who were just allowed to go to Sunday school while their parents were in church." But her mother made her attend both. She had a "Christian background but it never...caught on." Even as young as eight, she "had this idea... [that belief in God] ...just doesn't make sense to [her]." When confronted with the possibility that she could either believe or not believe in God at the age of 8, for her, not believing was the obvious position. As she recalls, it required little to no reflection to arrive at—it just made sense. Although it is almost a rule that children adopt the religion of their parents at a young age (Beit-Hallahmi, 2015), she was "really one of the few ones who, ...although [she] was raised in a church community, [she] ...just- never bought it." Thus,

despite her own claim that religion didn't make sense, she appears to have understood something meaningful about the religion that she rejected.

During her formative teenage years, Isabella went through what she characterized as “the normal adolescent turbulence... like, ‘you don't get me. You don't understand [me, speaking about her parents].’” However, she had a strong relationship with her parents and they were very active and supportive as far back as she can remember.

She was never really big on dating but started to date during her high school years. Over the course of this time she had 2–3 boyfriends but they were more of what she describes as “semi-boyfriend”—“are we dating? I guess. Maybe. We've gone some places.” She only considers what was to be “her first real boyfriend” at the very end of her senior year in high school.

Throughout college, Isabella had a steady and committed relationship with one boyfriend. Although they broke up in her senior year, it was amicable, or, as she said they had “just lost the spark.” Waiting almost two years after her graduation to begin dating again allowed Isabella time to plan her post college steps carefully. She moved back closer to her parents and saw this time (which was spent securing a job and place to live without the stressors of a relationship) as having a significant impact on herself allowing her to “get her life in order” after college. Through her careful planning, Isabella felt this contributed to the ability to have a stable and healthy relationship in the future, such as the one she shares with her husband at the time of the interview.

Upon graduating college, and now an adult, she was ready to take another important life step—Isabella got married. True to her independent and self-reliant nature, which was continually emphasized during the interview, she did not require a boyfriend and could choose her relationships as she saw fit. Likewise, she did not wait for (or require) a man to ask for her hand in marriage. Ever the action taker and decision maker, Isabella proposed to her boyfriend instead of waiting for him to propose to her.

As an adult, Isabella bares little resemblance to a stereotypical solitary and isolated atheist persona of years past. There are no faulty social relationships to be found and she is an excellent communicator of her thoughts and ideas. At the time of the interview Isabella was working as a research coordinator for a tier-one research university on the Eastern Coast of the United States.

Mapping Isabella I.'s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

Isabella occupies a rather unique position when placed in relation to other respondents on our coordinate system of “spirituality.” As detailed in Chap. 14, *mysticism* and *openness to experience* have been used for mapping the cases in a two-dimensional space. In this map (see Fig. 17.2), Isabella is located in the 4th quadrant, which indicates her low *mysticism* scores as well as above average scores on openness to *experience*. Isabella is no mystic, as she scores well below not only her group mean (FG6), but also the sample as a whole. Therefore, to the extent that Hood's *Mysticism Scale (1975)* correlates highly with self-identification as “spiritual” in our study, Isabella is not that “spiritual”—no doubt, and true to her own self-identification, she is a “neither religious nor spiritual” individual.

Table 22.1 presents Isabella's scores on the most important scales in comparison with the “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents in our study. Isabella's high score on *environmental mastery* is important for a more in-depth understanding of Isabella. Here, she scored 8 points higher than the average score in every focus group in our sample, and almost two standard deviations higher in her own focus group. When combined with a Faith Development score of a stage 5 for ‘decision making,’ this indicates she felt extremely comfortable operating and navigating the choices and possibilities present in her world. Isabella's life decisions were seldom the result of accidents and coincidences; they were the result of careful planning and consequentialist reasoning.

Table 22.1 Comparison of Isabella I. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Isabella I.	Mean values for “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” focus group in the USA	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	13	21.1	9.6
<i>Extraversion</i>	25	25.2	7.2
<i>Openness to experience</i>	39	35.4	5.6
<i>Agreeableness</i>	35	29.9	5.5
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	39	29.8	7.4
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)			
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	17	29.6	13.4
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	13	19.1	9.5
<i>Interpretation</i>	27	32.5	9.7
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	24	27.6	4.5
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	32	24.0	4.6
<i>Personal growth</i>	26	28.7	4.2
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	33	26.3	4.9
<i>Purpose in life</i>	31	25.5	4.6
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	33	25.2	5.0
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)			
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	49	46.5	8.0
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	6	6.5	2.9
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	23	21.9	2.5
<i>Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog</i>	13	13.7	3.5

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

Isabella’s high score on *purpose in life* is also important to note. Here, it is significant to recognize that she scores over one standard deviation above the mean for her focus group (FG6), while also well above all other means for the individual focus groups. Furthermore, this matches up nicely with the repeated emphasis in Isabella’s narrative that explicates the self-creation of purpose and meaning as a something inherently subjective and personal, while rejecting any Transcendent teleological

purpose to life. In other words, and when taken in conjunction with her narrative, Isabella’s scores on *purpose in life* can be used to demonstrate that a horizontally transcendent view of the world, that is one without reference to a vertically Transcendent reality, can have an exceptionally high amount of purpose and meaning—a purpose and meaning that exists at least on par with those worldviews commonly expressed through explicit religious and spiritual frameworks and language.

Isabella's Semantic of "Spirituality"

I think spirituality is just for people who say I want to believe in something, but I don't know *what*. (interact 265)

In the interview, as well as on the survey, Isabella takes great care to reiterate that she is neither religious nor spiritual. While she did not respond in the survey portion of our study when asked to give her definition of "religion" and "spirituality," the interview portion proved most telling. Isabella views both "religion" and "spirituality" as identical categories, going on to state that she doesn't "even understand what the difference in spirituality is" when compared with religion. Moreover, to Isabella, "spirituality" is actually "religion-lite." She views "religion" and "spirituality" as categories or labels that are applied to things we don't yet understand, and as such, these concepts stifle empirical and intellectual inquiry as one can always end up saying, "Oh, God did it. The end." when attempting to explain the world around us. In Isabella's mind, "spirituality" is "a failing" of "thinking through things and analyzing them." In one sense, it appears that Isabella may have little room for a sense of mystery, and, perhaps demands too much that reality be fully intelligible in a purely rational manner.

Whereas Isabella presents no explicit contrast between "religion" and "spirituality" in the interview, her survey responses to the Contextual Semantic Differential (see Fig. 22.1)³ for "religion" and "spirituality" indicate a slight and subtle *softening* of that position. Here, "spirituality" appears to be associated with slightly more favorable adjectives than "religion" (e.g. liberating, tolerant, modern). However, Isabella makes it clear that "religion" and "spirituality" are to be thought of as equally—and strongly—boring, otherworldly, irrational, and subjective. In this sense, Isabella rejects "religion" precisely because she does understand that it makes claims she believes to be false. "Spirituality" remains more positive perhaps, because for Isabella it is less

specific, perhaps even more so because it is more a matter of feeling than cognition (for comparison with results of her focus group, see Appendix A, Fig. A.27).

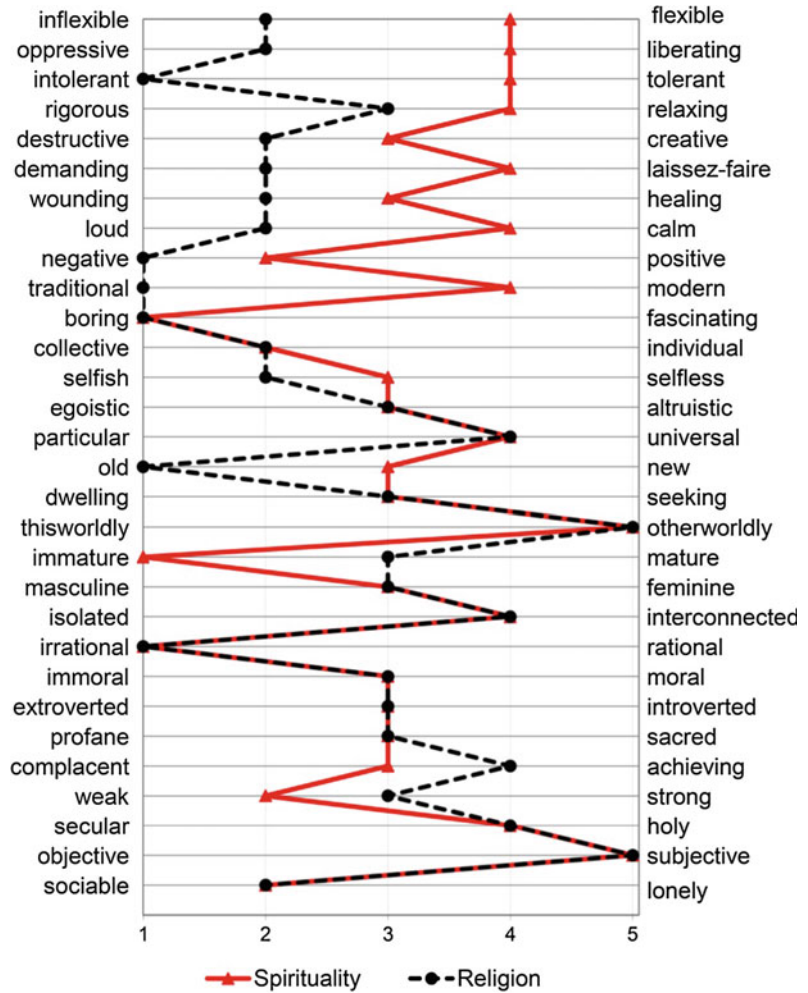
Isabella's understanding of "spirituality" appears to overlap substantially with her understanding of "religion." She claims to make no distinction between the two in her interview. Both appear to her as labels that function by default to limit the types of questions humans can ask, and answer about the world around us. Isabella's 'semantic of spirituality' (and by extension religion in her case) only has meaning and significance in so far as other individuals in society use them. She doesn't use or include these terms in her life because she feels they do not accurately describe it in any meaningful way. In other words, the term "spirituality" resembles an extra puzzle piece in Isabella's worldview—life is complete without it. As such, it is unlikely that any deeply meaningful and moving experiences Isabella has, or will have, will ever be expressed in terms of "religion" or "spirituality." In other words, the experiences—awe, wonder, etc.—are there, they will just not receive any supernatural framing. Yet, this interpretation is incomplete without noting that, for Isabella, "spirituality" does differ from "religion"—if only as a contrast between that which is closed, inflexible and even wounding, as opposed to that which is flexible, creative and healing.

Faith Development in the 'Faithless'

The Faith Development Interview (FDI) has seen great success in eliciting an abundance of rich autobiographical narrative material in religious and spiritual populations since its introduction by James Fowler in 1986 (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004). However, its use in populations and individuals who identify as 'neither spiritual nor religious' is a much more recent—and welcome—phenomenon (e.g. Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009). Thanks to Fowler's broad and rather ecumenical and liberal conceptualization of 'faith' (Fowler, 1981, pp. 92f), this has allowed the FDI to address not only religiosity

³Isabella did not complete Osgood's Semantic Differential.

Fig. 22.1 Isabella's Associations to "Spirituality" on the Contextual Semantic Differential



and spirituality, but also ‘worldviews’ that are not accurately represented in terms of spirituality or religion (Keller & Streib, 2013). Furthermore, the FDI offers a unique view at the intersection of religion, spirituality and the secular as some questions in the “Religion and Worldview” section of the FDI contain explicit theological concepts such as ‘sin.’ For example, interview question number 23 asks, “What is sin to your understanding?” (Fowler et al., 2004). What proves most interesting here is how individuals who identify as ‘neither spiritual nor religious’ (such as Isabella in the case study given here) accept, reject, or reinterpret such a question with a theological concept such as ‘sin’ or ‘God.’ In this sense, does the FDI require adjustment for

use in nonbelieving populations? While some researchers have had great success in slightly revising the FDI for use in explicitly atheist populations (e.g. Silver, Coleman, Hood, & Holcombe, 2014), the FDI certainly does not require a reformulation for use in nonreligious nonbelieving individuals as evident here. The few FDI questions that include theological notions are not to be understood as any sorts of methodological dilemma that require accounting for. They can be conceived of as a methodological advantage. For example, such a centering on the acceptance, rejection or reformulation of belief or unbelief may act as the vary point of stipulation from which to approach the psychology of religion (e.g. Coleman & Arrowood, 2015;

Coleman et al., 2013; Streib & Hood, 2013; Vergote, 1986, 1997).

Faith development in the ‘faithless,’ such as Isabella, allows a narrative window with which we may view first hand accounts of the role that seminal theological concepts such as God, Faith, Sin and prayer may or may not factor into nonreligious worldviews from a diachronic perspective. Exciting research opportunities for the future are made possible by the growing use of the FDI in “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents (e.g. Streib et al., 2009; and this current project) as scholars will have narrative accounts of how some theological notions are accepted, rejected or reinterpreted as the debate over secularization (Bruce, 2011; Coleman, 2013) and notions of the ‘post-secular’ (Habermas, 2008) continue to play out.

Taking Isabella as an example, when the FDI asks about her image of God or the Divine (FDI question 4), she responds with the following: “I am an atheist, so I don’t believe in any particularly personal god.” (interact 60) Although it is made clear that she does not believe in a God throughout the interview, Isabella appears to be communicating, at least in this instance, that if one defines the idea of God in broad enough impersonal terms (e.g. such as an ‘unmoved mover’, the laws of the universe, or as pantheistic) she might possibly assent to such a ‘belief,’ however and pragmatically speaking, her life would be lived *as is*—without the need for such a God belief. Here, Isabella is clearly able to conceive of something ‘grander,’ however she will not frame this in religious language. Thus in this instance, the FDI has elicited the reformulation of a theological concept (God) and neither an ‘acceptance’ nor a ‘rejection’ from Isabella.

Elsewhere, when Isabella is asked to define ‘sin’ to her understanding, she does not reformulate such a theological concept as in the previous instance—she rejects it. Isabella states, “I don’t believe in sin.” She goes on to explicate, “Sin is defined as something that is against what God has set down.” Isabella doesn’t “have the Ten Commandments in stone to have to follow. So, [she’s] sinless.” (interact 285) In this

instance, the FDI has elicited a rejection of a theological concept from the individual and we might expect as much when looking at a person who never saw the idea of God as a plausible framework. However, there is one way that Isabella’s understanding of religion belies her claim that it never made sense to her. It appears that the sense religion made to Isabella at age 8, is the very sense of religion that Isabella continues to reject and find meaningless as an adult nonbeliever. Lastly, when Isabella is asked if there are any ideas or symbols from the religious or spiritual community that are important to her, or that have been important to her she responds with, “in a way, yes.” In fact the one thing she misses “from not being religious is not having rituals.” (interact 267) She enjoys the repetition and sense of comforting efficacy that rituals provide knowing that they are “very deep seated in the human psyche,” just as scholars such as Boyer (2001), Xygalatas (2012) have indicated. As seen here, Isabella accepts the role that some theological concepts such as religious ritual have, or can contribute to, even in the life of a ‘neither nor’ atheist such as herself. We regret that we did not explore more fully Isabella’s participation in rituals, whether explicitly recognized as religious or not.

While a more in-depth analysis of Isabella’s case will be provided in the following sections, as argued here, the Faith Development Interview may provide methodologically important information in not only the Faithful but, especially in the ‘Faithless.’ The FDI can provide narrative data that elucidates the acceptance, rejection, or reformulation of certain theological concepts as presented in the FDI.

Faith Development in Isabella I

I think of myself as a pretty strict rationalist.
(interact 265)

Based on the faith development evaluation of the interview with Isabella I., for which we have followed closely the *Manual for Faith*

Development Research, Isabella's interview predominantly shows a 'mutual religion style' (stage 3) overlapping significantly with the 'individuating-systemic religious style' (stage 4) (Streib, 2001). Contra the advantage of the Faith Development Interview in the previous section, this sort of transitional space between these two styles seems to be a reflection, perhaps limitation, of using a religiously orientated developmental perspective to explore individuals who are neither spiritual nor religious. For example, when asking a *neither-nor* about their 'image of God' in general, and Isabella in specific, we might expect answers precisely like the one Isabella gave (for in-depth discussions of nonbelief and god image, see Bradley, Exline, & Uzdevins, 2015; Coleman, Hood, & Shook, 2015). Does Isabella have an 'image of God'? Well, and as she responds, "in general, no." If we attempt, as the faith development interview does, to impute a religious framework on Isabella, she, in a sense, 'shuts down.' There is just nothing for her to speak about. She doesn't believe in God, and has never. However, she is certainly able to conceive of the idea of something larger and grander than her, i.e. the very impersonal universe. You might be able to stretch, mold, and bend the concept of 'God' enough to suit Isabella, but it would be (at the least) an emical misnomer if we were to call this 'God,' in the vulgar of common sense that Isabella has never found acceptable.

Here, an important theoretical question presents itself for future investigation: what exactly is the impact of belief/religious praxis on the images of god? Does actually believing in God produce different 'images' than merely being asked to entertain an image of an entity that is *not* believed in, and therefore without relevance? Moreover, we should expect some nonbelievers to have sophisticated concepts of god, and others to have ones that range from 'poor' to nonexistent depending on whether or not the idea/notion was found plausible enough to entertain and explore in the first place. Perhaps just as the sciences have consulted theology in understanding god concepts and the religious human (Altınlı-Macić & Coleman, 2015), they might

want to consult with atheology (Shook, 2014) when considering the ontology of god concepts that nonbelievers will surely be asked about as research presses forward.

To that point, the FDI is not measuring an individual's personally held 'image of god'; rather, it is measuring (upon the interviewee choosing to answer the question) the interviewees' reconstruction of how they view other individuals' conceptualization of God. This is an important distinction to make when using Faith Development Theory in "neither religious nor spiritual" respondents. In other words, Isabella doesn't have an 'image of God' in the same ontological sense as a believer. Isabella must engage in cognitive pretense just to form such an image, presumably drawing on culturally available notions of what God might 'look like.' This distinction is important as it may explain why a 'neither-nor' would score relatively low (or refuse to answer) on areas of the FDI that explicitly ask about religious or spiritual concepts. This is not to say that the cognitive processes and structural logic of 'neither religious nor spiritual' respondents is necessarily different from other groups, but it is a question that awaits further investigation. Faith development theory, according to Fowler, is supposed to attend to structural logic. The difference, however, lies in *what* object the structural logic is being applied to. That is, we shouldn't be too surprised when a lifelong nonbeliever does *not* have a very elaborate, complex, or rich image of a God—a God they have never believed in, never worshipped, never prayed to, and that has no relevance in their own worldview. After all, gods that go unworshipped are gods that are impotent (Norenzayan, 2013).

As one might expect, Isabella typically scores low on FDI questions that espouse religious or theological concepts with scores ranging from a stage 2 when she was asked about her model of 'mature faith,' to a steady stage 3 when asked about her image of God, or if she considered herself a religious/spiritual person, or had any religious/spiritual ideas that were important to her. Of course Isabella scores low on these

aspects of Faith Development Theory.⁴ Even with Fowler's broad conceptualization of 'Faith,' asking a *neither-nor* to entertain religious concepts is like asking an adult about how Santa Claus fits into their life, or if they find the motions of putting out cookies and milk for Santa to be an important ritual. This example is not meant to denigrate believers, only to highlight some of the conceptual problems that occur when applying a religious theory to a *neither-nor*.

Inversely, and due to the ability of the FDI to capture not only religious relevance, but also secular, Isabella scores relatively high on aspects of 'faith development' that take into account non-religious structural aspects such as logic, perspective taking or locus of authority, more so than in the theological aspects for an individual at a relatively young age (27). This may, again, come as little surprise as atheists consistently demonstrate a thirst for knowledge (Schnell & Keenan, 2011), tendency to employ analytical thinking skills (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2012) and occupy far more positions in academia and science fields (Ecklund & Scheitle, 2007) than a typical religious individual.

When Isabella isn't asked about religious concepts that bare no personal relevance to her, her 'faith development' can be viewed as rather

⁴Although the "Form of Moral Judgment" aspect of Faith Development Theory is intended to be 'secular', half of the questions in this aspect can be easily interpreted as fairly religious. Isabella is a very bright interviewee; it is easy to see how she could/did catch on that the interview was attempting to view her through a religious framework. For instance, right after Isabella is asked, "What is sin to your understanding?" (sin clearly being a 'religious concept', which she refuses to answer because she does not believe in it) she is then asked "How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?". Although she chooses to answer this specific question, which is arguably a religious question itself, her answer is very brief. In fact, this is a pattern that largely holds up for all other 'theological questions' in the interview. When Isabella answers more 'secular' questions on the FDI, her responses are much more in-depth and elaborate. Taking this into consideration, and when given the overall framing of the interview, we suggest that it is likely that Isabella was somewhat hesitant to answer the more theological questions in the interview, which is one reason her scores on these questions are (and perhaps should be) lower than others.

advanced. She was a stage 5 for 'decision making' as well as elucidating moral opinions and actions (Always right). Isabella is a stage 4 for 'meaning in life,' 'changes in self,' and 'crises' among several other interview themes.

Taken together, the FDI has highlighted the role of rationality, logic, and decision making in Isabella's life while demonstrating that she is, in her own eyes, certainly neither religious nor spiritual, as these concepts do not fit well into her worldview.

The Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Isabella's Interview

Life Review

I have had a pretty boring, normal life. So, nothing all that exciting. (interact 12)

Attending to Isabella's response to the "life chapters" (see Chap. 16 for a methodological discussion) question in the faith development interview, we see that Isabella breaks her life up into an 'abstract' that displays temporal coherence in keeping with Bluck and Habermas' (2000) cultural concept of biography. The life chapters are as follows (a better understanding of her explanation is added in brackets):

1. "Early childhood" (her parents always read to her)
2. "Late childhood" (attended an arts and technology magnet school)
3. "Adolescence" (finally started to date)
4. "College" (one boyfriend until the last year of college)
5. "Adulthood" (spent some time reflecting and organizing her life, then decided she was ready to marry)

The systematic and thorough nature with which Isabella is able to reflexively divide up her life segments is noteworthy. Indeed, there was no need to rearrange Isabella's life chapter in order to form a more coherent structure for review—it was already present. Isabella is a planner and

never seems without an answer to a single question in the interview—provided they aren’t asking about a religious concept that is. As McAdams (2008, p. 257) writes, “life stories speak directly to how people come to terms with their interpersonal worlds, with society, and with history and culture.” As such, Isabella’s coherent and systematic life narrative details an individual (Isabella) who had a very happy and secure childhood, was able to prevail through the normal teenage stressors, graduate college and obtain a well paying job conducting research, marry, enjoy time with her friends and family all the while being aware of extra ordinary moments of powerful experience and perspective that seem to perforate the mundaneness of everyday reality. Isabella is comfortable looking back on her life choices and is optimistic for the future.

Horizontal Transcendence in Narrative

...life just happens. There’s no purpose. There’s no direction. I think, but it’s not like human life doesn’t have a purpose anymore than ants don’t have a purpose, that doesn’t mean that we don’t have a spot to be in or don’t deserve to live. (interact 253)

Of special interest are the narrative segments with a clear narrative-dynamic structure according to Labov and Waletzky (1967). The following quotations demonstrate important narrative segments indicative of horizontal transcendence with a trajectory from orientation, complication, evaluation and resolution focusing on the creation of meaning and experience of awe, wonder, and interconnectedness.

Horizontal Transcendence: The Creation of Meaning

In previous discussions of horizontal transcendence, Hood et al. (2009, p. 286) note that when God or religion is absent, the search for meaning may be sought in ways that are purely secular. Likewise, when Isabella is asked in the FDI if she feels that life has any meaning at the present she responds stating that there is not any meaning that is “inherent to the cosmos” (i.e. there is not a

‘meaning or teleological particle’), however, and true to the theorization of Hood et al. (2009), she notes there is meaning—“meaning [she] had to construct [herself].” This statement, and the narrative below, is also in line with, and supported by, the principle component analysis of subjective definitions of “spirituality” in Chap. 9 that further highlight horizontal transcendence to be associated with an individual search for meaning and truth. The following micro narrative, as told by Isabella, will explicate her journey, or construction rather, of meaning in life.

Throughout the narrative of Isabella, she recognizes that atheists commonly experience prejudice (Coleman, 2014; Norenzayan, 2013) and that traditionally, atheists have been stigmatized (Mann, 2013) as lacking meaning, morality, guidance and absoluteness in life, as the foundational claims of these concepts are commonly thought to reside only within religious texts or beliefs. However, such a claim is not only without warrant—it is false (Blessing, 2013; Wielenberg, 2013). In the case of Isabella, she recognizes that meaning is not handed down by divine fiat, or found in a single book such as the Bible. Rather, meaning for her is something that involves a conscious choice, a personal decision. It may be sought after, or created by the individual, but it is not given by, or found in a god. As she indicates above, meaning is a philosophical question for Isabella, not a religious one (Table 22.2).

Important in understanding the worldview of Isabella is to understand that she is not dismayed by the world being a “universal accident.” She seems to find an optimistic resolve in the challenge to discover meaning for herself and on her own terms. In this sense, Isabella feels responsible and personally accountable for the meaning that is present in her life, after all it was her choice. However, such a choice is not without its strife as she does note that the construction and search for personal meaning can, at times, be a “struggle.” In fact, she seems to have developed an ingenious mechanism for dealing with the moments in life when contemplating meaning appears to be too much—she drops the pursuit entirely, only to revisit it at a later point. Isabella is comfortable not only finding answers to

Table 22.2 Isabella’s Narrative Segment “Meaning of Life”

Title	The meaning of life
Orientation	...as an atheist, no one hands you a book that says here’s the meaning of life. (interact 100)
Complication	You kind of have to figure it [meaning in life] out for yourself which is probably a theme I’m going to touch on again. Um, and so I think <u>definitely</u> one of the philosophical questions that humans have been dealing with this they learned to think was, “What’s the meaning of life? Why are we here?” (interact 102)
Evaluation	And I really think that there is absolutely <u>not</u> any inherent meaning. I mean, we’re kind of a universal accident... (interact 102)
Resolution/coda	...we can certainly make up a meaning ourselves and go with that. (interact 102) And so, um, I mean, it’s certainly not an answer to everything. Sometimes I do certainly feel the ennui of “crap. Why even bother?” (interact 102)

important questions, but also going without answers to those very same questions when necessary. Perhaps, just as believers have struggles with God and spirituality (Exline & Rose, 2013), so too can nonbelievers’ struggle with, at times, finding meaning and purpose in their own lives.

Isabella may not have been handed a book “that says here’s the meaning of life,” but she certainly has no problem searching for, and answering questions of, meaning herself, and on her own terms.

Horizontal Transcendence: Awe, Wonder, and Interconnectedness

The Faith Development Interview allowed Isabella to share breakthrough experiences that have changed her sense of life’s meaning. These consisted, specifically, of two profound moments she labels and considers not only important, but “life-affirming.” These were experiences where the distractions of the outside world ceased to exist and an object in one case (a plastic bag) and an animal in another (her cat) became the epicenter of her attention and focus. These experiences cultivated a sense of awe, wonder and interconnectedness in Isabella that stands out as a “special experience” (Taves, 2009).

In her chapter titled *Building on William James: The role of learning in religious experience in Mental Culture* (Xygalatas & McCorkle, 2013), psychological anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann argues for *absorption* as “the broader name for the mental capacity common to trance,

hypnosis, dissociation and probably to much *spiritual experience*” (2013, p. 149; emphasis added). Luhrmann notes this is not a religious capacity, but a “psychological capacity” (Luhrmann, 2012, p. xxii) that she has found in her research, “helps the Christian to experience that which is not materially present.” Furthermore, she argues that absorption facilitates spiritual experience. According to Luhrmann (2013, p. 149),

(A)bsorption is the capacity to become focused in a non-instrumental way on the mind’s object (what humans imagine or see around them) and to allow that focus to increase while diminishing one’s attention to the myriad of everyday distractions that accompany the management of normal life.

Luhrmann’s definition of absorption may not only underlay religious or spiritual experiences, but seems to support notions of “transcending the everyday world” (Streib & Hood, 2013) in general and is highly correlated with openness to experience (Roche & McConkey, 1990), of which Isabella scores as above average across all focus groups. As such, it should be no surprise to identify what appears to be the mental capacity for absorption which plays a central role in Isabella’s experiences of awe, wonder and interconnectedness which we term horizontal transcendence. However, it is important to note that no explicit measure of absorption was used in our current study, and according to Hood et al. (2009, p. 355), the only study to ever use both a measure of mysticism and absorption did not report the correlation between the two constructs. Measuring *mysticism*, *absorption*, and *openness to*

Table 22.3 Isabella's Narrative Segment "The Universe is Just Beautiful on Its Own"

Title	The universe is just inherently beautiful on its own
Orientation	I think it was American beauty ^a where the kid is filming this bag floating through the air... I think I've had a lot of small moments like that...
Complication	...even like the bag floating through the air I've seen the same thing and thought, "That is beautiful." Not 'cause the bag is inherently beautiful, but just like the basic underlying physics of the universe and how it expresses itself in even everyday motion of bags through the air being a visible sign of air vectors and turbulency is beautiful
Evaluation	...I kind of find that life-affirming to <u>me</u> because when you're an atheist you have this problem of, like, "Oh shit, what happens when you die?"
Resolution/coda	Nothing has meaning. <u>Well</u> nothing has to have meaning. It can just be the universe is just inherently beautiful on its own And it [the universe] doesn't need to care a shit about humans ultimately, but if the universe is beautiful, we're part of that beauty. (interacts 82, 84, 86)

^a*American beauty* is a popular existential drama filmed in 1999 that satires what is seen as the mundane and benign nature of the uneventful American middle class life focusing on 'Lester Burnham' (Kevin Spacey), as he discovers his current uneventful life is but a façade of a much more beautiful and 'real' reality awaiting to be found by those disillusioned with the status quo. (c.f. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0169547/>)

experience in "neither religious nor spiritual" individuals awaits future empirical investigation.

As Mircea Eliade once wrote, "he who has experienced the mysteries, is *he who knows*" (1959, p. 189, emphasis in original). When Isabella states, "the universe is just inherently beautiful on its own" we should listen. She knows, for Isabella, at times, has marveled at "the basic underlying physics of the universe."

The language Isabella uses in her mini narrative is also inline with, and supported by, the principle component analysis of subjective definitions of "spirituality" in Chap. 9 that further highlight horizontal transcendence to be associated with "(All-) Connectedness and harmony with the universe, nature and whole." (Table 22.3).

In this vignette from her life, Isabella presents us with a moment in her life (one of many she notes) where the noise of the myriad distractions from everyday life ceases to exist. She is withdrawn from the outside world, yet a part of the world in a more definitive and exceptional sense that is out of the ordinary. Her attention focuses on the universe and its expression to her, and her understanding of it through the language of physics. She is absorbed into the beauty of the universe. Furthermore, she recognizes, in a rather discordian-paradoxical fashion, that even while the universe may not contain absolute meaning,

there is still such a *will to meaning* that permeates life (Coleman & Hood, 2015; Frankl, 1988). Isabella, lost in the moment and with a conscious focus on nature and the universe, finds resolve and comfort in its beauty. This comfort and beauty arrives at Isabella, just as it has to the more visible so-called 'new atheists' (cf. Cotter, 2011), not through a religious or spiritual path or framework, but through the very secular observation and admiration of the world around her. Furthermore, Isabella's experiences can occur in unexpected places and at any time: "bags floating in the wind moments can happen anywhere." This profound experience, and others, touches Isabella, and triggers a feeling of interconnectedness with the universe, after all "if the universe is beautiful, we're part of that beauty."

Relationships

...how your parents bring you up sets the foundation for absently everything... (interact 32)

Through the course of Isabella's narrative and life development, Isabella seems to have established, and maintained, healthy, secure, and meaningful relationships with numerous individuals in her life. Focusing on content we see her parents (perhaps not surprisingly) as the

primary relationship that resides at the center of Isabella's world.

Her parents loved her and they participated actively in her life. They read to her as a child and continually “set good examples for her.” Although they set such a “high bar and expected a lot” from her as a child, her parents were very engaged and “also enabled [her] to reach it [the high bar] by... being involved in school.”

Although Isabella did not date much in high school, she includes her first boyfriend as an example of a meaningful and important relationship. She notes that they eventually decided to “break up not because of any sort of argument or something. It was amicable, but because [they] had lost the spark.” (interact 44).

Isabella goes on to list two other siblings, an older brother and a younger sister, as current relationships that are important to her, along with an emphasis on her husband, “obviously” she states.

Isabella's very systematic reasoning process likely contributed to secure romantic relationships in her life and in being comfortable with the choices she has made. As such, Isabella was able to demonstrate restraint and control in her choices ‘to date or not to date’, even remarking that not having a boyfriend enabled her to focus on herself as she matured into adulthood. Not rushing into relationships and being comfortable ‘single’ likely prepared her fairly well for marriage, which, as she emphasizes, was something *she* decided was right for herself and her life.

Isabella has friends, and not just a few; according to her she has “a lot.” However, although she very much values her friends and their input, she “just [hasn't] had any big decisions she's needed their input on.” Her primary interests, regarding the relationships in her social life, revolve around much more than just not believing in a God. Isabella gathers with her friends, including family, siblings and coworkers to regularly play highly imaginative role-playing games. Some atheists may find it difficult to imagine and mentalize a superhuman agent such as a god (Norenzayan, Gervais, & Trzesniewski,

2012), however, such supernatural imagination and mentalizing runs rampant in the world of wizards, orcs and dragons—provided a role-playing game is going on, that is.

Values and Commitments

I definitely try and follow the Golden Rule.
Because I think it's just an inherently good idea.
(interact 219)

Throughout the interview, Isabella seems to value, and commit to, the idea that life—the world she inhabits—is wrought with meaning, even if it is not an inherent part of a God created cosmos. In fact, the value she places on meaning is so great that even though Isabella lists her husband as her top commitment, she goes on to say that “if I weren't married life wouldn't be meaningless, if I didn't have a house, life wouldn't be meaningless and if I didn't have a job, life wouldn't be meaningless.” (interact 205) It seems that the central commitment, and value, in Isabella's life has no material presence, but it is not God—it is the personal construction of meaning—something that is just wondrous in the absence of a supernatural worldview. You can take away such things as her family, her shelter, or her job yet the *will to meaning* still remains (Frankl, 1988). For Isabella, one of the acts of ultimate meaning is the act of “pure self-sacrifice” because “if the only person you're harming is yourself and it's helping others it's hard to say that's wrong.” (interact 249).

Isabella notes commitments to “feminism” and “science” and is active in social justice issues, such as animal welfare and the separation of church and state. She also strongly supports ‘pro-choice’ movements seeking to uphold reproductive rights for women. While we do not know for sure in the present study what ‘type’ of nonbeliever Isabella may be, her commitments are similar to those of the ‘Activist-Atheist/Agnostic’ type of nonbelief (Silver et al., 2014). A “fairly active” member of her local Freethought group, she stays connected with friends by also

attending the monthly "atheist Meet-up" in her area. Isabella recognizes that "atheists kind of lack that pillar [God/religion] to gather around. Because it's hard to gather around something that you don't believe in." (interact 165).

Religion and World View

...with age and maturity, of course, my world view changes, and incorporates a broader view, and, but that's hopefully just what everyone does. (interact 58)

Isabella makes clear: she is not religious and not spiritual. In fact, holding no belief in God has always seemed the only intelligible option for Isabella since the very moment she was first presented with an actual choice to believe or not believe at age 8. Besides identifying as an atheist throughout the interview (belonging), she uses terms such as "rationalist" (belief) and "humanist" (behavior) that more clearly speaks to what she does, or believes in, than the one thing she does not, i.e. God.

Although Isabella does not participate in religious rituals herself, and, as mentioned previously, she understands the comforting nature of many religious rituals and remarks on how this is the one aspect of religion that she actually might miss. Her views on the universe are reminiscent of the late Carl Sagan (cf. Sagan, 1980), that is to say, there is a very natural world around us governed by the physical laws of the universe which can provide—upon proper reflection—at least as much wonder, amazement, awe, and beauty as a religious or supernatural world. In fact, Isabella is still able to find meaning and beauty in what she recognizes is an ultimately impersonal universe. Isabella has no religion, and spiritual frameworks seem more than unappealing when trying to frame her place in the universe, they don't even accurately describe her views.

Isabella found talking about an afterlife a logically untenable position during the interview, quoting the following analogy: "Can you remember what it was like before you were born? Death is a lot like that." While this statement may

cause existential anxiety in a typically individual, Isabella finds this "comforting." Furthermore, the idea of life after death is "not even oblivion," as death is "not even nothing." Isabella does not need promises of eternal life to soothe death anxiety; the promise of 'nothingness'—nonexistence—will do just fine. Isabella recognizes that in death there is peace, and that alone is comforting.

From "Spirituality" to Horizontal Transcendence: A General Interpretation of Isabella's Journey

...there was no one moment where I was like, 'Oh I'm an atheist.' It was just a thing that's, like when I learned the word 'atheist', it was like, 'Oh, okay.' (interact 74)

In keeping with Klein's theorization (Chap. 6), spirituality may indeed be the 'new religion' however; horizontal transcendence may be the 'new spirituality.' In this sense, horizontal transcendence could be viewed not only as an alternative to a religious framing of experience and worldview, but also "spiritual" framings that appear too metaphysical and supernatural in nature. This is not to say that horizontal transcendence somehow occupies an identical space in relation to spirituality, only that it might serve as a conceptual category which may have functional similarities with the term and worldview of "spirituality," which has served as an alternative to "religion" for many in America today. Here, of course, we might see this category as being predominantly occupied by neither religious nor spiritual individuals such as Isabella.

Traditional paradigms hold true with regards to "religion" and "spirituality," however an additional subtle distinction of exceptional experience (Kohls & Walach, 2006) may be appearing as secularization increases (Bruce, 2011; Coleman, 2013) and experiences that were previously understood in religio-spiritual terms, are now being understood and explained rationally versus supernaturally. Some neither religious nor spiritual individuals (such as Isabella)

may not find powerfully moving experiences and meaning in life a topic suitable to be discussed using theologically tinged language. Regarding exceptional experience—religious or secular—you can look at the experience affectively, meaning that the experience confirms the validity of your interpretation, or you can look at it rationally where all experience is carefully vetted through a logical process but some leftover exceptional experience remains. Important to remember, however, is that even Isabella’s rational framing of the world and her experience of it gives way to deeply meaningful and profound experiences that can be used in comparison to experiences that may be deemed religious or spiritual. The individual’s metacognitive perspective determines their metacognitive perspective on the universe.

Important to the continued exploration of horizontal transcendence are qualitative and narrative psychological approaches as employed in our cross-cultural spirituality study. This kind of ‘ground work’ should be continued in efforts to further tease out all meaningful and exceptional experiences in the growing number of “neither religious nor spiritual” individuals, as traditional frameworks, typically structured around theological concepts, may not be able to capture *all there is* when taking into account the pluralities of richness of experience and meaning that is possible in the world (Feyerabend, 1999).

In conclusion, this chapter has sought to understand the case of Isabella I., an individual who’s life is expressed and lived in the absence of any supernatural framework, on her own terms by clearing conceptual space for the inclusion of horizontal transcendence (Coleman & Arrowood, 2015; Coleman et al., 2013; Streib & Hood, 2013) as a framework, which, in and of itself, is neither religious nor spiritual, just like Isabella. Isabella has developed this kind of horizontal transcendence without the use of, or need for, any type of “spiritual” semantic. Therefore, Isabella’s case demonstrates not a variation of “spirituality,” but something different, yet similar, but above all—something special, horizontal transcendence.

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Redrawing the Map: Varieties of “Spiritual,” “Religious” and “Secular” Lives

23

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Abstract

This chapter summarizes the trajectories laid out in the chapters focusing on narrative constructions of faith development in biographical context (Chaps. 16, 18–22 and 26). Differences and similarities which are aligned to and which cut across focus groups (defined by self-identification as “religious” vs. “spiritual” and the distinction of theist vs non- or atheist, see Chap. 4), affiliation, and cultural context are highlighted. Different trajectories are reviewed, and different discursive functions of being “spiritual” are outlined. The map we draw is, however, based on a selection of interviews obtained in this project. It will need to be revised as we study more interviews and map new territory, including our third volume that will be based upon longitudinal research now in progress.

Varieties of “Spiritual” Biographies

We have seen in Chap. 5 that identifying as “spiritual” or else in the forced choice format is not systematically related to type of affiliation. Especially Chap. 9 shows a wide variety of meanings of subjective definitions. We have documented group differences and trends. However, as we have seen in Chap. 17, the self-identifications given in the forced choice format in the questionnaire and those given in the

FDI show a high degree of correspondence, but do not overlap completely. What being “spiritual” means needs to be described by attending to method, context, and, as our case studies demonstrate, personal biography. In the following section we draw on the self-identifications and trajectories given in the FDIs. We focus on the “religious identity narratives,” the mini-narratives in which respondents account for their position vis à vis religion and use these to suggest a tentative typology of “spiritual” biographies (see Chap. 16; cf. Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Thus we shift the perspective to a summarizing reflection on the subjective reconstructions of “spiritual” lives, taking up the cases we have analyzed in the single respective chapters.

As a frame we use the distinction of vertical versus horizontal transcendence and the identification of the interviewees with institutions and

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traditions, or, in terms of Streib and Hood (2013; Chap. 2), degree of institutional mediation. However, we will also show that, when we focus on personal history, teasing out differences and similarities of individual ways of relating to the transcendent, we have to work with a different depth of sharpness. We discuss perhaps unexpected similarities across differences of, for example, culture, affiliation, or gender. We also show contradicting and conflicting aspects of faith which emerge during comparative analyses.

We start with those cases of interviewees who describe themselves as adhering to a tradition, or as religious, who refer to ritual, myth, and community of their tradition, who are invested in institutional mediation, while also discussing attachment to a personal God, thus displaying vertical transcendence.

Relying on God, Scripture and Community

Here, we take a second look at two young interviewees for whom “religion” and “spirituality” go together and who live within their Christian tradition, Ella and Madison (for case studies, see Chap. 18). Ella is a 28-year-old American and Protestant in the Church of Christ tradition, coming from a “more religious than spiritual” family and identifying herself as “equally religious and spiritual” at the time of the interview. She defines “spirituality” as “the inward belief system of an individual toward a higher power,” and “religion” as “the outward practice of the internal belief system toward a higher power.” Corresponding to her self-identification both inward belief and outward practice belong together. Her understanding of maturing in faith is about deepening: “I think that I have a much... deeper understanding of God.” And: “I think of where He is in the whole picture of trying to create a world where humans can get along with each other, and can also have a relationship with Him, and I have a much deeper respect for His patience with humans and our inability to deal in certain relationships” (FDI interact 20). In her FDI, we find a narrative telling how her faith,

prayer, and reading the Bible helped her to cope with the loss of her best friend (see Chap. 18).

Madison, 18-year-old American and Protestant in the Baptist tradition, remembers her home at age 12 as “equally religious and spiritual,” and she describes herself as currently being “more spiritual than religious.” She defines “spirituality” as “a sense of looking beyond what is tangible,” and “religion” as “knowing certain norms, criteria, stories, and/or rules of a certain belief.” In the FDI, she describes herself as “faithful.” Asked to describe her image of God, she thinks about the many different images which may reflect different aspects before she elaborates: “When bad stuff happens, it’s not His fault, that’s just life and you have to learn to depend on Him even more and just...” (interact 67), outlining a strategy of keeping or even strengthening faith in times of hardship. In the narrative that we find in her FDI she talks about the resolution of conflict in her family and re-establishing trusting relationships, which we see as context of her faith development.

Relationship issues are central in both women’s narratives. Both women can be located, in terms of faith development, between synthetic-conventional and individuative-reflective style, Ella more on the synthetic-conventional style, Madison more on the individuative-reflective side, however, both on the conventional side, when it comes to morality. In their own lives, they seem to negotiate the loyalties to their religious upbringing and groups and persons which whom they share their faith with their own aspirations and decisions. Madison, although younger, does this in a more explicit way, which is reflected by her individuative-reflective faith. Ella, who is reported to live in some disconnection between her church’s teachings and events in her life seems to rather implicitly acknowledge this as “difficult” without further elaboration. Turning to the content of their moral convictions, Madison displays the “moral intuitions” of purity/sanctity, and Ella those of purity/sanctity, ingroup/loyalty and authority/respect, which are more likely to be connected with a conservative orientation (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). When asked to give their view on “mature faith,” both refer to the bible. Madison mentions Job as a role model

(interact 204), and Ella states that “mature faith can only come from a deep knowledge of the bible” (interact 82). Both women rely upon God, scripture and community structures and their faith development is expressed in relational terms.

From Concretistic Activity to Experience-Based Receptivity

Also involved in tradition and attached to institutions are Hans, the elderly German Catholic priest and missionary (Chap. 19), Brian, the American young adult who is a Zen Buddhist (Chap. 21), and Laura, the young Protestant German student, who loves to sing with others (Chap. 19). At the same time, these persons explicitly reject the concept of a personal God who interferes directly in human affairs. Laura and Hans may be characterized by what Streib and Hood (Chap. 1) call the middle ground between horizontal and vertical transcendence, looking for a transcendent “Thou” who cares. Brian displays what corresponds to horizontal transcendence by not referring to any notion of other-worldliness or higher beings.

Laura, the young Protestant German, coming from a “more religious” background, sees herself as “seeking,” and somewhere between being a believer, religious, and spiritual. She does not believe in a God who would directly interfere in human affairs. Rather, she sees humans as having free will and a consequent responsibility for their actions, as her narrative on “God, Faith, and Responsibility” illustrates, where she criticizes fatalistic trust in deity. Belief to her means “a lot of scrutinizing, questioning.” She relates experiences of feeling hopeful to find her faith “someday.” Meanwhile, her preferred “spiritual” practice is singing.

Brian, coming from a “more religious” background, has, as teenager and during his time in college, been “experimenting with ideologies.” Then he discovered Zen Buddhism. He identifies as “more spiritual than religious atheist/non-theist” in our survey and as “religious” during the interview. At the time of the interview he is an

advanced student of psychology and newlywed husband and has been practicing Zen for some years. While rejecting traditional Western belief orientated religious frameworks, he feels connected to that tradition, its myths and rituals. In his religious identity narratives he states: “Zen Buddhist Don’t Believe in God,” and discusses “Peak Experiences, Psychedelic Drugs, and Mystical Insight” and “The Problem of Peak Experience,” which he regards with caution. He calls himself “religious” because he appreciates rituals and symbols which connect him with the community and the tradition, even if he does, admittedly, not always understand them completely.

Hans reports how he, coming from a “more religious environment” and identifying as “equally religious and spiritual” today, turned to a life structured by his faith, and by a lifelong experience with Marian spirituality and Ignatian exercises. Interestingly, he also self-identified as non-theist. In the FDI, he self-identifies as “more spiritual,” explaining that for him this means looking for his own path. His self-identification as non-theist may impress as counter-intuitive at first sight. However, as laid out in the narrative we titled “Emotion and Religious Intensification” (Chap. 19), the missionary plays with paradox when he concludes his narrative with “And I have been telling myself: I have gone there to bring faith, but I have found faith there,” his faith being something to be created and grounded again and again in the shared experience. God is to him a felt presence, not a person.

These individuals appreciate ritual, myth and community, and they feel seriously committed to their “religion,” here put in quotation marks as it refers to “religion” as understood by these individuals. By drawing on shared ritual, myth, and symbols they rely on institutional mediation. Hans and Brian have received systematic training in traditions which support experiences that might be called mystic, and this is tied to traditions and their institutions. For Laura, singing seems to have a similar function, however, with less involvement of traditional institutions. Their practices enhance experiences which they

appreciate—however, without relating to a personal God. Laura, Brian and Hans can be aligned according to age and stages of faith: Laura's faith development was rated as between conventional and individuative-reflective that is, between stage 3 and 4; Brian's faith development was rated as individuative-reflective (stage 4), and Hans' faith development was rated as conjunctive (stage 5). Their trajectories suggest, taken together, a move from concretistic activity, learned and refined in a tradition, to experience-based receptivity.

Personal Encounters with Deity

Here we turn to two of the interviewees who report personal encounters with deity, which puts them on the vertical pole of the vertical-horizontal distinction. They are different regarding mediation: Ernestine (Chap. 18) is 75 years old, from the south of the USA, Protestant, and grew up in an "equally religious and spiritual" environment. Like Hans (see above and Chap. 19), she looks back, in old age, on a lifelong commitment to her religious tradition. Different from Hans, she identifies herself today still as "equally religious and spiritual." In our questionnaire, she defined "spirituality" as "a feeling within, a good expression from the heart, a self-realization," and "religion" as "a body of believers with common beliefs and purposes, a group of worshippers with a guided plan." For her, both seem to have been matching parts rather than mutually exclusive. Her faith development shows a predominantly mythic-literal style (stage 2), her faith being more a matter of felt experience than of reasoning. Her image of God, she claims, has not changed across the years. She describes her version of faith development: "The divine is divine and I think God is the ruler of the whole universe and it has not changed, I have grown stronger in my faith towards God" (interact 35). Telling how God spoke to her when as a 16-year-old she was working hard in the field, she remembers that "wonderful sensation," which she also characterizes as "good feeling" and "uplifting spirit" (interact 39).

Nancy, 56 years old and also from the USA, has self-identified as "more spiritual than religious" in the questionnaire, while her environment at age 12 was "equally religious and spiritual." She defines "religion" as "the grounds in which the spiritual seed grows. Some are better for growing than others" and "spirituality" as "the innate seed that grows into the divine. It is not defined by a religious belief." In the FDI, she self-identifies as "spiritual," and explains that a religious person would be "very bound up more in their religion and what their religion teaches" (interact 178). In her FDI we learn that she has relied on her spirituality and personal encounter with deity when confronted with crises in her life. Different from Ernestine, who stayed with the faith of her family, Nancy has appropriated ideas from a variety of religious and philosophical traditions. She may have looked for the divine outside of the tradition she grew up in. This brought her into contact with different groups. Although she draws together concepts from various traditions, Nancy states that her idea of God has not changed over the course of her life: "My idea of God has pretty much stayed in place now for a long time ... I've changed because I feel like I'm getting closer and I don't even say that that's not right. I feel like there is more awareness than there was maybe before, more knowledge more awareness." (interact 59). Her experience with deity occurs in a psychiatric ward when she is in trouble. The felt message "you are loved," which characterizes her religious identity narrative, had, similar to Ernestine's encounter with God, an "uplifting" effect. While different in terms of tradition and content, the experiences of both women are similar in emotional immediacy. The very direct ways of relating to what God is to them, and the insistence on the continuing and deepening relationship to deity are other shared characteristics. Thus, we may see both cases as examples of vertical transcendence. It is noteworthy that Ernestine, who remembers growing up in a loving family, stayed with the "familiar" God, while Nancy, who survived traumatic experiences and conflict in her family, related to a God outside of

her culture, experiencing “you are loved” with Shiva, a deity unrelated to her troubled family history. Ernestine, staying in her church, relies on institutionally mediated faith, while Nancy, who has explored several “spiritual” options, prefers an individual combination of approaches. While both women’s faith development includes the mythic-literal stage, their own conceptions of mature faith stress getting closer to God (Nancy) or growing stronger in faith to God (Ernestine). Like almost all other participants portrayed here, their “moral intuitions” are about fairness/reciprocity and harm/care.

Mystic Experience and Transcendence, Vertical and Horizontal

Here we focus on persons who have reported experiences which may be called “mystical,” however, not within Christian tradition. Both do not rely on institutional mediation: Sarah, who was introduced in Chap. 16, identifies her environment at age 12 as “more religious” and herself as “more spiritual.” She left her Christian affiliation when she felt that her prayers were not answered. Isabella from Chap. 22 comes from an “equally religious and spiritual” environment and identifies herself as “neither religious nor spiritual.” She never felt at home in the Christian faith of her upbringing.

Sarah defines “spirituality” as “a sense of something greater than one’s self” and “religion” as “an organized method of worshipping a deity.” Later, in the FDI she defines herself: “I think I see myself as somewhat spiritual, but not religious, and not faithful” (interact 112). Her religious identity narratives focus on “Theodicy not Explained,” “Desperately Praying for Comfort and Getting no Answer” and “Reclaiming Sensual Experience.” These narratives account for Sarah’s turn away from “Judeo-Christian” faith and illustrate her turn to a “spirituality” based on experiencing the beauty of this world with all her senses, which we may understand as horizontal transcendence. We have suggested to understand her “spirituality” as corresponding to the tradition

of American religiosity, which Fuller (2013, pp. 93–95) describes as “nature religion” and “unchurched spirituality.” However, Troeltsch’s mystic also comes to mind (see Chap. 1).

Isabella rejects being identified as religious or spiritual: “I think spirituality is just for people who say I want to believe in something, but I don’t know what” (interact 265). In the two narratives identified in her FDI, she positions herself as critical of religious conceptions. Claiming that the meaning of life is something “you have to create (...) yourself,” she takes a stance which might be called existentialist. Her other “religious identity narrative” states that “the universe is just inherently beautiful on its own.” There however, answering the question exploring moments of breakthrough, she draws on an experience which might be labelled mystic or “spiritual”—seeing the beauty of the world in something as mundane as a plastic bag being blown about.¹ This might, similar to Sarah’s experience of this world’s beauty, refer to “nature religion,” or “aesthetic spirituality,” although Isabella herself probably would not label her experience that way. Again Troeltsch’s suggestion of mysticism outside organized religion comes to mind.

In terms of faith development both are basically conventional (stage three) with some individuative-reflective (stage four) ratings and their ratings covering a broad range. Perhaps Sarah’s stage four ratings of “religious” concepts can be related to her involvement in her own de-conversion process. Isabella’s stage three responses have been discussed as pointing to a possible bias toward non-believers in the FDI, which, however, raises more questions in light of lower ratings of religious participants like Ernestine. Rather, she may have adopted a different conventional stance, as a professed atheist in a country where atheists are a minority. Different from Sarah, who self-identifies as “somewhat spiritual,” she rejects that label. This puts her at the horizontal pole, if we conceive of vertical-horizontal transcendence as a dimension, while Sarah may have a position in some middle ground.

¹She refers to the movie “American Beauty,” see Chap. 22 for more details.

Spirituality as an Ongoing Project

Here, we reflect on those who seem to be engaged with their “spirituality” as an ongoing project. In Chap. 20 we have reported about “quilt spiritualities,” and introduced Marion, 65, German, and Julia, 43, American. Both seem to be located somewhere in the middle between individual and institutional mediation and between vertical and horizontal transcendence.

Marion, coming from a background which was “more religious than spiritual” considers herself “more spiritual” although “not theist” at the time of the interview, which would place her more toward the horizontal pole of vertical-horizontal transcendence. In the questionnaire, she has given her definition of “spirituality”:

To be attentive and empathic in everyday life, be mindful of the moment, self-reflection, daily Zen-meditation, to be there for other creatures (without Mother Theresa-syndrome), to not kill and eat any animals, the middle way of Buddha and Buddhist psychology.

She defines religion as:

Believing, not knowing, dogma, personalized God (which does not exist according to my view) church, a dead end, too little personal freedom, but new assertive approaches make discussion worthwhile. I welcome comprehensive dialogue.

In the FDI she rejects the categories “religious,” “spiritual” and “believing,” stating that she thinks that

from a certain stage on this all is the same. I am not talking institutions, these are man-made. I say that I believe that we all dream, ultimately, of the same. If this has a beard or is labelled Yin and Yang, I do not know. I have the notion that there is a point where we all might meet. (interact 116).

Her faith development was rated mostly conjunctive (stage five). Her narratives focus on her past development, referring to “Surrender and Loving Myself,” and on her current efforts to come to terms with aging, “Celebrating the Old Fool.” She has been affiliated with several institutions and made use of traditions, however, in an individual and reflective way. This would place her in a middle ground between individual and institutional mediation, and while she also

has participated in groups with charismatic leaders (gurus), she has acquired a critical stance toward those.

Julia describes herself as coming from a “more religious than spiritual” environment and self-identifies as “more spiritual than religious.” She has, in the questionnaire, defined “spirituality” as “internally driven—the need to connect with Deity comes from within the Seeker; connecting with the Divine for one’s own sake regardless of the outcome.” She has defined “religion” as “a structured way to worship—constructed by humans to define and dictate what is believed, and how that belief should be expressed.”

In the FDI Julia identifies herself as “religious,” but not in the traditional sense. In a self-ironic way she plays with combining rituals from different traditions. The FDI question about “breakthrough experiences” elicits a narrative on “being one with everything” during meditation. Her faith development was seen as predominantly synthetic-conventional (stage three), and, in her case, this was seen as reflecting her “religiosity” of intermingling Catholicism and Wiccan traditions. Julia also draws on different traditions. Participating in different rituals, she also seems to be more involved in different groups. Compared to Marion she seems to rely more on institutional mediation, however, choosing were to go.

Both women draw on different traditions, however, Julia seems to do so in a more tacit, Marion in a more reflected way—and both seem to gain something from it.

Struggling with Spiritual and Other Issues

Finally, we look at the interview with René, a 35-year-old German, who is also drawing on different traditions, also somewhere in the middle between vertical and horizontal transcendence and between individual and institutional mediation. He is using “spirituality” to come to terms with a difficult life and inner struggles. René comes from a “neither religious nor spiritual” environment and self-identifies as “more spiritual than religious.” René defines “spirituality” as:

“Spirit, being, consciousness, love, life, joy, happiness, all that is, nothing-everything, THAT, mysticism, Tao.” “Religion” is to him: “Partly more interesting, nicer, but unnecessary nonsense, which confuses people a lot over and over again and can make them to fanatics.” René’s faith development was rated as mostly synthetic-conventional faith (mutual religious style). It seems difficult for him, however, to describe his own “spiritual” identity in the context of his biography. He rather uses religious and spiritual terms and images in a manner which is hard to follow.

René’s FDI is not easy to follow. This may point to difficulties not only of narrating but also of integrating experience. He is using “spirituality” to make what happened to him conceivable to himself and others, and it seems to be a challenge.

Conclusion

Redrawing the map has been an exercise in breaking up combinations which are sometimes taken for granted: We have seen that being “religious” does not mean believing in a personal God. Being “neither religious nor spiritual” does not mean having no faith or a life without meaning. And being “spiritual” can best be understood if we know who is speaking as it can be defined in very different ways.

Redrawing the map may also be an exercise in finding some unexpected similarities: FDI evaluations show Hans, the priest, and Marion, the former Sannyasin, at stage five. Both have invested a considerable part of their life-time in their engagement with “spirituality” and continue to do so, while both reject a person-like God, aware of their inner experience, and mindful of the notions of others. Hans has been “mediating” faith as a missionary, however, he understands himself rather as seeking than safely dwelling in institutionally mediated faith. Brian and Madison, whose faith development was rated individuative-reflective, affiliate with different traditions, the common characteristic being institutional mediation.

Those who rely on God, scripture and community indicate the moral intuitions of purity/sanctity, ingroup/loyalty and authority/respect, which are more likely to be connected with a conservative orientation (Graham et al., 2009). All others show either harm/care or fairness reciprocity or both. The intuition harm/care was found in almost every FDI. Most interviewees were found at synthetic-conventional faith or stage three.

“Religious identity narratives,” the mini-narratives accounting for participants’ faith development as they currently see it, are most likely to be elicited by the FDI questions exploring crisis and breakthrough experiences in the life review section. Narratives focusing on relationship and attachment arose in FDI with people who believe in a personal God, while experiences involving nature or the beauty of the universe appear in interviews with persons identifying as “more spiritual” theist or non-theist or “neither religious nor spiritual.”

Regarding the semantics of “spirituality,” the idea emerges that the openness of the concept makes it attractive and useful as “common ground” for the sharing of lived experience. Thus, it is used as a “common place” expression in the literal sense of the word for very different individual experiences, which might be called mystical or transcendent. It seems to be a concept which can be used as referring to different narratives. (cf. Koschorke, 2012, 172²).

However, it may function in culturally different ways. We have learned in the chapter portraying Isabella that she does not have a deconversion story to tell as might be expected of an atheist. American atheists may be aware of being regarded as solitary and isolated. The disclaimer of the “stereotypical solitary and isolated atheist persona” in Chap. 22 points to that possibility. In Germany, atheists do not run so much a risk of being stereotyped in this way, neither is it assumed that they necessarily deconverted. Similarly, a German atheist would not describe

²Koschorke uses the expression “Gemeinplatz” in his discussion of lexical, territorial, and social mobility of concepts. He argues that the approximate (das Ungefähre), not-understanding (Nichtverstehen), reinterpretation (Umdeutung) can be resources and function to allow communicative compromise.

himself or herself as a “closet atheist” as one other American interviewee, not presented here, did. Rather, German religious believers may be reluctant to talk about their personal encounters with deity—it may be not just by chance that we did not present German interviews covering such encounters in our analyses of the interviews of this study so far. Thus, “spirituality” may be used to cover somewhat different “common grounds” in Germany and the USA.

Outlook

Most of our interviewees were assigned a “synthetic-conventional” faith, this broad category encompasses different kinds of faith in terms of content, and personal constitution, as the narratives and the scales included in the case studies show. This raises the question of lack of differentiation in this area of the model of faith development with which we work and which we revise (Keller & Streib, 2013; Streib, 2005). Capitalizing on experiences with similar interview formats (e.g. Adult Attachment Interview) we experiment with current developmental concepts such as attachment and mentalization to capture development in the area of faith beyond the cognitive structural linear trajectory suggested by Fowler (1981). Multidimensionality will be conceptualized drawing on current developmental concepts to achieve more differentiation and precision in the description of faith across the adult life span.

Also, we have here presented retrospective narratives, reconstructions of faith development. Plausible as these may be, faith development needs to be observed, not only inferred relying on subjective reconstructions and evaluations of past experience. Another step in our research program will, therefore, involve a longitudinal design. For this we may add two more classics to the literature to consider: For studying how FDIs and, in particular, religious identity narratives change over

time we may draw on the inventive work of Bartlett (1932). For conceptualizing social and cultural contexts of subjective reconstructions of faith development we may use the work of Halbwachs (1980) on collective memory.

From a decidedly narrative perspective it might be worth to extend the discussion to “grand narratives” which play into the individual narratives we document. That would mean to attend to different cultural models or “master narratives” the interviewees draw on, but also to reflect on the relationship of grand narrative (e.g. enlightenment) and scientific “storytelling” (e.g. on conceptions of faith development).

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Part VI

Consequences of Being “Spiritual”

Heinz Streib, Michele Wollert and Barbara Keller

Abstract

This chapter has a special focus on the question how “spiritual” self-attribution is related to religious development. Do the “spiritual”/“religious” self-identifications and self-ratings as “spiritual” change together with the religious style/faith stage? Do subjective understandings (semantic versions) of “spirituality” change from one stage to the other or differ between specific configurations of religious styles? In the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality,” we interviewed a selection of more than one hundred of the 1886 respondents using the Faith Development Interview (FDI). FDI ratings were completed for 54 respondents in the USA and 48 in Germany. This chapter presents results about the relation of faith development/religious styles and “spirituality” both qualitatively and quantitatively. In regard to the qualitative analysis, the case studies from previous chapters are discussed in a synoptic view. Quantitative evaluation is possible on the basis of a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, after results from FDI evaluation were re-entered in the quantitative data base, which contains, for example, each interviewee’s response to the Religious Schema Scale, to the self-rating as “religious” and “spiritual,” but also information about the respondents’ semantics of “spirituality.” Results indicate that the faith stages/religious styles relate to age, to self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious,” and to the semantics of “spirituality”—which allows the identification of style-specific semantic profiles.

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Were Fowler writing today, *Stages of Faith* would certainly be about “spirituality.” The book would at least include a strong focus on “spirituality,” if not even the title would explicitly read “stages of spirituality.” Instead, theory and research have been based by Fowler (1981) on the construct of ‘faith’, which is conceptually well grounded in the theory of religion of scholars such as Cantwell

Smith (1963, 1979), Niebuhr (1943, 1961) and Tillich (1957, 1963). After the enormous spread (see Streib, 2008, see Chap. 3) and semantic career of “spirituality” (see Chaps. 6–10), one could speculate if the conceptualization and operationalization in the field of the scientific study of religion would be better-off today, if the term ‘faith’ had been considered instead of ‘spirituality’; but it may be too late for such proposal.

However, based on these conceptual considerations, we may assume rather close relationships between ‘faith’ and “spirituality” conceptually and empirically. And such empirical investigation is part of our project in this research and particularly in this chapter. The unique contribution of the faith development model and the religious styles perspective is their perspective on *development*, the account for *difference* between religious styles. Thus the line of argumentation and investigation is based on the differential perspective on faith and religious styles—to ask from there the central question: Are there differences, and, if yes, what are these differences between religious styles when research participants self-identify as “spiritual”? Is the semantics of “spirituality” style-specific? Is there something like a “spiritual” development?

In regard to the instrument and its conceptual background, we continue to use some of the terms of faith development theory¹ and the faith development interview (FDI) as central research instrument. In our view (see also Chap. 15, this volume), the qualitative, interpretative approach using the FDI has, for very good reasons, remained the ideal solution in research in faith development and religious styles. One of the reasons for this is that we do not have convincing solutions for a quantitative measure for faith development (see Streib, 2003b, 2005; Streib,

Hood, & Klein, 2010). The construct, which Fowler (1981) called ‘faith’ and Streib (2001) calls ‘religious style’, is more complex and comprehensive than a single scale type of measure can capture. As Streib (1991, 2003a, 2003c, 2005, 2007) argues, the multi-dimensionality of religious development is underestimated in empirical investigation in Fowler’s faith development theory and research. The classical FDI as semi-structured interview format with its twenty-five questions however elicits, besides data on structural operations of faith, a plentitude of narrative and content related data, which are important for widening the horizon in the assessment of faith development/religious styles.

The Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality” used the classical FDI. Evaluation was based on the structural approach of the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004) and has, in addition, engaged in a multi-levelled interpretative evaluation by including additional dimensions (see Chaps. 15 and 16). As a consequence of using the interview approach, our study of faith development and “spirituality” has a primacy in attending to the single cases and a selection of FDIs has been elaborated into case studies. But, of course, the chapter aims at a synoptic overview of the 102 FDIs. Based on the quantitative data, we engage in triangulation of data and across methods, which was possible after entering the results from FDI evaluation into the quantitative data base. This allows not only to present a descriptive overview, but also results of relating FDI scores to the most important scales and measures in the questionnaire for “spirituality” and its semantics.

Characteristics of the Faith Development Interview Sample

A general overview on the FDI sample of our study is presented in Table 24.1, which already details the FDI sample according to stage assignments and focus group memberships:

As Table 24.1 shows, the number of evaluated FDIs is 54 in the USA and 48 in Germany.

¹A note on terminology: We use in this chapter and many other chapters of this book not only the term ‘style’, but also the term ‘stage.’ This is consistent with the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004) which was used for evaluation. But it is important to note that we associate with ‘stage’ not the entire set of structural-developmental assumptions, but rather understand ‘stage’ as synonymous with, or interpreted by, ‘style.’ Therefore, wherever possible and appropriate, we use both terms interchangeably or use both terms with a slash.

Table 24.1 US and German FDI Respondents According to Focus Groups Membership and Faith Style Assignment

Country		Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Total
USA	FG1	–	–	–	–	–
	FG2	3	6	3	1	13
	FG3	–	13	13	2	28
	FG4	–	1	2	–	3
	FG5	–	2	2	–	4
	FG6	–	3	3	–	6
	Total	3	25	23	3	54
Germany	FG1	2	3	1	–	6
	FG2	–	6	1	1	8
	FG3	1	4	1	2	8
	FG4	2	4	–	1	7
	FG5	–	3	5	–	8
	FG6	–	1	7	–	8
	No FG	–	2	–	1	3
	Total	5	23	15	5	48

Note FG focus group; FG1 more religious than spiritual; FG2 equally religious and spiritual; FG3 more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist; FG4 more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists; FG5 neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist; FG6 neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists

Interviewees were selected from rather high numbers of respondents ($n_{USA} = 575$; $n_{GER} = 561$) who had entered their email address or phone number in the questionnaire to indicate readiness for a personal interview. Principles for selection included primarily age, sex and focus group membership. Mean age in the US FDI sample is 37.9 years, ranging from 18 to 75 years, and in the German FDI sample 47.4 years, ranging from 20 to 78 years. With 64.8 % females in the US sample and 41.7 % females in the German FDI sample, gender distribution is not perfect, but acceptable. Focus group distribution is perfect in the German FDI sample; but also in the US FDI sample, all focus groups are present, except the rather small FG1 of “more religious than spiritual” individuals.

As Table 24.1 also shows, the clear majority of faith stage assignments in both the US and German samples are stage 3 and stage 4, indicating that the synthetic-conventional and individuated-reflective styles are preeminent in the selected FDI samples, while the mythic-literal and the conjunctive styles are minorities. This distribution of faith stage assignments corresponds to findings in other studies (e.g. the Deconversion Project, Streib, Hood,

Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009) and may meet expectations for FDI results with adult samples.

The FDI Subsample for Case Studies—Observations and Questions

Going more into detail with single cases, we present a synoptic overview of the cases that were selected for case study elaboration in previous chapters of this book in the context of all faith development interviewees. Figure 24.1 presents these case study cases (large font), plotted according to their age and their FDI total score,² and indicating also their focus group

²The FDI total scores that are used in Fig. 24.1 were calculated, following the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Fowler et al., 2004), as mean value of all faith stage assignments to the 25 FDI questions, resulting in a number with decimal values—thus indicating nuances. As detailed in Chap. 15, we have however generally used, in the case studies and many other statistics, a different algorithm, which is based on the frequency of stage assignments separately for each stage and estimates the FDI total score (as number without decimals) from the

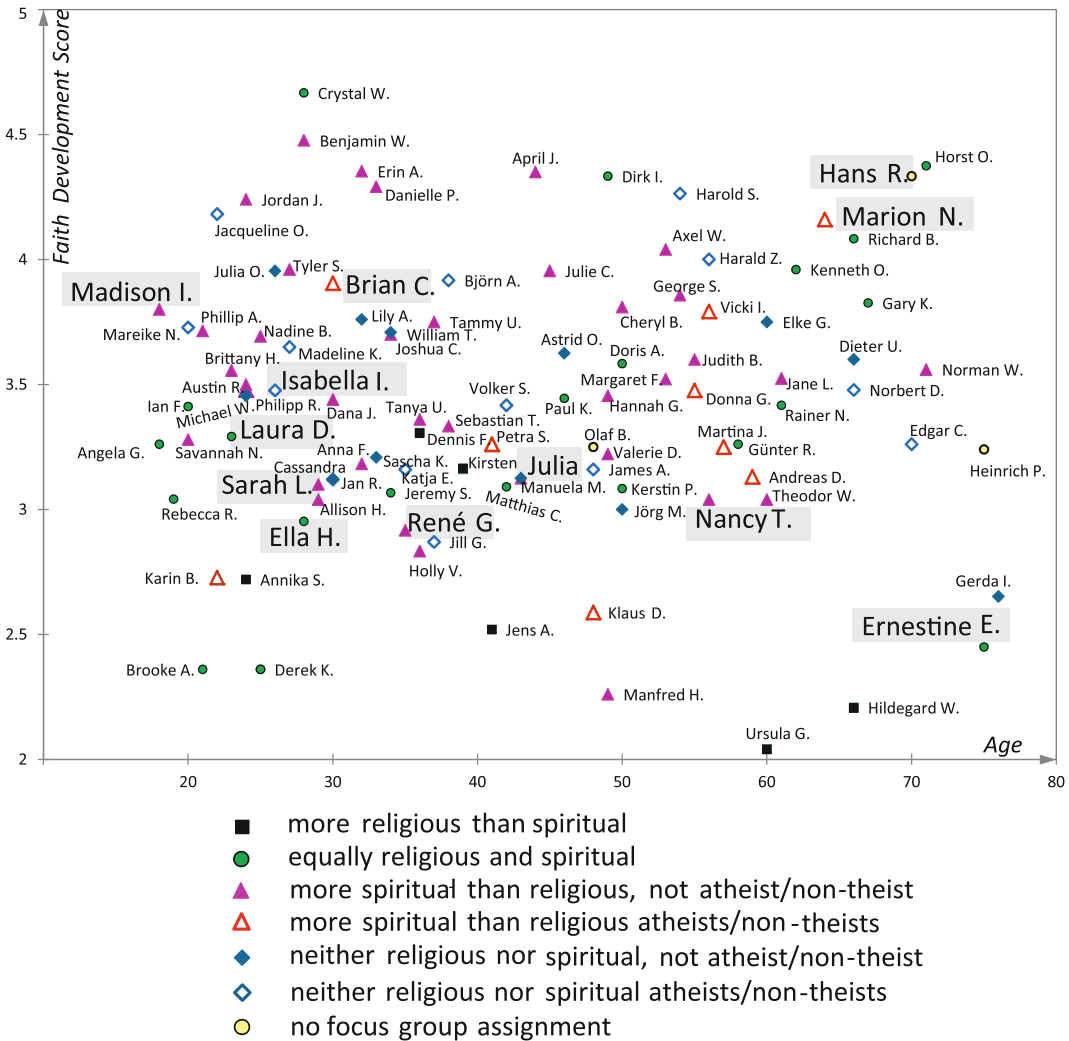


Fig. 24.1 FDI Scores, Age and Focus Group Membership of the Case Study Respondents

membership. As detailed in Chap. 17, this specific selection for case study elaboration used an emerging typological framework, the result of which can be read from the chapter titles of Chaps. 18 through 22. Nevertheless, as the figure demonstrates, the interviews that were selected for case studies represent a considerable broad range of faith stages, focus groups, age groups and religious affiliations.

Three out of four of the cases with a dominant individuative-reflective (stage 4) and conjunctive (stage 5) style self-identify as “atheists” or “non-theists”: Hans R., a 70-year-old former missionary with the Catholic Church (see case study in Chap. 19), indicates in the questionnaire that he is “non-theist,” but at the same time he is “equally religious and spiritual,” because he has marked the highest option for both. “Non-theism,” for Hans means, however, the rejection of an image of God as almighty and intervening in the world. Thus, Hans is one of the rare cases of “equally religious and spiritual atheists/non-theist” (who did not constitute a focus group, because

(Footnote 2 continued)

highest frequency. This explains some the differences, e.g. that Marion N. and Hans R. have a clear stage 5 assignment in the case studies, while they score somewhat below 4.5 in Fig. 24.1.

this would have been too small for meaningful statistical calculations, see Chap. 4).

“More spiritual than religious atheist/non-theists” are Marion I. (case study in Chap. 20 on “quilt spirituality”) and Brian C. (case study in Chap. 21 on “spirituality outside religious traditions”); both affiliate with or practice Buddhism and have a life history of deconversion(s). And interestingly, both stage 5 cases, Marion N. and Hans R., and the stage 4 case Brian C., self-identify as “non-theists”; and Marion N. and Hans R. with a rating of “5,” the highest score, rate themselves as being “spiritual,” Brian C. with a rating of “4” rates himself as being “rather spiritual.” Thus, for these cases, higher stage in faith development is associated with high self-ratings as “spiritual,” “non-theist” self-identification, and eventually deconversion. Nevertheless, all three are convinced and practicing affiliates of their religions—which for Marion and Brian is not Christian however. If we regard these cases as legitimate—or perhaps typical?—versions for advanced faith development and higher religious styles, we need to explicitly take non-theism, deconversion and high “spirituality” into account for religious style development—and eventually use the term “spiritual development” specifically for these kinds of trajectories.

The younger respondents assemble in the lower left area in Fig. 24.1 with a preferred synthetic-conventional style. But differences are noteworthy: One of these cases is Ella H., a 28-year-old Church of Christ affiliate (see case study in Chap. 18). Ella is a clear example of how “equally religious and spiritual” individuals with strong commitment to their religious tradition nest in the synthetic-conventional style, where the semantics of “religion” and “spirituality” almost completely overlap. However, there are also young stage 3 cases with a different profile of religious development, religious identity construction and semantic preference: Laura D. is a 23-year-old German theology student with a typical coming of age story (see case study in Chap. 19). While primarily embedded in a synthetic-conventional style, Laura applies also partially the individuative-reflective style, e.g.

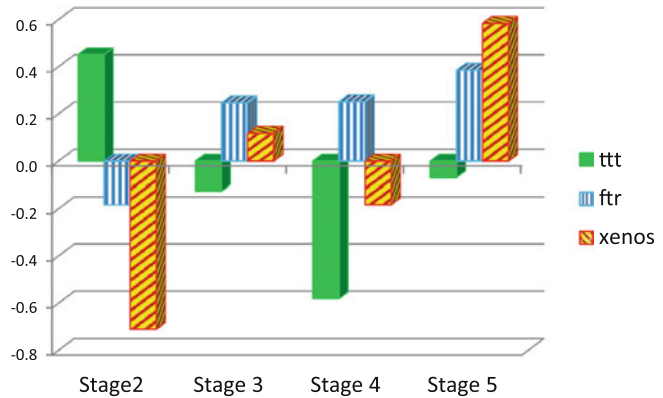
when she questions the faith in which she was raised. Consistent with this is Laura’s semantic preference: she does not want to be pinned down as “religious,” “spiritual” or “faithful,” and instead would prefer the word “seeking.” Sarah L., a 29-year-old deconvert from the Baptist tradition and presently with no religious affiliation (see case study in Chap. 16), has answered most FDI questions in the synthetic-conventional style, but used the individuative-reflective style for some central questions about religion. Sarah rejects “religion” in her self-rating and favors “spirituality”—which she understands as “a sense of something greater than one’s self.” Taken together, the stage 3 cases are not confined to what may be associated with the “synthetic” attitude and the “conventionality” of faith. It does not always mean, as in Ella’s case, the unquestioned embeddedness in the religious tradition in which one was raised. Conversely, the primary use of the synthetic-conventional style (stage 3) may also go along with “spiritual seeking,” specific non-traditional or anti-traditional understandings of “spirituality” or with deconversion(s).

The distribution of cases in Fig. 24.1, especially because of the stage 5 cases Marion N. (65) and Hans R. (70), may create the impression of an age trend involved in faith development. This is, of course, highly speculative on the basis of the few cases selected in cross-sectional data for case studies; however, on the basis of all our 102 FDIs, we will present below a stronger argument that faith stage may change with age.

Results from Triangulating Faith Development Evaluation and Questionnaire Data

After attention to selected single cases, we now move on to the quantitative investigation of faith development and religious styles in our FDI sample. Thus we present results from the analyses with all 102 rated FDIs, when these are related to the measures in the questionnaire. The presentation of results begins with an analysis of the relation of FDI scores to the Religious Schema Scale

Fig. 24.2 Mean Differences of the Three Religious Schemata (RSS) in the Faith Stages



(RSS) with the aim to further clarify the relation between faith stages/religious styles, on the one hand, and religious schemata, on the other hand. Then we will take up questions about the relation of FDI rating to age and to self-rated “spirituality.” This section concludes with the question about the stage-specific semantics of “spirituality.”

Faith Stages and Religious Schemata (RSS)

What is the relation of the stages of faith to religious schemata? Conceptually, Streib et al. (2010) did not claim for the Religious Schema Scale to correspond one-to-one to the stages of faith (Fowler, 1981) or religious styles (Streib, 2001). The RSS is not just another attempt to construct a faith development scale.

Also from empirical studies, there is not enough support for the assumption that the RSS subscales in isolation are measures of the faith stages. Correlational analyses are an indication for this. For example, correlations between the RSS subscales and FDI scores in this Spirituality Project are considerably lower than in the Deconversion data (Streib et al., 2009): While in the Deconversion data, FDI scores correlated with $r = -.52$ ($p < .001$) with *truth of texts and teachings* (*ttt*) and with $r = .28$ ($p = .004$) with *xenos*, in the present Spirituality data, correlations of FDI scores with *ttt* are only $r = -.26$ ($p = .009$) and $r = .17$ ($p = .085$) with *xenos*. The quantitative approach to faith stages and religious styles is

more complex and has to take into account what religious schemata are and may indicate.

The three RSS subscales are assumed to assess three religious schemata, which, in specific variation and strength, can be found and characterize specific religious styles/stages of faith. Configurations of religious schemata are thus assumed to indicate the faith stage and the difference between faith stages. Specific associations between stages of faith and pattern of religious schemata can be hypothesized: One of the assumptions is that stronger agreement with the RSS subscale *truth of text and teaching* (*ttt*) and lower agreement with the RSS subscale *xenosophia/interreligious dialog* (*xenos*) can be observed in respondents whose FDI shows primarily the mythic-literal style (stage 2). Another assumption is that relatively high agreement to *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* (*ftr*), low agreement with *ttt* and moderate agreement with *xenos* is the characteristic schematic pattern for respondents with a predominant individuative-reflective style (stage 4). And finally we may assume that high agreement with the RSS subscale *xenosophia/interreligious dialog* together with eventually lower agreement to *ttt* is the characteristic pattern for cases with a prevalence of the conjunctive/dialogical style (stage 5).

We should however leave it to the empirical investigation to reveal the associations of religious schemata and religious styles/faith stages. As presented in Fig. 24.2 and Table 24.2, results from this study provide some evidence. For the visualization of differences of means for the

Table 24.2 Mean Differences and Effect Sizes of the Three Religious Schemata (RSS) Between the Faith Stages

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i> to Stage 2	Cohen's <i>d</i> to Stage 3	Cohen's <i>d</i> to Stage 4
<i>ttt</i>						
Stage 2	8	15.6	7.3	–		
Stage 3	48	12.0	5.9	–0.6	–	
Stage 4	38	9.2	4.8	–1.2	–0.5	–
Stage 5	8	12.4	3.5	–0.6	0.1	0.7
Total	102	11.3	5.7			
<i>ftr</i>						
Stage 2	8	21.1	3.0	–		
Stage 3	48	22.4	2.2	0.5	–	
Stage 4	38	22.4	2.1	0.5	0.01	–
Stage 5	8	22.8	1.5	0.7	0.1	0.2
Total	102	22.3	2.2			
<i>xenos</i>						
Stage 2	8	14.6	5.4	–		
Stage 3	48	18.1	4.6	0.8	–	
Stage 4	38	16.9	4.2	0.5	–0.3	–
Stage 5	8	20.1	2.9	1.3	0.5	0.8
Total	102	17.5	4.5			

Note *M* sumscore means; *ttt* truth of text and teachings; *ftr* fairness, tolerance and rational choice; *xenos* xenosophia/inter-religious dialog

schemata between stages, the figure is based on the calculation of z-standardized means for the three RSS subscales. The table, in contrast, presents the sumscore means and the effect size calculations (Cohen's *d*) for the differences of RSS subscale means between all faith stages.³

As presented in Table 24.2 and Fig. 24.2, results generally indicate that the RSS subscale *truth of texts and teachings* accounts for the largest difference with the highest effect size. High *ttt* clearly is the unique characteristic of stage 2 of mythic-literal faith. For the individualive-

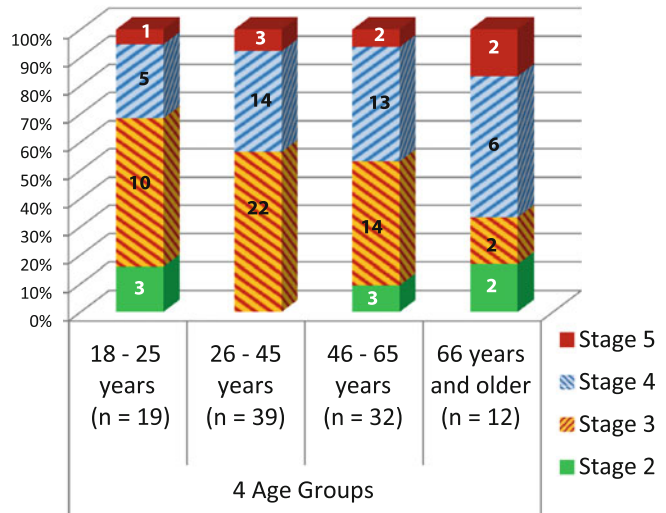
reflective style of stage 4, conversely, *ttt* is very low. The difference between *ttt* on stage 2 and stage 4 is very high with very high effect size as indicated by Cohen's *d* = –1.2. Such strong rejection of submission to a religious tradition is consistent with stage 4 respondents' autonomous and individual reflection.

Interestingly, *ttt* is only slightly negative on stage 5, indicating a less strong rejection of (religious) tradition—but still with a moderate effective difference (Cohen's *d* = –0.6) to stage 2. The outstanding characteristic of stage 5, however, is the high agreement to *xenosophia/inter-religious dialog*—together with, compared with the other stages, slightly higher agreement for *ftr*. Thus the difference between stage 2 and stage 5 appears to be characterized by the very high difference in *xenos* with extremely high effect size (Cohen's *d* = 1.3).

The most important message displayed in Fig. 24.2 however is this: It is not the ratings on the single RSS subscales, but their *combination*

³Due to the rather small sample size, which is inevitable in triangulatory inclusion of results from qualitative evaluation, results from analysis of variance was only moderately significant for *ttt* ($F_{(3, 98)} = 3.89, p = .011$) and less for *xenos* ($F_{(3, 98)} = 2.88, p = .051$), while for *ftr* it did not reach significance. Therefore, we have calculated means and assess the effect sizes of the mean differences with Cohen's *d* calculations. According to Cohen (1988), effect sizes are interpreted as follows: $d < 0.2$ indicates no effect, $0.2 \leq d < 0.5$ indicates a small, $0.5 \leq d < 0.8$ a medium, and $d \geq 0.8$ a large effect size.

Fig. 24.3 Faith Stage Assignments in Four Age Groups



which identifies the faith stages resp. religious styles. Very high *ttt* together with very low *xenos* appears to be the profile of the mythic-literal style of stage 2. Very low *ttt* together with slightly higher *ftr* appears as characteristic of stage 4. The synthetic-conventional faith of stage 3 appears to have the least pronounced profile of RSS subscales. And finally, very high agreement with *xenos* together with somewhat higher agreement to *ftr* and less rejection of *ttt* appears to be the profile of the dialogical/conjunctive style of stage 5.

All of these profiles appear to be consistent with the conceptualization of the differences between the stages of faith, as developed by Fowler (1981) and—differences of both developmental models notwithstanding—as carried on in the religious styles perspective (Streib, 2001, 2005, 2013). Viewed from the perspective of empirical investigation, this profiling of the religious styles/stages of faith by the combination of the three religious schemata may indicate windows for assessment and this profiling of the faith stages is an important contribution to understanding the cases in our sample.

Faith Development as Age-Related Change

Figure 24.3 presents frequencies of faith stage assignment divided in four age groups; the figure

is the result of cross-tabulation using the entire FDI sample of 102 interviews conducted in both the USA and Germany.

Results presented in Fig. 24.3 indicate that the individutive-reflective and conjunctive styles increase with age, while the synthetic-conventional style decreases with age. This appears plausible for an adult FDI sample. And it corresponds and confirms our observation of an age trend in Fig. 24.1.

The development of the mythic-literal style (stage 2) appears rather u-shaped—and reflects the conclusion on the basis of cross-sectional data made already by Fowler (1981, p. 318) that the mythic-literal style of stage 2 may re-appear in old age. Only the age group of the 26- to 45-years-old respondents appears to slightly deviate from the trend.

And finally, the conjunctive or dialogical style (stage 5) appears to increase with age. Most cases assemble in the old age group. This also reflects the findings in Fowler’s (1981) research.

Results for our sample of 102 FDIs with adult respondents clearly indicate that the individutive-reflective (stage 4) and the conjunctive/dialogical styles (stage 5) continuously increase with age, while the synthetic-conventional style (stage 3) decreases—a pattern that could be expected from the perspective of faith development theory and, differences notwithstanding, roughly corresponds to the results presented by Fowler (1981).

Faith Stages and Self-rated “Spirituality”

Now we turn to the question if self-rated “spirituality” is related to the preference for specific religious styles. Thus we attend to faith stage assignments in relation to the item in the questionnaire for self-rating of how respondents see themselves on a 5-point scale from “not spiritual” to “spiritual.” Figure 24.4 presents results based on cross-tabulation.

Faith stage assignments in our sample indicate that the self-rating as “spiritual” is most frequent among individuals who prefer the conjunctive or dialogical style (stage 5). But generally the relation between self-rated “spirituality” and faith development appears u-shaped: About three out of four respondents on stages 2 and 3 self-rate as “spiritual” or “rather spiritual.” Then we see a considerable decline of the self-rating as “spiritual” on stage 4, which is consistent with the profile of stage 4 because the individuating-reflective style often is associated with a reflective distance from religious tradition and any “spiritual” praxis. This apparently encourages the explicit self-rating as “not spiritual.” Thereby it is plausible in the conceptual framework that there are no cases with a prevalent mythic-literal style (stage 2) who self-rate as “not spiritual” or “rather not spiritual,” the capacity for rejecting “spirituality” may develop in stages 3 and 4.

Thus we conclude that there are clear indications from our FDI sample that self-rated “spirituality” is related to the differences between faith stages and religious styles. Thereby, the “spiritual” self-ratings of stages 2 and 3 first decline with the development of individuating reflectiveness (stage 4), while, on the conjunctive or dialogical style of stage 5, the majority of respondents choose the highest option of self-rating as “spiritual.” But we should immediately ask: Is the “spirituality” on all stages the same? Or do respondents on “higher” stages disagree with “spirituality” of “lower” stages? This question for semantics will be discussed below.

Faith Stages and Self-ratings as “Religious” and “Spiritual”

Related is the question whether there is an association of faith stages resp. religious styles with both self-ratings as being “religious” and being “spiritual.” We approached this question by an analysis of variance of the means of self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious” according to the faith stage groups, which indicated that differences are significant ($F_{(3, 97)} = 4.86, p = .004$ for self-rated “religion”; $F_{(3, 96)} = 4.86, p = .014$ for self-rated “spirituality”). Table 24.3 presents results, which are visualized in Fig. 24.5. Table 24.3 presents in

Fig. 24.4 Faith Stage Assignment and Self-rating as “Spiritual”

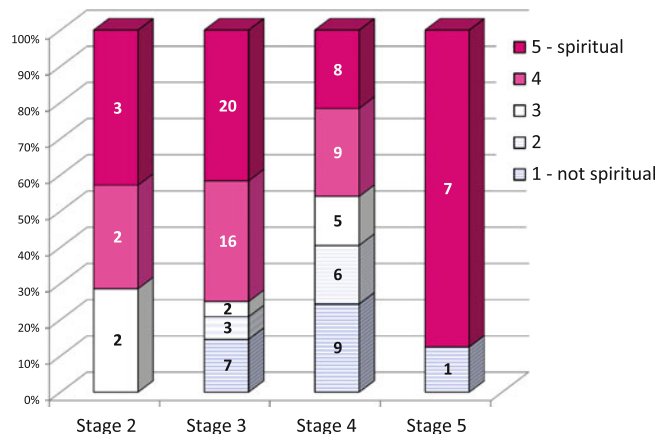
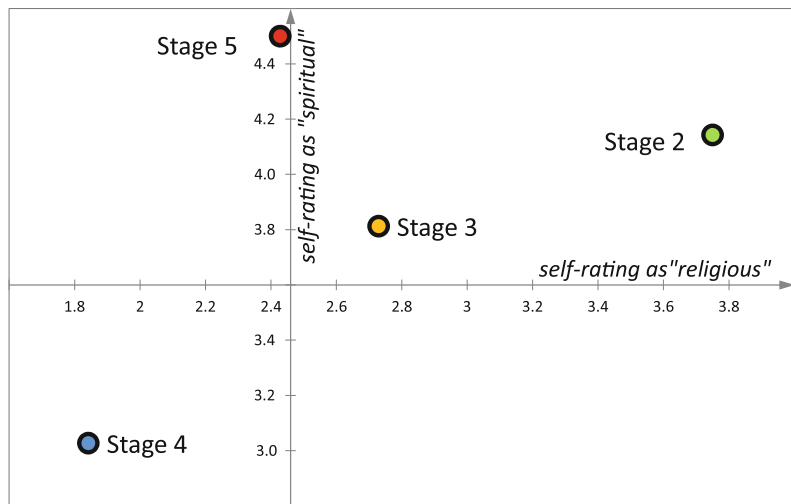


Table 24.3 Distribution of and Effect Size of Mean Differences Between Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” in the Stages of Faith

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i> to Stage 2	Cohen’s <i>d</i> to Stage 3	Cohen’s <i>d</i> to Stage 4
“Religious”						
Stage 2	8	3.8	1.8	–	–	–
Stage 3	48	2.7	1.5	–0.7	–	–
Stage 4	38	1.8	1.4	–1.3	–0.6	–
Stage 5	7	2.4	1.6	–0.8	–0.2	0.4
Total	101	2.5	1.6			
“Spiritual”						
Stage 2	7	4.1	0.9	–	–	–
Stage 3	48	3.8	1.4	–0.2	–	–
Stage 4	37	3.0	1.5	–0.8	–0.5	–
Stage 5	8	4.5	1.4	0.3	0.5	1.0
Total	100	3.6	1.5			

Fig. 24.5 Centroids of Faith Stages in the Two-Dimensional Space of Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious”



addition the effect size (Cohen’s *d*) of the mean differences between the faith stage groups.

In Fig. 24.5 the mean values are interpreted as vectors in a two-dimensional coordinate system and thus present the location of the centroids of the faith stages in the “spiritual”/“religious” space. Of course, centroids are the centers of clouds of cases that are more or less populated and have a more or less wide spread, as indicated by the standard deviations. This should be kept in mind in the interpretation of these centroids.

Results indicate that, consistent with expectations, the self-ratings as being “religious” are considerably higher for the respondents who predominantly use the mythic-literal style (Stage 2). With very high effect size (Cohen’s *d* = –1.3), the centroid of the stage 2 group differs more than one standard deviation from stage 4, and somewhat lesser (Cohen’s *d* > 0.7) also from the other faith stage groups in the self-rating as “religious.”

But respondents with mythic-literal faith (stage 2) are considerably inclined also for the

self-rating as “spiritual.” This confirms and details results presented in Fig. 24.4, and we may assume that it is the kind of “spirituality” which is closely related to vertical transcendence.

While the centroid of the group of respondents who prefers a synthetic-conventional style (stage 3) is close to the mean level for both self-rated “spirituality” and “religion,” stage 4 respondents show a sharp contrast with relative low self-ratings both as “spiritual” and as “religious.” On the self-rating as “spiritual,” the largest difference of about one standard deviation and with high effect size (Cohen’s $d = 1.0$) is indicated between the centroids of stage 4 and stage 5. On the self-rating as “religious,” as mentioned already, the highest difference is between stage 2 and stage 4. It thus appears that the preference for the individuating-reflective style is associated with both lower self-ratings as “spiritual” and lower self-ratings as “religious” compared to the other faith stage groups, especially to stage 2 in regard to the self-rating as being “religious” and to stage 5 in regard to the self-rating of being “spiritual.”

Finally, the respondents who prefer the conjunctive style (stage 5) appear to have the highest self-ratings as “spiritual,” while their self-ratings as “religious” are somewhat below the means of all FDI respondents in our sample. Apparently, stage 5 respondents tend toward a “more spiritual than religious” self-identification. They differ with high effect size (Cohen’s $d = 1.0$) about one standard deviation from Stage 4 respondents in self-rated “spirituality.” This, again, confirms what we have seen in Fig. 24.4, but details this in

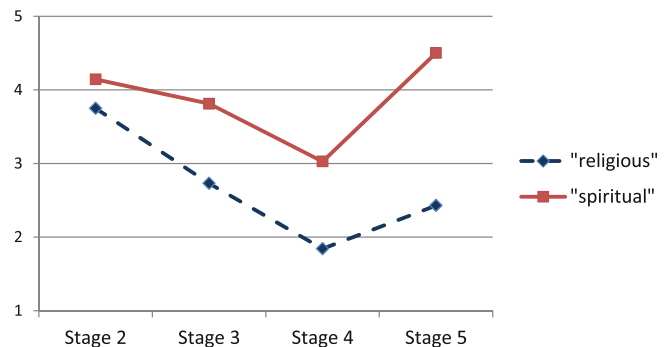
relation to both self-rated “spirituality” and self-rated “religion.”

Taken together, the self-ratings as “spiritual” and “religious” appear to differ considerably in relation to the preference for specific religious styles. These differences in self-ratings as “spiritual/religious” display a pattern that appears consistent with conceptual expectations: The mythic-literal style (stage 2) is associated with higher self-ratings as being “religious,” while the conjunctive style (stage 5) is associated with higher self-ratings as being “spiritual”; the individuating-reflective style appears to be associated with lower self-ratings both as “religious” and “spiritual.”

The Question of “Religious” and “Spiritual” Development

After the presentation of results on self-rated “religion” and “spirituality” on the different faith stages, it may be the right place for taking up the question of religious or spiritual development. Do our results for self-rated “religion” and self-rated “spirituality” suggest that there is religious or “spiritual” development? In Fig. 24.6, we present a possible answer. In this figure, the results from the same analysis as in the last section are used, but visualized somewhat differently in line figures what makes it easy to speculate about developmental progress from stage to stage (interesting are the rather strong underlying assumptions that come with the different visualization).

Fig. 24.6 Self-ratings as “Spiritual” and “Religious” from Stage to Stage



It is obvious that assumptions of a “religious development” are not supported by our data, if “religious development” should be understood as the increase of religiosity from stage to stage. Conversely, as Fig. 24.6 shows, self-rated “religion” appears to decline over the course of development and does not increase much between stage 4 and 5. And also self-rated “spirituality” does, albeit on a higher level, decline from stage 2 over stage 3 to stage 4—to considerably increase in stage 5. To be sure, the relatively simple assumption of a continuous increase of religiosity or “spirituality” from stage to stage is not the key assumption in our theoretical model of religious development, which is instead conceptualized and operationalized as multi-dimensional and complex process, as detailed in Chaps. 3, 15 and 16. Anyway, the self-attribution of respondents as “religious” and/or “spiritual” may contribute to profiling the faith stages/religious styles. Therefore, Fig. 24.6 may open new perspectives.

Obvious in Fig. 24.6 is the consistently higher self-ratings as “spiritual” across the faith stages. This reflects the general “more spiritual than religious” tendency in our data—and demonstrates that this general tendency is also true for the FDI respondents. New and interesting is that obviously “religion” and “spirituality” drift apart from stage to stage, to become highly separated on stage 5—where self-ratings as “spiritual” are between 4 and 5 (5 is the highest rating option on this scale), while self-ratings as “religious” indicate a “rather not.” Thus, under the assumption that development proceeds from stage to stage, the data from our FDI respondents suggest the conclusion that development is characterized in our data by an increasing self-understanding as “more spiritual than religious.” Of course, in our FDI sample self-rating as “spiritual” is rather high (38 % self-rate their “spirituality” as high and 27 % self-rate as “rather spiritual”); but this does not disqualify, but rather focus our conclusion: For highly “spiritual” individuals, religious development/faith development is characterized by increasing self-rating as “spiritual” and an increasing self-understanding as “more spiritual than religious.”

Another conclusion follows from this: “Spirituality” appears to offer an alternative way to

indicate experiences, commitment to belief systems, and ritual practices that are not associated with “religion” by the respondents—and eventually could not be expressed, when “religion” was the only semantic option available. This may be an indication that “spirituality” offers a surplus in “coming to terms with” and communicating experiences, attitudes and practices that we as scientific observers and theorists may still call ‘religion,’ namely the “privatized experience-oriented religion” (Streib and Hood, 2011; Chap. 1, this volume), but the respondents in our research would rather not call “religious” and therefore appreciate the new semantic option to interpret them as “spiritual.”

This resonates with the various developmental trajectories as they are presented in the case studies (see case studies in Chaps. 18–22 and the brief summary at the beginning of this chapter). All cases that were selected for case studies self-rate as “spiritual” (5) or “rather spiritual” (4), except Isabella I., who is a “neither religious nor spiritual” atheist. This reference to the case studies allows for a synoptic view: Many of the developmental trajectories of the cases include religious doubt, deconversions, affiliations with Buddhism or Wicca, or self-identifications as “atheist” or “non-theist,” while others indicate transformed intensified commitment to their religious tradition. With this variety of rather unconventional or non-traditional developmental trajectories, respondents may have “come to terms with,” just *because* they accepted for themselves the semantic option “spirituality.” Many, certainly not all, of the interviews demonstrate the explicit adoption of the semantics of “spirituality” for their—subjective—reconstruction and narration of their developmental trajectories.

Faith Stages and the Semantics of “Spirituality”

But what do FDI respondents mean when they self-rate as “spiritual”? In the context of a project with a strong focus on, and with plenty of data about, the semantics of “spirituality,” it suggests itself that we explore the question of whether

religious development is associated with semantic preferences. Do respondents with preferences for the mythic-literal, the synthetic-conventional, the individuative-reflective or the conjunctive style use the word “spirituality” with different meanings? For an answer to these questions, we can use the subjective definitions of “spirituality” which, fortunately, 99 out of 102 respondents have entered as free-text-entries in the questionnaire.

Analyses of these free-text-entries with subjective definitions of “spirituality” for the entire US and German sample are presented in detail in Chap. 9. There, interpretative, content-analytic approaches and quantitative procedures have been combined in the evaluation procedure, starting with content-analytic coding of each meaning unit in each free text entry. The qualitative evaluation resulted in 44 categories. After they were entered in the quantitative data base, these categories have been reduced by principal component analysis to ten components, which represent the semantics of “spirituality” in our sample. Here we use these ten semantic components and calculate the means of the regression factor score according to the faith stage groups.⁴

Figure 24.7 presents the results, which indicate that the semantics of “spirituality” differs according to the preference for a religious style as manifest in the faith stage assignment. The calculations of Cohen’s d indicate that all effect sizes of the mean differences are, for the highest between-group difference in the respective component, at least small, while for three components (“Individual religious praxis...”; “(All-)connectedness”; and “Opposition to religion...”) this effect size is high (Cohen’s $d > 0.8$). Thus, we see in half of the components differences with high or moderate effect size between stage 2 and stage 5.

Results indicate that, on the semantic component “spirituality” as “(all)connectedness and harmony with the universe, nature and the whole,”

the difference between stage 2 and stage 5 is high with high effect size (Cohen’s $d = 1.0$). This indicates that “spirituality-as-(all)connectedness” belongs to, and has a prominent place in, the vocabulary of people with preference for the conjunctive or dialogical style, while rejected by respondents with a dominant mythic-literal style. This result generally meets conceptual expectations, but it may be important to note that “spirituality-as-(all)connectedness” appears to be the key characteristics for the semantics of “spirituality” stage 5 respondents in our data.

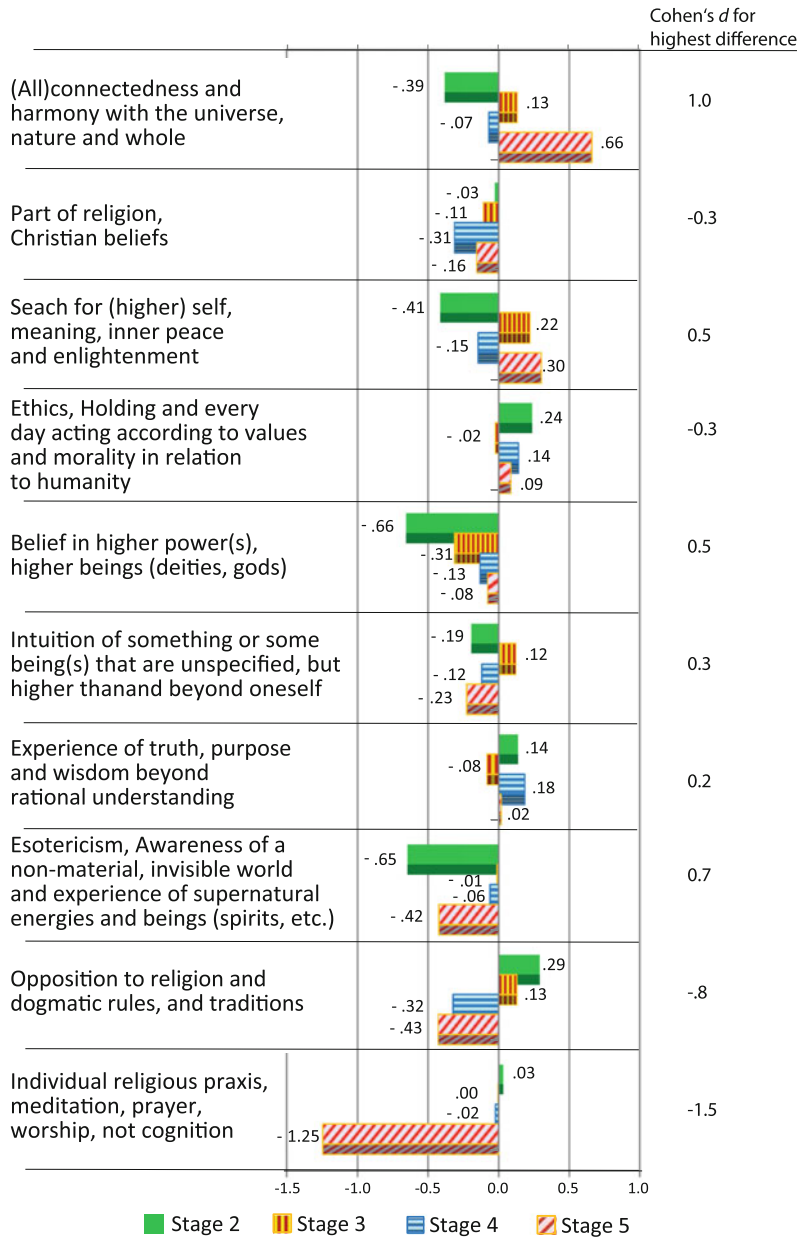
A similar pattern emerged for the semantic component of “search for (higher) self, meaning, inner peace and enlightenment.” Even though with moderate effect size (Cohen’s $d = 0.5$), but anyway clearly, the difference between the semantic of “spirituality” on stage 2 and stage 5 is considerable. This indicates that “spirituality-as-search-for self” is part of the semantics of people with the conjunctive or dialogical style (stage 5), while not for people with the mythic-literal style. Noteworthy, this semantic variant of “spirituality” also belongs to the vocabulary of people with the individuative-reflective style.

This pattern is reversed for the last two semantic components in Fig. 24.7, “opposition to religion” and “individual religious praxis.” That “spirituality-as-opposition-to-religion” belongs to the preferred vocabulary of the mythic-literal respondents of stage 2 may appear surprising on first sight, but it is not, when we take into account that people who are strongly committed to their own religious tradition tend to use “spirituality” as a word for something they see as opposing their religious identity. Conversely, people with a conjunctive/dialogical style apparently have considerable less use for such semantic demarcation, but may bring to the fore other semantic variants of “spirituality” such as “(all)connectedness” or “search for (higher) self.”

It is more surprising that people with the conjunctive/dialogical style of stage 5, according to these results, are clearly excluding the ritual, pragmatic dimension from their semantics of “spirituality”; they are far away from understanding “spirituality” as “individual religious

⁴Due to the rather small sample size, which is inevitable in triangulatory inclusion of results from qualitative evaluation, analyses of variance did not reach significance, except for the component “Individual religious praxis...” Therefore, we have also here calculated Cohen’s d to get an estimate of the effect size of the difference.

Fig. 24.7 Factor Scores of the Semantic Components of “Spirituality” in the Faith Stage Groups



praxis, mediation, prayer, worship” etc. This may indicate that “spirituality” for them is a belief, a world view, a philosophy, a kind of cognitive preference, rather than a praxis.

The same pattern, but with small effect size difference, is visible for the semantic component of “ethics, holding and everyday acting according to values and morality in relation to

humanity”. “Spirituality-as-ethics” appears to be preferred especially by stage 2 respondents.

Interesting also is the rejection of “spirituality-as-esotericism”—which is shared by both stage 2 and stage 5 respondents; they appear far away from the understanding of “spirituality-as-esotericism,” i.e. as “awareness of a non-material, invisible world,” and/or as “experience

of supernatural energies and beings (spirits etc.)”—in any case, with moderate effect size stage 2 and stage 5 respondents appear to be further away from such understanding of “spirituality” than the respondents on stages 3 and 4.

Finally, we draw attention to the component of “belief in higher power(s), higher beings (deities, gods).” As speaking of God in plural or in terms of “higher power” deviates clearly from the Christian semantics (and the majority of our stage 2 respondents are Christians), it is understandable that this is not used or preferred by people with prevalent mythic-literal style (stage 2), and also, even if somewhat less strongly rejected, by people with a prevalent synthetic-conventional style (stage 3). Conversely, stage 4 and especially stage 5 respondents appear to have no problem with “spirituality-as-higher-power/beings,” but they appear not to have a special preference for this semantic either.

Observation of the stage-specific means on the ten semantic components for “spirituality” indicates that the semantics of “spirituality” differs between the religious styles/faith stages. Thus, contours for stage-specific semantic profiles of “spirituality” emerge from this analysis and can be described in a more systematic way:

1. The mythic-literal style (stage 2) respondents appear to prefer an understanding of “spirituality” as “everyday ethics” and as “experience of truth, purpose and wisdom beyond rational understanding”; also “spirituality-as-part-of religion” is least rejected by stage 2 respondents. But most clearly the semantics of “spirituality-as-opposition-to-religion” and the rejection of “spirituality” as “(all)connectedness,” “search-for (higher)-self,” “belief in higher power(s)” and “esotericism” stands out for stage 2 respondents. This semantic profile appears plausible for respondents with rather exclusive and unquestioned embeddedness in a religious tradition and a literal understanding of their own holy texts.
2. For the people with synthetic-conventional style (stage 3), our analysis shows a less pronounced profile, in which, however, the semantics of “spirituality-as search-for (higher)-self” and, relative to the other groups, the semantics of “spirituality-as-intuition-of-something-beyond” belong; but also “opposition to religion” and the rejection of “spirituality-as-belief in higher power(s)” appear to be part of the semantic profile for stage 3 respondents. Also this semantic profile appears plausible, because stage 3 is characterized by rather implicit theory-building and appreciation of conventional belief systems.
3. For the respondents with the individuative-reflective style (stage 4), the only positive semantic characterizations are “experience of truth, purpose and wisdom beyond rational understanding” and “spirituality-as-everyday-ethics”; stronger are the rejections of the semantics of “spirituality-as-part-of-religion” and “spirituality-as-opposition-to-religion.” This semantic profile plausibly fits with the individuative-reflective style which is characterized by reflective distance from conventions and rejection of the authority of religious traditions.
4. For the respondents with the conjunctive/dialogical style (stage 5), finally, the most pronounced semantic profile has emerged. This is characterized positively by the semantics of “spirituality” as “(all)connectedness and harmony with the universe, nature and the whole” and as “search for (higher) self, meaning, inner peace and enlightenment.” Demarcations of the stage 5 semantic of “spirituality” are: the rejection of “spirituality-as-individual-religious-praxis” and “spirituality-as-opposition-to-religion,” and the rejection of “spirituality” in terms of esotericism and as “intuition of something or some being(s) that are unspecified, but higher than and beyond oneself.” These demarcations aim in two directions to prevent the occupation of “spirituality” by religious tradition, on the one side, and by esotericist beliefs and unspecified intuition, on the other side. This semantic profile fits with the characteristics of stage 5, which include the openness for dialog with other versions of being “religious”/“spiritual.”

Taken together, we can positively answer the question at the beginning of this section: Respondents with preferences for the mythic-literal, the synthetic-conventional, the individuating-reflective or the conjunctive style appear to use the word “spirituality” with different meanings, and the different semantic profiles, which emerge from the analysis that is based on the subjective definitions in the free-text-entries in the questionnaire, are plausible in the framework of religious styles.

Conclusion

The two key questions for this chapter were: Does self-rated “spirituality” change according to the religious style resp. faith stage? Does the semantics of “spirituality” change from one stage/style to the other? In conclusion we can answer both questions positively with reference to the results presented.

We are, as stated above, careful with assumptions and conclusions for religious or “spiritual” development, especially when these envision a linear, mono-directional developmental sequence. But we may legitimately assume a number of hierarchically ordered styles. And, as our results demonstrate, self-rated “spirituality” differs considerably between the stages/styles. Stage 5 in particular is characterized by high self-rated “spirituality” and rather low self-rated “religion.” And as stated earlier also, here lies the contribution of “spirituality.” “Spirituality” appears to fill a gap, because “spirituality” provides the opportunity to name something and self-identify as something that did not have an explicit expression in everyday language, when we had “religion” only. We may speak therefore of a surplus of “spirituality,” which indeed is related to religious styles.

The identification of style-specific semantic profiles of “spirituality” is a unique finding of our research which was only possible because of the extensive inclusion of semantic measures and the sophisticated evaluation of free-text-entries in our questionnaire (see Chap. 9). But also here, the

size of the FDI sample in this study allows for only tentative conclusions, and the question needs to be investigated further in future research.

After all: Is there indication of religious and/or “spiritual” development in our data? Yes, there is; but the account for *development* is primarily based upon the narrations in the interviews—and, of course, based on the assumption that the stages of faith or the hierarchy of religious styles corresponds to individual change across time. The quantitative data, however, because they are all cross-sectional, can only preliminarily support developmental assumptions. As long as we do not have results from the comprehensive longitudinal study of faith development, we should be careful with conclusions for development. Nevertheless, results about the differences in self-ratings as “religious” and “spiritual” on the faith stages do suggest the hypothetical assumption of a “spiritual” development—which waits for corroboration in future research.

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Positive Adult Development and “Spirituality”: Psychological Well-Being, Generativity, and Emotional Stability

25

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Abstract

This chapter deals with the association between “spirituality” and indicators of positive adult development. While possible links of “spirituality” to mental health, well-being, and psychological growth have been the subject of extensive research, this broad interest in salutary effects of “spirituality” has gone along with an inflationary usage of the term “spirituality,” vague concepts and invalid measures. This is particularly true when “spirituality” *itself* is implicitly understood in terms of mental health and well-being (e.g. as meaning, self-efficacy, or inner peace). Such an overlap of concepts results in illusionary associations because the same phenomenon is measured twice. Therefore it is important to distinguish between the conceptualizations of “spirituality” and their possible associations with dimensions of mental health and well-being. In the Bielefeld-based Cross-cultural Study of “Spirituality,” mystical experiences have been measured using Hood’s M-Scale; and SEM analyses (see Chap. 11) have evidenced that the M-Scale is an excellent predictor of self-rated “spirituality.” Thus, the M-Scale can be used as a measure for what many people today call “spirituality.” An advantage of the M-Scale in comparison to more recently developed measures of “spirituality” within health research is that the M-Scale is unsuspecting to be a hidden measure of well-being. But—and this is the focus of this chapter—a set of SEMs illustrates that the subscales of the M-Scale predict psychological well-being as measured with the Psychological Well-Being and Growth Scale, generativity as measured with the Loyola Generativity Scale, and neuroticism/emotional stability as measured with the NEO-FFI. It can be concluded from these findings that “spiritual” experiences are indeed associated with positive adult development in terms of well-being, generativity, and emotional stability.

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Introduction

In particular in medical and psychological literature, “spirituality” is often assumed to be associated with better mental and physical health, life satisfaction, and subjective well-being. Numerous studies have been carried out to corroborate this assumption (for reviews, see Hackney & Sanders, 2003; Klein, Berth, & Balck, 2011; Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Wong, Rew, & Slaikeu, 2006) and, for this purpose, many measures of “spirituality” have been developed (Fetzer Institute and National Institute on Aging Working Group, 1999; Hall, Meador, & Koenig, 2008; Hill & Hood, 1999; Koenig, 2011; Vivat, 2008; Zwingmann, Klein, & Büssing, 2011). Although the overall picture that “spirituality” fosters better mental health and well-being seems to be clear, there are several concerns about the supposedly clear salutary effects of “spirituality.” Among the most important concerns there are doubts due to the vague conceptualization of “spirituality,” since the term has been used rather inflationary throughout the recent years (Pargament, 1999). On the one hand, it is a question of debate how “spirituality” relates to “religion” which—although a complex phenomenon, too—appears to be operationalizable somewhat clearer than “spirituality.” Hence, effects of religion on mental health and well-being appear to be accessible somewhat more easily than salutary effects of “spirituality.” On the other hand, there are concerns about the width of “spirituality” concepts, because many conceptualizations overlap partly with concepts of mental health and psychological well-being (Koenig, 2008, 2011). As a consequence, further skepticism concerns the strength of the association between “spirituality” and indicators of mental health and well-being which depends to a certain degree on the ways how “spirituality” is operationalized and whether these operationalizations can be considered to be valid and not confounded (Sloan, 2006).

In this chapter, we try to shed some light on the relation of “spirituality” with well-being and

mental health beyond the aforementioned shortcomings. With respect to our general focus on the development of certain forms of “spirituality,” we have decided to reflect well-being and mental health in terms of positive adult development. For this purpose, we first discuss conceptualizations of the constructs which we have assessed in our own study, i.e. psychological well-being and growth, generativity, and neuroticism/emotional stability, and their conceptual relations and boundaries to mental health. Second, we give a brief overview of findings about the relation of “spirituality” and—because we consider “spirituality” to be a specific expression of religion (see Chap. 1)—also of religion with mental health and well-being in general and with generativity and neuroticism/emotional stability in particular. It can be concluded from this overview that, within empirical research on religion, “spirituality,” mental health, and well-being, the operationalization and valid measurement of “spirituality” is one of the most demanding challenges. Therefore, we critically discuss the shortcomings of recent attempts to measure “spirituality” within health research in the third section of this chapter. Based on our evaluation of previous attempts to measure “spirituality,” we present the design of our own study which uses Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 2001; Hood, Morris, & Watson, 1993) Mysticism Scale (M-Scale) as a validated measure for what many people today associate with “spirituality” (see Chap. 11) and relate the M-Scale to established measures of psychological well-being (Psychological Well-Being and Growth Scale; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 1996, 1998), neuroticism/emotional stability (subscale *neuroticism* of the NEO Five Factor Inventory/NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1985; McCrae, Costa, del Pilar, Rolland, & Parker, 1998), and generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale/LGS; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993; McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997; McAdams, Hart, & Maruna, 1998). Because we refer strongly to Faith Development Theory (Fowler, 1981) and its reformulation in terms of religious

styles (Streib, 2001, 2003, 2005; Streib, Hood, & Klein, 2010) within our analyses of the biographical contexts of self-declared “spirituality” (see Chap. 15–24), we have chosen the selection of the aforementioned measures which can be assumed to indicate several important aspects of positive adult development. To test whether the mystical experiences which are measured by the M-Scale are rather interpreted as religious or as “spiritual,” we compare the associations between the applied measures across four groups according to their categorical self-identifications as “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual,” or “neither religious nor spiritual.” With this study design we hope to establish a valid and stable pattern of associations of “spirituality” (and “religion”) with indicators of positive adult development as contribution to the broader research about relations of “spirituality” with mental health and well-being. This will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Current State of Research

Indicators of Positive Adult Development: Well-Being, Generativity, and Neuroticism/Emotional Stability

In this section, we introduce the concepts of well-being, generativity, and neuroticism/emotional stability which we have chosen to assess within our study with standardized measures as indicators of positive adult development that might be related to “spirituality.”

Well-being is a genuinely psychological concept which has been developed to describe the (positive) subjective evaluation of an individual’s condition (for overviews, Eid & Larsen, 2008; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). Thus, well-being overlaps considerably with the concept of subjective quality of life which is more common in the fields of medicine and social sciences to describe an individual’s

perceived state in contrast to the more objective medical state of his health (Barry, 1997). Both well-being and quality of life have been introduced as concepts into health research for the observation of positive outcomes beside objective medical changes after treatment or within the process of illness and recovery. Well-being and health are changeably related, but they are neither identical nor do they necessarily go along with one another: On the one hand, well-being can be understood as subjective component of physical and mental health. On the other hand, it is possible to sharply distinguish well-being from health because someone suffering from severe illness still might subjectively experience a high level of well-being (Diener & Diener, 1996). Thus, well-being is an important dimension of an individual’s condition beside and beyond his physical and mental health.

According to a prominent psychological theory of well-being (Subjective Well-Being Theory; Diener, 1984, 2000, 2008a, b, c), rather cognitive parts of well-being can be distinguished from the rather affective parts (Chamberlain, 1988; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). The cognitive parts of well-being encompass the subjective perception and evaluation of an individual’s *satisfaction with life* whereby one’s general satisfaction with life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) can be distinguished from the more specific satisfaction with certain areas of life, such as marital and familial satisfaction, satisfaction with one’s job, health, sexuality, and so forth (Fahrenberg, Myrtek, Schumacher, & Brähler, 2000). The affective-emotional parts of well-being relate to an individual’s emotional condition. Here, a more stable, trait-like disposition to general experience of feelings of *happiness* (Argyle 1987; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008) can be distinguished from the more situational, state-like *positive and negative affects* (Diener & Emmons, 1984; Schmuckle, Egloff, & Burns, 2002; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). In a meta-analysis on personality traits and well-being, DeNeve and Cooper (1998) were able to corroborate that satisfaction with life and happiness represent the trait components of

well-being while positive and negative affect represent the state components.

The distinction between cognitive and affective components of well-being is empirically well-evidenced, but the concentration on the mere maintenance of life satisfaction, happiness, and positive affect instead of dissatisfaction and negative affect has also been criticized for understanding well-being solely in a hedonic way (Ryff, 1989). Therefore, Ryff has proposed to conceptualize well-being more strongly in an eudaimonic way (from the Aristotelian concept of eudaimonia, i.e. leading a good life; cf. Aristotle, 2002; Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008) and to concentrate also on developmental and social perspectives such as self-actualization (Maslow, 1968), personal growth (Rogers, 1961), personal maturity (Allport, 1961), and development across the lifespan (Bühler & Massarik, 1968; Erikson 1959). Ryff (1989; Ryff & Singer, 1996, 1998) developed an alternative concept of *psychological well-being and growth* which includes six dimensions: The first dimension, *autonomy*, refers to the impression that one feels free in his decisions. The second dimension, *environmental mastery*, expresses the feeling that one is able to manage his daily challenges. *Personal growth* encompasses the impression that one experiences development and an expansion of his horizons during his life. *Positive relations with others* deals with one's satisfaction with his social relationships. The fifth dimension, *purpose in life*, refers to experiences of meaning and purpose, while the sixth dimension, *self-acceptance*, relates to the degree of satisfaction with one's character and biography. Thus, Ryff's concept of psychological well-being and growth explicitly includes developmental perspectives with respect to the individual's biography and perceived personal growth as well as social relations and interactions.

In our context, additionally the concept of "spiritual" well-being is of interest because it tries to reflect "spirituality" as a certain dimension of well-being. Already in 1971, the White House Conference of Aging recommended that "spiritual" well-being should be understood as an important dimension of the well-being of the elderly (Moberg, 1971; White House Conference

on Aging, 1971). Following this advice, the National Interfaith Conference on Aging (NICA, 1975) defined "spiritual" well-being as "the affirmation of life in relationship with God, self, community, and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness." Since the 1980s, a growing number of attempts have been made to operationalize "spiritual" well-being, in particular within the fields of psycho-oncology and palliative medicine. While Paloutzian and Ellison (1982, 1991) tried to distinguish between a vertical (*religious well-being*) and a horizontal (*existential well-being*) dimension of "spiritual" well-being, more recent attempts to operationalize "spiritual" well-being for assessing the condition of patients suffering from severe diseases have focused even more strongly on positive psychosocial states such as meaning, purpose, inner peace, hope, or optimism beside explicit religion (Daaleman & Frey, 2004; Gomez & Fisher, 2003; Peterman, Fitchett, Brady, Hernandez, & Cella, 2002; The WHOQOL-SRPB Group, 2002). It is important to remember that the original intention of the concept of "spiritual" well-being has been to characterize a certain dimension of well-being beyond the "merely" psychological aspects of well-being. It has legitimately been questioned whether the recent attempts to measure "spiritual" well-being really capture the specific quality of this "spiritual" dimension of well-being or whether they mingle indicators of psychological well-being with indicators of religion in a way that rather prevents than guarantees a sound operationalization of "spiritual" well-being (Koenig, 2008, 2011).

Generativity has been prominently described as an important developmental task by Erikson (1950, 1959, 1982) within his theory of human development across the lifespan. According to Erikson, each period of life is characterized by certain tasks, for instance the establishment of one's identity during adolescence or of intimate relationships in young adulthood, which Erikson calls 'crises.' If an individual fails to satisfyingly manage these tasks, he or she is likely to suffer from the unresolved crises throughout later life, for instance due to a diffused identity or living in isolation. Erikson assumed such unresolved

developmental crises to be important risk factors for the occurrence of psychopathological symptoms. Generativity is said by Erikson to be the central task of middle adulthood, be it in terms of giving birth and raising one’s own children, be it in terms of transferring one’s knowledge and skills to younger generations in school, vocational training, and other workplaces, be it in terms of public significance. It is crucial about generativity that the individual gets the impression that there will be a younger generation positively remembering his impact on their lives. If the individual fails to be generative in one way or another, he or she is, according to Erikson, likely to stagnate self-preoccupied while being cut off from his or her social surrounding, and thus prone to worse mental health and well-being.

Although Erikson viewed generativity as a developmental task which each person in middle adulthood has to manage, he recognized that degrees to which individuals dedicate to generativity may differ. McAdams and colleagues (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1993, 1997, 1998) developed a scale for measuring generativity, the *Loyola Generativity Scale* (LGS) which operationalizes generativity in terms of having an impact on other people’s lives, caring for and being responsible for others, and being remembered by others. They could observe that self-reported generativity in fact increases from early (20s) to middle adulthood (30s–50s) and seems to decrease afterwards (60s and 70s; cf. McAdams, 2001; McAdams et al., 1993). It became also obvious, however, that generativity is not limited to middle adulthood, although this is the period of life wherein most people get involved most strongly with generative activities.

In line with Erikson’s assumptions about the importance of generativity for mental health and well-being, several studies found self-reported generativity to be positively associated with measures of well-being (Ackerman, Zuroff, & Moscovitz, 2000; Keyes & Ryff, 1998; Vandewater, Ostrove, & Stewart, 1997). Discussing these findings, McAdams (2006a, b) emphasizes that generativity does neither conceptually nor in

terms of operationalization overlap with well-being since generativity deals with concern for and commitment to promoting the well-being of future generations and not with one’s own well-being.

Schnell’s (2008, 2009a, b) research additionally links generativity with meaning-making. Based on her theory of implicit religion (Schnell, 2009a), she tried to identify important sources of meaning beyond explicit religion (Schnell, 2009a, b). In a study with a representative German sample, she found generativity to be the most important source of meaning (Schnell, 2008). Since there is empirical evidence that generativity is associated with higher levels of well-being and meaning, we consider generativity to be an important indicator of positive adult development.

Neuroticism/Emotional Stability is included as one of the most important behavior dispositions within multidimensional models of personality (Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003), e.g. Cattell’s 16 PF model (Cattell, 1946, 1950; Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1970; Cattell & Kline, 1977), Eysenck’s three-dimensional model (Eysenck, 1953; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1969, 1991) or the Big Five model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1992; Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Within the Big Five model of personality, neuroticism (in contrast to emotional stability) is characterized as predisposition to react impulsively, moody, self-conscious and shy on the one hand, but angry and hostile on the other, to experience feelings of anxiety and depression, and to be generally more vulnerable to stress (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It is thus not surprising that neuroticism is a prospective risk factor for a set of mental disorders, including depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, substance use disorders, and several personality disorders (Hettema, Neale, Myers, Prescott, & Kendler, 2006; Malouff, Thorsteinsson, & Schutte, 2005; Ormel et al., 2013; Saulsman & Page, 2004). In addition, neuroticism is associated with less physical health (Lahey, 2009; Smith & MacKenzie, 2006), in particular stress-related illness such as cardiovascular diseases (Suls & Bunde, 2005), and with higher

morbidity (Shiple, Weiss, Der, Taylor, & Deary, 2007; Wilson et al., 2005). Thus, neuroticism/emotional stability is the dimension of personality which is most clearly related to health. Beside health risks, neuroticism does also predict interpersonal conflicts and (dis)satisfaction with personal relationships (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; 1997; Kelly & Conley, 1987), and is generally negatively associated with several dimensions of well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Schmutte & Ryff 1997).

Although personality traits are generally assumed to be rather stable over the life course (the stability of neuroticism/emotional stability over 45 years is $r \approx .30$; cf. Conley, 1984), it has been observed throughout recent years that neuroticism/emotional stability can change in reaction to changes in life circumstances (Jerominus, Riese, Sanderman, & Ormel, 2014) and to positive and negative life events (Jerominus, Ormel, Aleman, Penninx, & Riese, 2013; Riese et al., 2014), including the transition into new social roles such as entering working life, marriage, parenthood, or retirement (Klimstra, Bleidorn, Asendorpf, van Aken, & Denissen, 2013; Roberts, Wood, & Smith, 2005; Specht, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2011). Changes in neuroticism/emotional stability are significantly associated with life satisfaction for two reasons: First, more satisfied persons generally experience more positive change in neuroticism/emotional stability, and second, positive changes in life satisfaction go along with development from neuroticism to more emotional stability (Specht, Egloff & Schmukle, 2013). Therefore, we think that it is legitimate to consider neuroticism/emotional stability as an indicator of personality maturation and thus also of positive adult development.

We hope that these brief explications about well-being, generativity, and neuroticism/emotional stability might be sufficient to justify that this selection of constructs can be understood as indicating positive adult development. We will return to them in the following section wherein we give an overview about the findings

on religion, “spirituality,” mental health, and well-being, and later in this chapter when we present the design and the results of our own study.

Overview About Findings on the Association of Religion and “Spirituality” with Mental Health and Well-Being

In the following section, we give a brief overview of findings about the associations of religion and “spirituality” with mental health and well-being. Since there are numerous studies on this topic, we concentrate on meta-analyses, large-scale epidemiological studies, and comprehensive reviews which allow to identify the most robust findings. Additionally to well-established findings on mental health and well-being, with respect to the design of our own study we report selected findings about the associations of religion and “spirituality” with generativity and neuroticism/emotional stability.

A challenge of reviewing research about associations of religion and “spirituality” with mental health and well-being is that the terms religion and “spirituality” are often understood very distinctly. Therefore it is important to be aware of the differing notions of the two terms and to consider which author regards which one to be the broader concept and which dimensions of religion or “spirituality” have been investigated accordingly. So far, we have usually spoken of both “spirituality” and religion although we consider religion to be the broader concept and “spirituality” to be a certain kind of privatized, experience-oriented religion (Streib & Hood, 2011, 2013; Utsch & Klein, 2011; see Chap. 1). When we use the term “spirituality” independently from the term religion in the following sections, we do not write about our own notion of “spirituality,” but refer to concepts which understand “spirituality” as a broader phenomenon which can be clearly distinguished from religion and does not necessarily relate to religion. As we

will outline in the following paragraphs, in particular the measurement of such concepts of “spirituality” raises some concerns.¹

Religion, “Spirituality,” and Psychopathology Most important for our purpose are the numerous findings about religion, “spirituality” and depression, because depression—including symptoms like decreased mood, negative affect, and unhappiness—is the indicator of bad mental health that is most closely related to well-being. According to an impressive meta-analysis including 147 studies (Smith, McCullough, & Poll, 2003), an intrinsic religious orientation is associated with lower levels of depression, whereas an extrinsic religious motivation and negative ways of religious coping are associated with higher levels of depression. In general, being religious appeared to be a stress buffer reducing the risk to suffer from depression. Koenig et al. (2012) reviewed 272 cross-sectional and 45 prospective studies about the relation between religion or “spirituality” and depression. 63 % of the cross-sectional studies found generally positive associations of indicators of religion (and “spirituality”) with lower depression while 6 % reported negative associations. 22 % found no significant associations. Of the prospective studies, twenty-one (47 %) observed that higher levels of religious or “spiritual” involvement predicted lower rates of depression over time while five studies (11 %) found religion predicting higher levels of depression (fourteen studies/31 % found no association). In particular, attendance of religious services, intrinsic religiousness, and positive religious coping strategies turned out to be religious variables associated with lower levels of depression.

With respect to a distinction between indicators of religion and “spirituality,” Baetz, Bowen, Jones, and Koru-Sengul (2006) reported an interesting finding: Based on analyses of a large-scale study about psychiatric symptoms among 37,000 Canadians, they found that religious service attendance was related to a lower current and lifetime incidence of depression, but valuing “spirituality” was associated with higher rates of current symptoms and lifetime risk for depression. Regarding the studies reviewed by Koenig et al. (2012), however, most studies wherein “spirituality” has been tried to measure found positive associations with lower levels of depression. The majority of these studies either tried to assess “spirituality” in terms of “spiritual” experiences (using several versions of the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale/DSES; Underwood & Teresi, 2002) or in terms of “spiritual” well-being (using in particular the Spiritual Well-Being Scale/SWBBS of Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982, 1991, or the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy—Spiritual Well-Being Scale/FACIT-Sp. of Peterman et al., 2002). All in all, both religion (in particular in terms of intrinsic religiousness, collective religious practice, or religious coping) and “spirituality” (in terms of “spiritual” experiences or “spiritual” well-being) seem to be related to lower levels of depression. Doubts remain, however, with respect to the findings about “spirituality” due to the objection already raised in the previous paragraph: In particular relating “spiritual” well-being (in terms of positive mental states like meaning, peace, or existential well-being) to depression is highly at risk to result in confounded findings as these supposed facets of “spirituality” are positive mental states directly opposed to depressive symptoms.

Depressive symptoms are one of the most important predictors of suicide. Because religion in general appears to be positively associated with less depression and since many religious teachings explicitly proscribe suicide, it is not surprising that belonging to a religious community and public religious practice are negatively associated with suicide rates in the USA and in Europe (Neeleman & Lewis, 1999). However,

¹There are measures including the label “spiritual” in the names of subscales (e.g. the RCOPE of Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000) or entire instruments (e.g. the Spiritual Assessment Inventory of Hall & Edwards, 2002) which deal clearly with aspects of religion and refer to concepts of “spirituality” which are subordinated to broader concepts of religion (e.g. Pargament, 1997, 2007). When we write about attempts to measure “spirituality” within health research in the following, however, we refer only to concepts which separate “spirituality” from religion and understand the former as the broader construct than the latter.

the picture is less clear for “spirituality”: Out of the 74 studies on religion, “spirituality,” and suicide reviewed by Koenig et al. (2012), only three explicitly tried to measure “spirituality.” Two of them used the FACIT-Sp. (McClain, Rosenfeld, & Breitbart, 2003; O’Mahoney et al., 2005), and one of them employed the SWBS (Nad, Marcinko, Vuksan-Aeusa, Jakovljevic, & Jakovljevic, 2008). Although the findings consistently yielded lower suicidal tendencies among the three samples (severely and terminally ill patients, war veterans), again skepticism remains with respect to the assessment of “spirituality” in terms of well-being.

Similarly clear as the findings about religion and depression are the findings about the association between religion and substance use and abuse (Koenig et al., 2012). A broad review of the literature on this topic (Geppert, Bogenschutz, & Miller, 2007) found 368 primarily cross-sectional studies about drinking and other substance use and abuse among adults, and additional 274 studies about substance use and abuse among adolescents. The vast majority of these studies yielded negative associations of religious affiliation and measures of religiousness with substance use and abuse. Further 101 studies reported more negative attitudes towards drinking and use of other drugs of persons belonging to certain religious traditions (Jews, Muslims, several Christian denominations) and higher religious respondents. The relation of substance use and abuse with “spirituality” is somewhat more complex: On the one hand, there is a certain kind of literature (56 studies, primarily from the late 1960s and 1970s) about use of psychoactive substances to stimulate extraordinary states of “spiritual” consciousness. On the other hand, there is a huge number of studies (308) illustrating the effectiveness of “spiritual” intervention programs such as the 12-Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous (Wilson, 2001) which uses a certain concept of “a power greater than ourselves” and became thus probably a prominent promoter of interest in “spirituality” in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy (Murken, 2008). Therefore, among the 188 studies on religion, “spirituality,” and substance

use and abuse reviewed by Koenig et al. (2012), beside DSES, SWBS (again the instruments most often used to capture “spirituality”) and a variety of other scales also measures asking for a “higher power” have been used in studies wherein “spirituality” was intended to be measured. All in all, setting the specific literature on psychoactive substances and “spiritual” consciousness aside, indicators of both religion and “spirituality” seem to be associated with less substance use and abuse and better treatment outcomes.

Findings about other psychiatric symptoms beside depression, suicide, and substance use and abuse are less clear. However, in a comprehensive longitudinal study on twins, Kendler et al. (2003) observed that several religious variables (general religiousness, social religiousness, God images, religiously motivated virtues) were negatively associated with a lower lifetime risk for a range of several psychiatric disorders (beside major depression and substance use and abuse also several anxiety disorders, bulimia nervosa, and adult antisocial behavior). The majority of studies on religion, “spirituality,” and anxiety seems to indicate that religious variables, in particular intrinsic religiousness and positive religious coping strategies, are inversely related with symptoms and the manifestation of anxiety disorders (of 299 reviewed studies, 49 % show a negative association with religion while only 11 % found positive associations; cf. Koenig et al., 2012). Again, the measures which have been used most often to assess “spirituality” as distinct from religion have been the DSES and the SWBS.

Research on relations of religion and “spirituality” with psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia is less common and more difficult to interpret because extraordinary religious beliefs and experiences might be part of the symptoms (Siddle, Haddock, Tarrier, & Faragher, 2002). However, a number of studies both from the USA and Europe observed that religion was one of the most important coping resources of psychiatric patients suffering from schizophrenia or related diseases whereas only a minority of patients held beliefs which were part of their delusions (Huguelet, Mohr, Borrás,

Gilliéron, & Brandt, 2006; Mohr, Brandt, Borrás, Gilliéron, & Huguelet, 2006; Tepper, Rogers, Coleman, & Malony, 2001). With respect to assessing “spirituality” among psychotics, Stiffler, Greer, Sneck, and Dovenmuehle (1993) observed that a small sample of psychiatric inpatients with psychotic diseases did not differ from a group of contemplative “spiritual” practitioners in terms of mystical experiences as measured with Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001) M-Scale, but only in terms of personality structure: While the contemplatives exhibited an open mindset, the mindset of the psychiatric patients was inflexible and rigid.

Religion, “Spirituality,” and Well-being In their comprehensive review of empirical research on religion, “spirituality,” and health, Koenig et al. (2012) reviewed 224 studies on the relationship of religion and “spirituality” with well-being and related constructs such as quality of life. 78 % of the studies found positive associations between measures of religion and “spirituality” while only two studies (1 %) found inverted relationships. 17 % of the studies observed no significant associations. Two international large-scale surveys could corroborate the finding that subjective religiousness and well-being (Crabtree & Pelham, 2009) as well as religious beliefs and life satisfaction (Diener & Clifton, 2002) are positively correlated in many cultures whereby the effects were found to be stronger in poorer countries and disappeared in some wealthier countries. In addition, the average degree of religiousness in a certain culture seems to play a moderating role. A recent analysis of international survey data found that the correlation of religion with happiness and life satisfaction was stronger in more religious countries with dominant negative attitudes towards non-believers (Stavrova, Fetchenhauer, & Schlösser, 2013).

Additionally, the strength of the association between religious variables and well-being depends on their assessment: A meta-analysis across 35 studies (Hackney & Sanders, 2003) showed that the association between scales of religiousness and scales of well-being became stronger if religiousness was measured in terms

of personal devotion (intrinsic religiousness, emotional attachment to God, colloquial prayer) instead of institutional religiousness (extrinsic religiousness, church attendance, ritual prayer) or ideological religiousness (belief salience, religious attitudes, fundamentalism). Further, the association increased if well-being was measured in terms of satisfaction with life (including also constructs which are conceptualized rather in terms of positive emotions such as happiness or self-esteem) or in terms of self-actualization (including identity integration, existential well-being and other growth-related concepts) instead of merely assessing absence of symptoms of bad mental health (anxiety, depression, and the like).

Aiming at conceptual clarity, Hackney and Sanders (2003) explicitly excluded measures of “spirituality” from their analysis. Taking a closer look at the measures which have been used trying to assess “spirituality” in the studies on well-being reviewed by Koenig et al. (2012) reveals that scales trying to measure “spiritual” well-being are most commonly used; in particular the SWBS, the FACIT-Sp., or the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire—Spirituality, Religiousness, and Personal Beliefs/WHOQOL-SRPB (cf. The WHOQOL-SRPB Group, 2002). Thus, “spirituality” in terms of well-being has been related to other measures of well-being—with high risk to produce tautological findings.

Religion, “Spirituality,” and Generativity In comparison to the numerous findings about associations of religion and “spirituality” with mental health and well-being, there are only few studies which have investigated the relation of religion and “spirituality” with generativity. Reviewing research with McAdams and de St. Aubin’s (1992) LGS, McAdams and colleagues (de St. Aubin, McAdams, & Kim, 2004; McAdams, 2001; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1998) report a number of findings showing that generativity is significantly correlated with higher levels of religious observance among adults. In addition, Rossi (2001) reports that persons scoring high in generativity have been socialized religiously to a greater extent than less generative

respondents. Linking quantitative research using the LGS with the qualitative study of life stories of US Christians at midlife, McAdams (2006a, b; McAdams & Albaugh, 2008) also found many of his religiously committed interviewees expressing high levels of generativity. Furthermore, he detected many motives pointing to generativity within their stories about their lives and their religious faith.

Working with the *generativity* subscale of her Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (SoMe; Schnell, 2009b), Schnell observed correlations between religious variables and generativity, too: She found positive associations of medium extent between intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness (Allport & Ross, 1967), quest religiousness (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991a, b), and generativity (cf. Schnell, 2009a). Since the SoMe questionnaire does also include two brief, but valid scales for religiousness and “spirituality,” Schnell (2009a) further correlated the generativity subscale of the SoMe with these two scales and found that both were significantly and to a similar extent associated with generativity. Beside this study, however, we do not know of any further findings about relations between generativity and measures of “spirituality.”

Religion, “Spirituality,” and Neuroticism/Emotional Stability Koenig et al. (2012) report the findings of 54 studies on associations between religion, “spirituality,” and neuroticism/emotional stability. Most of them yielded no significant associations (61 %), while a quarter (24 %) detected inverse relationships of religion and “spirituality” with neuroticism (thus indicating a positive association with emotional stability). Only five studies (9 %) found associations in the opposite direction.

Saroglou has calculated two meta-analyses based on 16 (Saroglou, 2002) and 71 (Saroglou, 2010) studies about the associations of religious variables with the Big Five dimensions of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1992; Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987). In the smaller study (Saroglou, 2002), neuroticism was uncorrelated with measures of general religiousness (including scales assessing general

religiousness, intrinsic religiousness, prayer, or religious orthodoxy), but slightly negatively associated with measures of mature faith and “spirituality.”² But in the larger study (Saroglou, 2010), mature faith and “spirituality” as well as general religiousness remained uncorrelated with neuroticism/emotional stability. However, although statistically insignificant, all religious variables correlated negatively with neuroticism.

Thus, both the review of Koenig et al. (2012) and the meta-analyses of Saroglou (2002, 2010) indicate that, in general, there are no strong associations of religion and “spirituality” with neuroticism/emotional stability. But if correlations reach the level of significance, religion and “spirituality” are more likely to be inversely related to neuroticism (and thus to be associated with slightly higher emotional stability). This result is probably more valid than many findings about “spirituality,” mental health, and well-being because there are only very few studies wherein scales for “spiritual” well-being have been related to neuroticism/emotional stability (and none of them has been included in Saroglou’s meta-analyses). Consequently, as the findings of Saroglou show, the patterns of correlations of general religiousness and “spirituality” with neuroticism/emotional stability do not differ much anymore.

Which conclusions can be drawn from our overview about research on religion, “spirituality,” mental health, and well-being? In general, religion seems to be associated with better mental health (in terms of less depression, suicidal tendencies, substance use and abuse and maybe also other symptoms of psychopathology; cf. Koenig et al., 2012) and well-being (cf. Hackney & Sanders, 2003) although at least the latter relation is moderated by

²In his second meta-analysis, Saroglou (2010) gives a reason for assigning measures of mature faith to the group of “spirituality” measures arguing that faith maturity in Fowler’s (1981) sense shares with “spirituality” “individuation and reflectivity in faith (critical consideration of beliefs); this faith may or may not be in connection with a specific religious tradition” (Saroglou, 2010, p. 109). In both meta-analyses, Saroglou carefully considered which subscales of certain “spirituality” measures could be validly assigned to the group of “spirituality”/mature faith measures.

cultural and religious context (Crabtree & Pelham, 2009; Diener & Clifton, 2002; Stavrova et al., 2013). Many findings seem to show that “spirituality” is similarly related to better mental health and well-being, yet there are serious concerns due to the unsatisfying assessment of “spirituality” in many studies. Although there is a large number of studies, doubts remain concerning their validity, and better ways to investigate relationships between “spirituality,” mental health, and well-being need to be established.

There are fewer concerns about studies which have investigated the association between “spirituality” and neuroticism/emotional stability. As general religiousness, “spirituality” usually appears to be uncorrelated to neuroticism/emotional stability (Koenig et al., 2012; Saroglou, 2010). However, there are not many studies which have tried to relate mysticism to neuroticism/emotional stability (Caird, 1978; Michalica & Hunt, 2013; Spanos & Moretti, 1988). While there are numerous studies on “spirituality,” health, and well-being and many findings about “spirituality” and neuroticism/emotional stability, so far there is only one study which has linked generativity explicitly to a measure of “spirituality.” Therefore, it is still a widely open question whether “spirituality” is really associated with higher levels of generativity. In our own study, we will try to shed some light on this question—as we will try to investigate the relation of “spirituality” with neuroticism/emotional stability in more detail and the relation of “spirituality” with well-being more validly. In the following section, we will discuss the limitations of previous attempts to measure “spirituality” within health research and will outline a possible design to avoid these shortcomings.

Evaluation of Commonly Used Measures of “Spirituality” Within Health Research

Our review of the current state of research has shown that there are serious problems with respect to the measurement of “spirituality.”

If “spirituality” is understood as the wider construct as compared to religion and thought to be not necessarily related to religion, two ways of conceptualizing and measuring “spirituality” can be observed: Either “spirituality” is tried to be operationalized in terms of general “spirituality”—often with special interest in “spiritual” experiences as in Underwood and Teresi’s (2002) DSES or in the Index of Core Spiritual Experiences (INSPIRE; Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Zuttermeister, & Benson, 1991). Or measures of “spiritual” well-being are used when “spirituality” shall be assessed, making use of such measures as the SWBS, the FACIT-Sp., or the WHOQOL-SRPB.

With respect to measures of general “spirituality,” it can be questioned whether these instruments really cover anything else or broader than traditionally described religious experiences, beliefs, and activities. This concern can be underscored empirically if they are correlated both with self-rated religiousness and “spirituality” and with measures of traditional religiousness: In a comparative study on 478 adherents of various faith traditions, several measures for religiousness and “spirituality” have been used (Klein, Gottschling, & Zwingmann, 2012). The DSES was found to correlate to $r = .57$ with self-rated “spirituality,” but to $r = .61$ with self-rated religiousness, to $r = .74$ with a measure of belief in God (Maiello, 2005), and to $r = .84$ with Huber’s (2003; Huber & Huber, 2012) Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) which assesses the centrality of religion in an individual’s personality. In a combined principal component analysis of all scales, 12 of the 16 items of the DSES loaded solely or more strongly on the same factor as all items of the CRS and the belief in God scale. Thus, this factor could be interpreted as general religiousness or centrality of religion. Only the remaining four items of the DSES loaded on a second factor expressing a kind of connectedness with nature, humanity, and the Divine.³ Thus, taking respondents’

³It is surely no coincidence that all of these four items are recommended by Koenig (2011) to be left out of the DSES when applied within health research.

understanding of both “religion” and “spirituality” seriously, the DSES appears to be rather a measure of religious experiences than an operationalization of a broader concept of “spiritual” experiences. As a consequence, many of the findings about positive associations of the DSES with mental health and well-being reported above probably rather signal positive effects of well-known religious experiences.

Similar concerns can be raised with respect to other scales trying to measure “spiritual” experiences or general “spirituality” because they do not satisfyingly clarify how the underlying concept of “spirituality” and the corresponding behavior relate to religion—either because they lean on experiences, beliefs, and practices which are traditionally thought to be core dimensions of religion, e.g. Piedmont’s (1999) Spiritual Transcendence Scale/STS or Kass et al.’s (1991) INSPIRIT, or because they leave it open to the respondents what they understand as “spirituality,” e.g. Hodge’s (2003) Intrinsic Spirituality Scale (cf. the critical review of measures of Koenig, 2011, and the critique articulated in Chap. 11, this volume).

While this is rather a problem of terminological and conceptual clarity, the problem of much research using the scales which try to measure “spiritual” well-being is a more serious methodological one. All three of the most widely used measures for “spiritual” well-being (SWBS, FACIT-Sp., WHOQOL-SRPB) consist of one or more subscales explicitly dealing with religion (labeled as ‘faith’ or ‘religious well-being’) while at least half of the items belong to subscales named ‘meaning,’ ‘peace,’ ‘hope,’ ‘optimism,’ ‘self-efficacy,’ or ‘existential well-being’ which assess positive mental states. The same is true for many other measures of “spiritual” well-being, among them the Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire/SWBQ (Gomez & Fisher, 2003), the Spirituality Index of Well-Being (Daaleman and Frey 2004), and also the recently developed European Organisation for Research and Therapy of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire—Module for the Assessment of Spiritual Well-Being/EORTC QLB-SWB36 (Vivat et al., 2013). It is obvious that mental states like finding

meaning and purpose, experiencing inner peace, feeling hope and self-efficacy, or being optimistic are common indicators of general mental health and well-being. But it is unclear why these mental states shall be understood as expressions of a certain dimension of “spiritual” well-being. Using scales which take common positive mental states as indicators of “spiritual” well-being and relating them to other measures of mental health and well-being is likely to result in confounded findings because predictor and outcome are intermixed and the same construct (or at least parts of it) is measured twice (Koenig, 2008, 2011).

If scales of “spiritual” well-being are taken as predictors for studying salutary effects of “spirituality,” they are used rather against the original intention of the concept of “spiritual” well-being which was developed to check positive outcomes of caring for elder people or of medical treatment. It is part of the problem that measures of “spiritual” well-being are often unclear about their conceptual intention. For instance, Gomez and Fisher (2003) found that the subscales of their SWBQ did not correlate significantly with Eysenck’s (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991) personality dimensions and concluded that “spirituality” as measured with their questionnaire appears to be an independent personality trait. Conceptualizing “spirituality” as a personality trait, however, would rather characterize Gomez and Fisher’s instrument as a measure of general “spirituality”; yet the SWBQ claims to measure “spiritual” well-being, thus referring rather to a dimension of well-being than to a dimension of personality.

What follows from this critical evaluation of attempts to measure “spirituality” within health research? It is obvious that, for a valid investigation of the association of “spirituality” (predictor) with well-being and mental health (outcome), the measure which is chosen as operationalization of “spirituality” must not overlap with indicators of well-being and mental health. Thus, measures dealing with general “spirituality” are for sure a better choice than the existing measures for “spiritual” well-being since the latter are rather outcome measures themselves

and often overlap with other dimensions of mental health and well-being. To avoid the problems of an unclear distinction between “spirituality” and religion which is, as we have seen, the major concern about scales trying to measure general “spirituality,” one possibility is to choose a scale which does not intend to measure either “spirituality” or religion, but a certain kind of belief (e.g. in something “transcendent” or “divine”), practice (e.g. meditation), or experience (e.g. experiences of transcending or mystical experiences) which might relate to both religion and “spirituality.”

In Chap. 11, we have shown that Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001) M-Scale can be used as a reliable and valid measure for what many people today associate with “spirituality.” Thus, the M-Scale operates like a measure of “general spirituality.” To test whether the mystical experiences which are assessed with the M-Scale are interpreted rather in terms of religion or of “spirituality” (or neither), it is additionally necessary to ask for the religious and “spiritual” self-identification of study participants. On the basis of such a selection of measures, it is possible to validly investigate how experiences which appear “spiritual” to many people (and religious to others) generally relate to indicators of well-being and health. In our study, we follow this path by investigating the associations between the M-Scale and psychological well-being, generativity, and neuroticism/emotional stability as indicators of positive adult development across four groups according to their categorical self-identification as either “more religious than spiritual,” “more spiritual than religious,” “equally religious and spiritual,” or “neither religious nor spiritual.”

Hypotheses

In our hypothetical model for the entire project (see Chap. 4), we assumed that “spirituality” may predict positive adult development in terms of psychological well-being and generativity. With

respect to the findings presented in Chap. 11, we feel legitimized to use Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001), M-Scale as a valid measure for experiences which many people associate with “spirituality.” As measure for well-being, we use the Ryff Scale (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 1996, 1998). For the assessment of generativity, we employ the LGS (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1993, 1997, 1998). To additionally link our analyses with research on “spirituality” and personality (see Chap. 12) and to findings on personality maturation and well-being (cf. our section on neuroticism/emotional stability at the beginning of this chapter), we also use the *neuroticism* subscale of the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1985; McCrae et al., 1998) as a further indicator of positive adult development. Religious and “spiritual” self-identification is measured with a single forced-choice item.

Except for one study of Byrd, Lear, and Schwenka (2000) who observed positive associations of the M-Scale with life satisfaction and purpose in life, most previous studies about associations of the M-Scale with indicators of health and well-being have focused rather on psychopathological symptoms than on well-being and related constructs (for overviews, see Hood et al., 2009; Hood & Francis, 2013). Most important for our study are the following findings: As already mentioned earlier in this chapter, Stifler et al. (1993) compared a small sample of advanced members of various contemplative “spiritual” groups with a small sample of psychiatric inpatients with psychotic symptoms and with a control group. They found that the contemplative and the psychotic group expressed similar levels of mystical experience which differed significantly from the lower level reported by the control group. But the personality structure of the contemplative group differed from that of the psychotics. While the contemplative participants exhibited openness and fluidity, the psychotics exhibited resistance and rigidity. Thus, among persons who are familiar with “spiritual” practices, extraordinary mystical experiences do not necessarily point to

psychopathology. Instead, people who are adept at spiritual practices are more likely to experience mystical states as positive (Kohls, Hack, & Walach, 2008), in particular if no distress or psychopathological symptoms occur parallel (Kohls & Walach, 2007). But not only “spiritual” training makes a difference, but also having a plausible frame which allows to interpret the mystical experiences as positive (Granqvist & Larsson, 2006).

The last finding gives a hint to take a differentiated look at the three subscales of the M-Scale which distinguish between *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* (i.e. mystical experiences) and their *interpretation* as positive, noetic, and sacred (Hood, 2006, Hood et al., 1993, 2001). In a study on the association between mysticism and magical ideation (a construct closely related to proneness to psychotic symptoms), Byrom (2009) noticed that introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences were significantly correlated to magical ideation while the correlation with the *interpretation* subscale remained marginal. In the study of Byrd and colleagues (2001), it was the subscale *interpretation* that turned out to correlate significantly with life satisfaction and purpose in life. In our own analysis of associations between the three subscales of the M-Scale and self-rated “spirituality,” we found neutral or negative direct associations between *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* and “spirituality,” but strongly positive direct associations of *interpretation* with “spirituality” among participants who self-identified as “spiritual” (see Chap. 11). However, *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* had positive indirect effects on self-rated “spirituality,” but they have been completely mediated by *interpretation*. Thus, it is crucial to have a frame of interpretation for mystical experiences because otherwise they are not associated with seeing oneself as “spiritual” or religious—and might potentially even be prone to psychotic symptoms.

Based on these findings, we formulate the following hypotheses about the association of the

M-Scale with psychological well-being, generativity, and neuroticism/emotional stability:

- H₁: Persons who are familiar with “spiritual” practice and have a corresponding interpretive frame are likely to experience mystical states as positive (Granqvist & Larsson, 2006; Kohls & Walach, 2007; Kohls et al., 2008; Stifler et al., 1993). Since our sample consists of persons who mostly self-identify as “spiritual” and participated in our study due to their interest in “spirituality,” we generally expect that mystical experiences (which are strongly associated with our participants’ self-assessment of “spirituality”; see Chap. 11) will predict higher levels of psychological well-being and growth (Ryff Scale).
- H_{1a}: With respect to the differential effects of the three subscales of the M-Scale observed by Byrd et al. (2000), Byrom (2009), and in our own study (Chap. 11), we expect that the *interpretation* subscale will have direct positive effects on psychological well-being and growth.
- H_{1b}: For the same reason, direct effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* on well-being are expected to be neutral or rather negative.
- H_{1c}: Additionally, we assume that there will be positive indirect effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* on well-being which are mediated by *interpretation*.
- H_{1d}: Since mystical experiences require an interpretive frame to be perceived as positive, we expect only significant effects of mysticism among the subgroups of our sample who self-identify either as “spiritual” or as “religious,” but not among the participants who self-identify as “neither religious nor spiritual.”

The theoretical model for our analysis of direct and indirect effects of the M-Scale subscales on psychological well-being and growth is visualized in Fig. 25.1. We will analyze the data

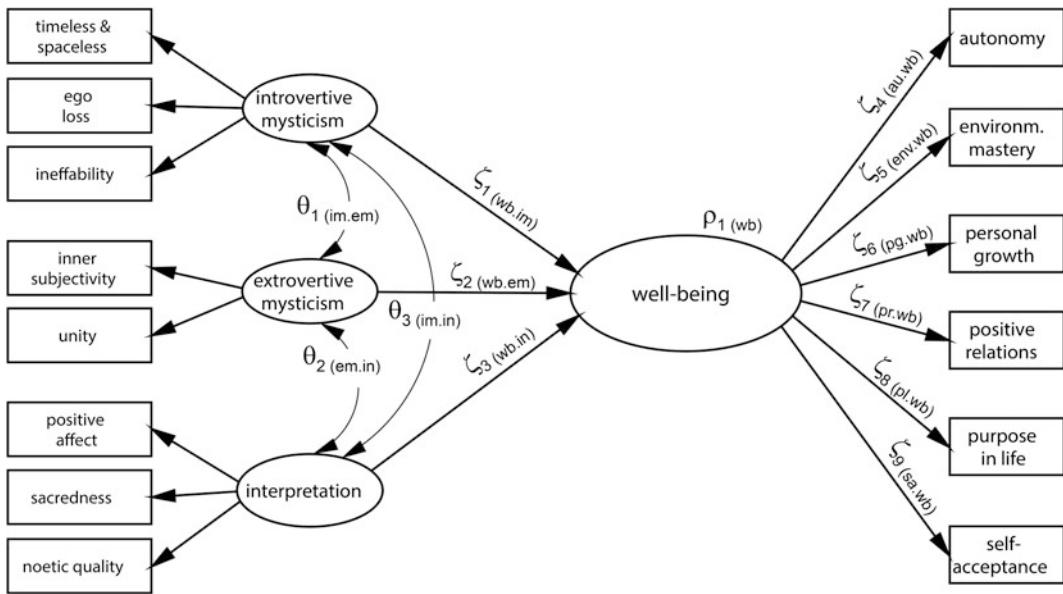


Fig. 25.1 Effects of Mysticism on Psychological Well-Being and Growth (Hypothesized Model)

by structural equation modeling (SEM). In the theoretical model, circles represent latent constructs while rectangles represent observed variables. As observed indicators of the three M-Scale subscales clusters of four items measuring the eight aspects of mystical experience described by Stace (1960) and operationalized by Hood (1975; see Chap. 11 and below) are used. The subscales of the Ryff Scale measuring the six dimensions of psychological well-being and growth described by Ryff (1989; Ryff & Singer, 1996, 1998; see above) serve as measured indicators for the broader construct.

H₂: The M-Scale measures introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences in terms of feelings of unity either due to self-loss or to a perception of the unity of all things (Hood, 2006). Generativity is characterized by the need to dedicate one’s activities to the of future generations which will remember how they benefitted from these activities. Thus, generativity requires both subordinating personal needs to expected needs of others and feeling united with others in terms of caring for them and being remebered by them. Therefore, we expect mysticism to predict higher levels of generativity (LGS).

- H_{2a}: With respect to the differential effects of the three M-Scale subscales mentioned above, we expect the *interpretation* subscale to have direct positive effects on generativity.
- H_{2b}: Contrary, direct effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* on generativity are expected to be neutral or rather negative.
- H_{2c}: But again, we expect that *interpretation* will mediate positive effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism*.
- H_{2d}: Also again we expect significant effects of mysticism only among the “spiritual” or “religious” subgroups of our sample, but not among the “neither religious nor spiritual.”

The theoretical model for effects of the subscales of the M-Scale on generativity is depicted in Fig. 25.2. Measured indicators of the three subscales of the M-Scale in this SEM are again the eight clusters of items operationalizing Stace’s (1960) aspects of mysticism; observed indicators of generativity as measured with the LGS shall be four clusters of items which we have identified by explorative factor analyses expressing the feeling to have impact on others, the wish to be remembered, the fear to have neither impact nor responsibility, and the need to

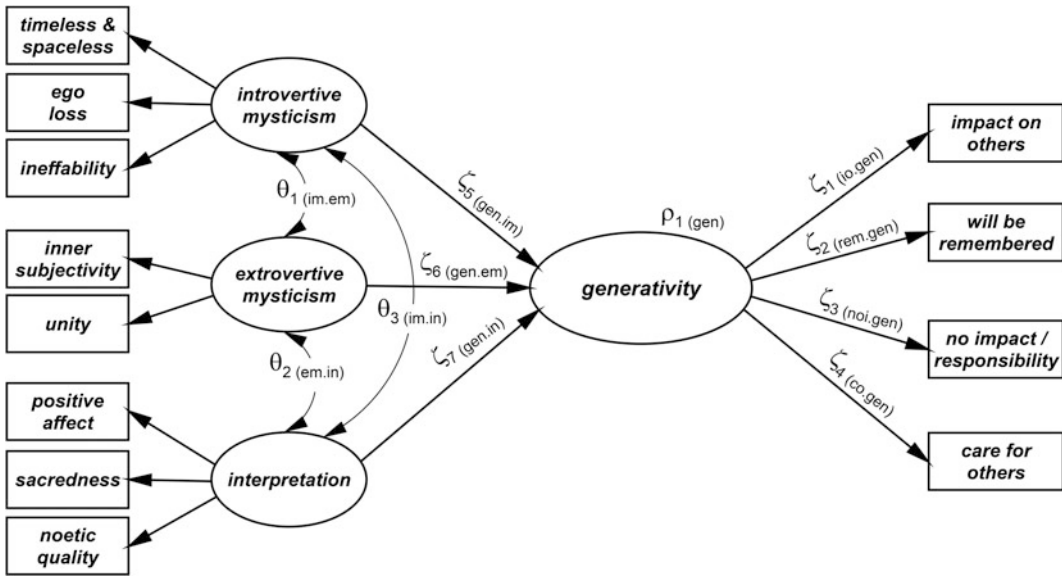


Fig. 25.2 Effects of Mysticism on Generativity (Hypothesized Model)

care for others (cf. McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1998).

- H₃: Since “spiritually” adept people experience mystical states rather as positive, we expect that mysticism will predict lower levels of neuroticism (and thus higher levels of emotional stability) as measured with the NEO-FFI subscale *neuroticism*.
- H_{3a}: Again, we assume differential effects of the three M-Scale subscales: The *interpretation* subscale is expected to have direct negative effects on neuroticism (and thus positive effects on emotional stability).
- H_{3b}: The direct effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* on neuroticism are assumed to be neutral or rather positive.
- H_{3c}: *Interpretation* is expected to mediate negative effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* on neuroticism.
- H_{3d}: There will be only significant effects of mysticism on neuroticism among participants who self-identified as “spiritual” or “religious,” but not among “neither religious nor spiritual” participants.

The theoretical model for testing the effects of the three subscales of the M-Scale on neuroticism is visualized in Fig. 25.3. Observed indicators of the three M-Scale subscales are the same as in the two previous models. Measured indicators of neuroticism are three clusters of four items each which we have identified by explorative factor analyses and labeled *emotional instability*, *social stress*, and *vulnerability to stress*.

Since there are no findings with the M-Scale comparing a US sample with a sample from Germany yet, we do not formulate any hypotheses on cross-cultural differences. But of course we are aware of possible cross-cultural differences which we will discuss in the final section of this chapter.

Method

Participants

The total data set of our study contains responses from $N = 1,886$ participants ($n = 1113$ respondents from the USA and $n = 773$ respondents

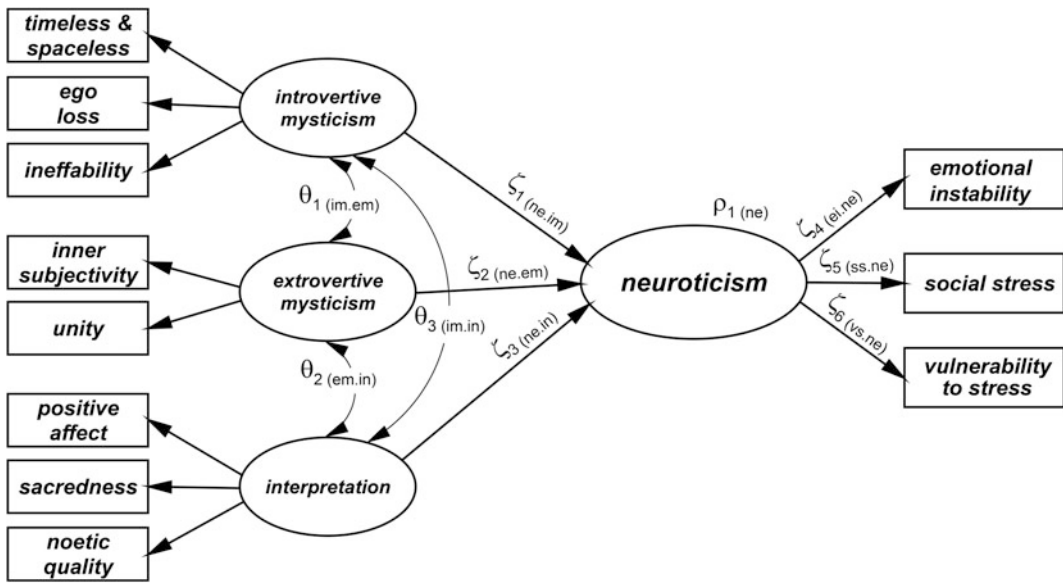


Fig. 25.3 Effects of Mysticism on Neuroticism (Hypothesized Model)

from Germany). For details about the distribution of socio-demographic variables (age, sex, education, income) and religious affiliation, see Chap. 4.

Measures

As we have demonstrated in Chap. 11, Hood’s (1975, 2006; Hood et al., 1993, 2001) M-Scale can be used as a valid measure for “spirituality” (for more details about the theoretical background and measurement details, see Chap. 11). The M-Scale operationalizes mystical experiences by making use of eight characteristics which have been phenomenologically described by Stace (1960): *Timelessness/spacelessness*, *ego loss*, *ineffability*, *unity in diversity*, *inner subjectivity*, *noetic quality*, *sacredness*, and *positive affect*. Hood (1975) has operationalized each of these eight facets of mystical experience with two items with positive wording and two items with negative wording. Thus, the entire M-Scale consists of 32 (2 × 2 × 8) items. Extensive factor analyses have corroborated a three factor solution to be

stable across different cultures and faith traditions (Chen, Zhang, Hood, & Watson, 2012; Hood & Williamson, 2000; Hood et al., 1993, 2001). The twelve items measuring *ego loss*, *timelessness/spacelessness*, and *ineffability* form the first factor which Hood, leaning on Stace’s work, has termed *introvertive mysticism* (the ineffable experience of a self-loss in greater unity, out of time and space). The eight items operationalizing *unity in diversity* and *inner subjectivity* build the second factor, *extrovertive mysticism* (feeling united with the multiplicity of all things which all appear to be somehow alive and connected). The remaining twelve items represent a factor which is called *interpretation* because the facets *noetic quality*, *sacredness*, and *positive affect* already express a rudimentary appraisal of the experience as positive, holy, and insightful. The three factors function sufficiently as reliable subscales (Burriss, 1999; Hood & Williamson, 2000; Hood et al., 1993, 2001). As in the studies of Hood and Williamson (2000), Hood et al. (2001) and Chen et al. (2012), we use the clusters of items representing the eight mysticism facets described by Stace (1960) as measured indicators of the three

factors of the M-Scale in our SEMs (see Figs. 25.1, 25.2 and 25.3). For cross-cultural comparison, the M-Scale has been translated into German by B. Keller. The M-Scale shows satisfying internal consistencies both in the US and the German subsample. They range from Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$ (*interpretation*) to $.88$ (*introvertive mysticism, extrovertive mysticism*) in the US sample and from $\alpha = .90$ (*interpretation*) to $.92$ (*introvertive mysticism, extrovertive mysticism*) in the German sample. We used five response options for the items of the M-Scale (1 = "very inaccurate," 2 = "moderately inaccurate," 3 = "neither inaccurate nor accurate," 4 = "moderately accurate," and 5 = "very accurate").

Well-being and growth is measured with the Psychological Well-Being and Growth Scale (Ryff Scale; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 1996, 1998). For the German sample, we used the German translation which has been applied in the Berlin Aging Studies (BASE) with permission of U. Staudinger. As detailed above, Ryff (1989; Ryff & Singer, 1996, 1998) distinguishes six dimensions of well-being and positive adult development: *autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance*. These dimensions are operationalized as subscales with differing numbers of items depending on different versions of the Ryff Scale (ranging from three items per subscale up to 14 items per subscale). In previous research of our team, we have used a 9-item version of the Ryff Scale with satisfying results (Streib, Hood, Keller, Silver, & Csöff, 2009). For the present study, we decided to use a somewhat shorter version wherein each subscale consists of seven items with partly positive and partly negative wordings. For all items we used five rating stages as response options (1 = "strongly disagree," 2 = "disagree," 3 = "neutral," 4 = "agree," 5 = "strongly agree"). Reported internal consistencies for the 14-item versions of the subscales range from Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$ to $\alpha = .91$ (Ryff, 1989). In our own study, the internal consistencies for the 7-item versions range from $\alpha = .74$ (*autonomy*) to $.84$ (*self-*

acceptance) in the US subsample and from $\alpha = .66$ (*personal growth, purpose in life*) to $.85$ (*self-acceptance*) in the German subsample. In our SEM on well-being, all six subscales of the Ryff Scale are used as measured variables which indicate the overarching latent construct of psychological well-being and growth (see Fig. 25.1).

Generativity is assessed with the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, McAdams et al., 1993, 1997, 1998). For our German subsample we used the German translation of the LGS of Hofer, Busch, Chasiotis, Kärtner, and Campos (2008). The LGS has been developed by McAdams and colleagues to measure generativity as described by Erikson (1950, 1959, 1982) in terms of leaving a positive legacy of oneself for future generations. The LGS consists of 20 items asking for the feeling of having an impact on others' lives, the need to care for others, and the impression of being therefore remembered. All items are summed to a total score whereby six items with negative wordings need to be inverted. All items had to be answered with a 5-stage rating scale ranging from 1 = "never applies to me" to 4 = "applies to me very often or nearly always." In their initial validation study of the LGS, McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) reported internal consistencies of Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$ and $.84$. In our study, the LGS yields satisfying internal consistencies of $\alpha = .86$ for the US sample and $\alpha = .83$ for the German sample. In order to define observed indicators of generativity for our SEM, we identified four clusters of items which we labeled *impact on others, will be remembered, have no impact/responsibility, and care for others* (see Fig. 25.2).

Neuroticism/emotional stability is measured with the *neuroticism* subscale of the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1985; McCrae et al., 1998). For our German subsample, the German translation of Borkenau and Ostendorf (1993) has been used. The *neuroticism* scale consists of 12 items, partly with negative wordings, expressing self-reproach and feelings of anxiety and depression (which can be understood as

subcomponents of the construct neuroticism/emotional stability according to Saucier, 1998, and Chapman, 2007). The items had to be answered with a 5-point rating scale ranging from 0 = “strongly disagree” to 4 = “strongly agree.” The reported internal consistency of the *neuroticism* scale is Cronbach’s $\alpha = .79$. In our study, internal consistency is $\alpha = .88$ in both the US and the German subsamples. We tried to use the subcomponents of the neuroticism subscale of the NEO-FFI described by Saucier (1998) and Chapman (2007) as item clusters serving as observed indicators of neuroticism/emotional stability for our SEM, but we could not replicate these components. Since Saucier’s and Chapman’s proposals for subdimensions also differ slightly from one another, we find it legitimate to use other clusters of items as measured indicators of neuroticism instead. A principal component analysis with Varimax rotation showed that three clusters of four items can be used as observed indicators of neuroticism for our sample. We have labeled these clusters *emotional instability*, *social stress*, and *vulnerability to stress* (see Fig. 25.3).

“Spiritual” and “religious” self-identification is measured with a forced-choice categorical item asking whether participants prefer to identify themselves as “more religious than spiritual” (US sample: $n = 71$, German sample: $n = 79$), “equally religious and spiritual” (US sample: $n = 304$, German sample: $n = 146$), “more spiritual than religious” (US sample: $n = 566$, German sample: $n = 377$), or “neither religious nor spiritual” (US sample: $n = 172$, German sample: $n = 171$).

Statistics

Data have been edited in SPSS 22. SEMs applying Maximum-Likelihood Estimation have been calculated using AMOS 22. Multi-group analyses for the eight groups emerging from “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification and cultural background have been performed for

each of our theoretical models on associations between the three factors building the subscales of the M-Scale and well-being, generativity, and neuroticism (Figs. 25.1, 25.2 and 25.3). As indices of model fit, we report χ^2 , χ^2/df , comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1995, 1999). As in the SEM reported in Chap. 11, our first attempts to test our theoretical models resulted in models of acceptable fit, yet there have been non-positive definite covariance matrices of the three factors at least within one of the eight groups. Because non-positive definite covariance matrices are not admissible (Wothke, 1993), as in the SEM described in Chap. 11, we fixed the variances of the error terms for the observed mysticism aspects *ego loss* and *unity* to a value of 1.0. We consider this selection of indicators to be justifiable because of the conceptual proximity of *ego-loss* and *unity*, since *ego-loss* is described as “a loss of the self in a greater unity” by Hood et al. (2001), thus referring to an experience of unity, too. In the SEM on neuroticism, additionally the variance of the error term of the item cluster *vulnerability to stress* had to be fixed to 1.0 to avoid a non-positive covariance matrix in the US “more religious than spiritual” group.

Results

Mysticism and Psychological Well-Being and Growth

Our respecified SEM on the associations between the three factors representing the subscales of the M-Scale and psychological well-being and growth as measured with the Ryff Scale (cf. Fig. 25.1) yields sufficient model fit indices (Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999): $\chi^2 = 1971.473$; $df = 584$; $\chi^2/df = 3.38$, CFI = .900, RMSEA = .036 (lower

bound = .034, upper bound = .037). Thus, our theoretical model fits the data acceptably.

Table 25.1 presents the regression weights and multiple squared correlations for the four categorical groups of “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification in both countries. In general, they support our H_1 that mysticism predicts higher psychological well-being and growth since the factors of the M-Scale explain the variance of well-being and growth to a considerable extent; at least in most of the eight groups. The estimates for explained variance are highest for the groups of the “equally religious and spiritual” both in the US and the German sample ($R^2 = .48$ and $.36$, respectively). They are still substantial for the “more spiritual than religious” groups in both countries ($R^2 = .32$ and $.26$) and for the German “more religious than spiritual” group ($R^2 = .23$) while a little bit lower for the US “more religious than spiritual” group ($R^2 = .19$). The explanation of the variance of well-being and growth of the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups by mystical experiences, however, remained low ($R^2 = .11$ and $.05$).

Across all eight groups, the M-Scale factor *interpretation* significantly predicts higher psychological well-being and growth; at minimum on trend level with $\beta = .36$ ($p = .078$) among the German “neither religious nor spiritual” group, at maximum with $\beta = .97$ ($p \leq .001$) among the US “more spiritual than religious” group. Thus, we can corroborate our H_{1a} : The interpretation of mystical experiences as emotionally positive, sacred, and providing a new, deeper knowledge is associated with better well-being and growth.

On the contrary, as assumed in H_{1b} , the direct effects of introverted and extroverted mystical experiences on psychological well-being and growth are insignificant or even significantly negative. The latter is true in particular for the US “equally religious and spiritual” and “more spiritual” groups in which both *introverted mysticism* ($\beta \leq -.26$; $p \leq .009$) and *extroverted mysticism* ($\beta \leq -.25$; $p \leq .009$) have negative effects. Further, there are significant negative effects of *introverted mysticism* among the German “equally religious and spiritual” and “more spiritual” groups ($\beta \leq -.28$; $p \leq .039$) and at

trend level also among the US “neither religious nor spiritual” group ($\beta = -.31$; $p \leq .063$). The remaining effects of introverted and extroverted mysticism on psychological well-being and growth are insignificant.

Does this mean that, if introverted or extroverted mystical experiences affect well-being and growth at all, they affect it to the worse? The answer to this question is plainly: No. There are highly significant correlations between the three factors of the M-Scale among all eight groups of $r \geq .60$ ($p \leq .001$), indicating a considerable amount of shared variance between the three factors. Thus, the observed insignificant or negative regression weights of *introverted* and *extroverted mysticism* express that only such mystical experiences which cannot be interpreted as emotionally beneficial (*positive affect*), valuable (*sacredness*), and insightful (*noetic quality*) appear to be related to lower psychological well-being and growth. In combination with a suitable interpretive frame, however, they contribute to better well-being and growth. Therefore, both H_{1b} and H_{1c} can be confirmed: While there are rather neutral or even significantly negative direct effects of *introverted* and *extroverted mysticism*, positive effects of introverted and extroverted mystical experiences are mediated by their interpretation in terms of *positive affect*, *sacredness*, and *noetic quality*.

H_{1d} postulated that there will be only significant effects of mysticism among the subgroups of our sample who self-identify either as “spiritual” or as “religious,” but not among the participants who self-identify as “neither religious nor spiritual.” But in fact, there are consistently significant positive effects of *interpretation* among the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups in the US and the German sample ($\beta_{USA} = .63$; $p \leq .025$; $\beta_{GER} = .36$; $p \leq .078$); although on an equal or lower level than the effects among the other three groups in each country. Additionally, at trend level, *introverted mysticism* predicts lower well-being of the US “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents ($\beta = -.31$; $p \leq .063$). Thus, H_{1d} could not be corroborated in terms of regression weights. However, in terms of explained variance of well-being and growth, the

Table 25.1 Correlations of Mysticism Factors and Standardized Regression Weights of Mysticism Factors on Psychological Well-being and Growth Among the Four Groups of Categorical “Spiritual” and “Religious” Self-identification

	im em (01)	em in (02)	im. in (03)	wb. im (ζ1)	wb. em (ζ2)	wb. in (ζ3)	au. wb (ζ4)	env. wb (ζ5)	pg. wb (ζ6)	pr. wb (ζ7)	pl. wb (ζ8)	sa. wb (ζ9)	R ²	
													wb	(ρ1)
USA	.73 ^{***}	.69 ^{***}	.66 ^{***}	-.18 [*]	-.24	.63 ^{**}	.63 ^{***}	.85 ^{***}	.70 ^{***}	.74 ^{***}	.83 ^{***}	.91 ^{***}	.19	
More religious than spiritual (n = 71)														
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 304)	.75 ^{***}	.60 ^{***}	.61 ^{***}	-.26 ^{***}	-.25 ^{**}	.90 ^{***}	.62 ^{***}	.76 ^{***}	.74 ^{***}	.80 ^{***}	.81 ^{***}	.84 ^{***}	.48	
More spiritual than religious (n = 566)	.76 ^{***}	.78 ^{***}	.78 ^{***}	-.26 ^{***}	-.43 ^{***}	.97 ^{***}	.42 ^{***}	.79 ^{***}	.66 ^{***}	.71 ^{***}	.75 ^{***}	.86 ^{***}	.32	
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 172)	.76 ^{***}	.83 ^{***}	.77 ^{***}	-.31 [*]	-.23	.63 ^{**}	.46 ^{**}	.84 ^{***}	.62 ^{***}	.75 ^{***}	.73 ^{***}	.91 ^{***}	.11	
Germany														
More religious than spiritual (n = 79)	.60 ^{***}	.68 ^{***}	.60 ^{***}	-.14	-.12	.61 ^{**}	.55 ^{**}	.90 ^{***}	.40 ^{**}	.72 ^{***}	.61 ^{**}	.91 ^{***}	.23	
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 146)	.78 ^{***}	.71 ^{***}	.84 ^{***}	-.50 ^{***}	.08	.91 ^{***}	.42 ^{***}	.86 ^{***}	.49 ^{***}	.79 ^{***}	.56 ^{***}	.83 ^{***}	.36	
More spiritual than religious (n = 377)	.74 ^{***}	.83 ^{***}	.83 ^{***}	-.28 ^{**}	.12	.61 ^{***}	.55 ^{***}	.82 ^{***}	.54 ^{***}	.62 ^{***}	.54 ^{***}	.87 ^{***}	.26	
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 171)	.73 ^{***}	.77 ^{***}	.76 ^{***}	-.19	-.04	.36 [*]	.46 ^{***}	.87 ^{***}	.55 ^{***}	.69 ^{***}	.71 ^{***}	.91 ^{***}	.05	

Note Variances for error terms of *unity* and *ego loss* were fixed to 1.0 to correct the non-positive definite covariance matrix of the three latent variables. Model Fit Indices: $\chi^2 = 1971.473$, $df = 584$, $\chi^2/df = 3.38$, CFI = .900, RMSEA = .036 (lower bound = .034, upper bound = .037); *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$; *im* introverted mysticism, *em* extroverted mysticism, *in* interpretation (of mystical experiences), *wb* well-being, *au* autonomy, *env* environmental mastery, *pg* personal growth, *pr* positive relations with others, *pl* purpose in life, *sa* self-acceptance

effects among the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups remained low among the US respondents ($R^2 = .11$) and marginal among the German respondents ($R^2_{GER} = .05$) so that H_{1d} could be confirmed at least partially.

Mysticism and Generativity

The result of the χ^2 statistics for the respecified SEM on the associations between mystical experiences and generativity (cf. Fig. 25.2) is $\chi^2 = 1331.632$. Including 400 degrees of freedom, χ^2/df is 3.329. With a comparative fit index of CFI = .909 and RMSEA = .035 (lower bound = .033, upper bound = .037), our model can be assumed to fit properly to the data of our sample (Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The regression weights and the multiple squared correlations across the four categorical groups of “spiritual” and “religious” self-identification in the US and the German sample are presented in Table 25.2. While a substantial part of the variance of generativity can be explained by mysticism within the “more religious” and the “equally religious and spiritual” groups ($R^2 = .38$ and $.28$, respectively) in the US sample and the German “equally religious and spiritual” group ($R^2 = .36$), the amount of explained variance of the other groups is lower (between $R^2 = .08$ and $.17$). Thus, H_2 can be confirmed better for the three aforementioned groups than for the other five groups and cannot be completely corroborated.

With respect to our first detailed hypothesis H_{2a} , we find significant regression weights of the *interpretation* factor among the “more religious” ($\beta = .74$; $p = .029$), the “equally religious and spiritual” ($\beta = .63$; $p \leq .001$) and the “more spiritual” group ($\beta = .55$; $p \leq .001$) in the US sample and among the German “equally religious and spiritual” ($\beta = .88$; $p \leq .001$). Additionally, there are regression weights which are significant on trend level among the “more spiritual” ($\beta = .30$; $p = .098$), and the “neither religious nor spiritual”

group ($\beta = .37$; $p = .077$) in the German sample. Thus, in accordance with H_{2a} , *interpretation* significantly predicts higher generativity, at least at trend level, among six out of the eight groups.

H_{2b} can be corroborated even more clearly: Either there are insignificant effects of the *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* factors on generativity, or the effects are even negative. The latter applies to the US “more religious” ($\beta = -.58$; $p = .035$) and the German “equally religious and spiritual” group ($\beta = -.45$; $p = .079$) for *introvertive mysticism* and to the US “equally religious and spiritual” ($\beta = -.25$; $p = .018$) and “more spiritual” ($\beta = -.29$; $p = .003$) group for *extrovertive mysticism*.

As in the previous SEM, again the three factors of the M-Scale are highly correlated. Correlation coefficients range between $r = .60$ ($p = .005$; correlation between *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* in the German “more religious” group) and $r = .84$ ($p \leq .001$; correlations between *introvertive mysticism* and *interpretation* in the German “equally religious and spiritual” and “more spiritual” groups). Thus, again possible positive effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* are mediated by *interpretation*, at least among the six groups in which *interpretation* was found to be a significant predictor of generativity. We can consider H_{2c} to be widely confirmed: Mystical experiences can only contribute to higher levels of generativity if there is a suitable interpretive frame.

However, H_{2d} , claiming that there will be no significant effects among the “neither religious nor spiritual” but significant effects among the other groups, cannot fully be confirmed: On the one hand, there is at least one significant effect of *interpretation* at trend level among the German “neither religious nor spiritual” group ($\beta = .37$; $p = .077$). On the other hand, the rather low amount of explained variance of generativity of the US “neither religious nor spiritual” group ($R^2 = .13$) does not differ strongly from that of the US “more spiritual” group ($R^2 = .16$) or of the German “more religious” ($R^2 = .14$) and “more spiritual than religious” ($R^2 = .17$) groups.

Table 25.2 Correlations of Mysticism Factors and Standardized Regression Weights of Mysticism Factors on Generativity Among the Four Groups of Categorical “Spiritual” and “Religious” Self-identification

	im em (01)	em in (02)	im. in (03)	gen. im (ζ1)	gen. em (ζ2)	gen. in (ζ3)	io. gen (ζ4)	rem. gen (ζ5)	noi. gen (ζ6)	co. gen (ζ7)	R ² gen (ρ1)
USA											
More religious than spiritual (n = 71)	.73***	.70***	.66***	-.58***	.17	.74**	.56***	.84***	.61***	.44**	.38
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 304)	.75***	.61***	.63***	.03	-.25**	.63***	.84***	.70***	.50***	.66***	.28
More spiritual than religious (n = 566)	.77***	.78***	.79***	.04	-.29**	.55***	.77***	.76***	.63***	.66***	.16
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 172)	.76***	.83***	.77***	-.04	.03	.37	.86***	.71***	.52***	.77***	.13
Germany											
More religious than spiritual (n = 79)	.60**	.68***	.62**	.22	.20	-.01	.80***	.77***	.43**	.63***	.14
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 146)	.78***	.70***	.84***	-.45*	.07	.88***	.85***	.73***	.41***	.58***	.36
More spiritual than religious (n = 377)	.74***	.83***	.84***	.19	-.08	.30*	.80***	.78***	.56***	.56***	.17
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 171)	.73***	.77***	.76***	-.19	-.04	.37*	.79***	.72***	.65***	.57***	.08

Note Variances for error terms of *unity* and *ego loss* were fixed to 1.0 to correct the non-positive definite covariance matrix of the three latent variables. Model Fit Indices: $\chi^2 = 1331.632$, $df = 400$, $\chi^2 / df = 3.329$, CFI = .909, RMSEA = .035 (lower bound = .033, upper bound = .037); *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$; *im* introverted mysticism, *em* extroverted mysticism, *im* interpretation (of mystical experiences), *em* generativity, *io* impact on others, *rem* will be remembered, *noi* no impact on others, *co* care for others

In terms of explained variance, H_{2d} can best be corroborated for the German “neither religious nor spiritual” group which shows the lowest explained variance ($R^2 = .08$).

Mysticism and Neuroticism/Emotional Stability

The model fit indices for the respecified SEM on the associations between the three mysticism factors of the M-Scale and neuroticism/emotional stability as measured with the *neuroticism* subscale of the NEO-FFI (cf. Fig. 25.3) are the following: $\chi^2 = 1075.265$, $df = 328$, $\chi^2/df = 3.278$, CFI = .928, RMSEA = .035 (lower bound = .033, upper bound = .037). Based on these results, the model can be supposed to fit the data well (Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

In H_3 we expected that mystical experiences predict less neuroticism (and thus higher emotional stability) among highly “spiritual” persons (the majority of our respondents). In terms of the amount of explained variance, we find that the three mysticism factors explain substantial parts of the variance only among the US “more spiritual than religious” group ($R^2 = .19$) and among the German “equally religious and spiritual” group ($R^2 = .21$; cf. Table 25.3). The effects of mysticism on neuroticism are lower among the US “neither religious nor spiritual” ($R^2 = .13$) and “equally religious and spiritual” ($R^2 = .11$) groups and among the German “more spiritual” group ($R^2 = .15$). They are completely marginal among the three remaining groups of the “more religious than spiritual” in both samples ($R^2 \leq .04$) and the German “neither religious nor spiritual” group ($R^2 = .04$). Thus, H_3 can be confirmed only in parts for those respondents who identified somehow as “spiritual” in both samples or as “neither religious nor spiritual” in the US sample. Compared with the two previous SEMs, the effects of mysticism on neuroticism/emotional stability are obviously weaker.

Correspondingly, findings on the effects of the single factors of the M-Scale are less clear for

neuroticism/emotional stability than for well-being or for generativity. *Interpretation* is a significant predictor of less neuroticism and more emotional stability only among five of the eight groups ($\beta \leq -.45$; $p \leq .013$), but not among the German “neither religious nor spiritual” group ($\beta = -.28$; $p = n.s.$) and the “more religious” groups in both samples ($\beta = -.20$; $p = n.s.$). Thus, H_{3a} cannot be fully confirmed.

The direct effects of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* match with the previous findings: Either the regression weights of *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* are insignificant, or they are significantly positive, i.e. they predict higher rates of neuroticism and less emotional stability. The latter is true for *introvertive mysticism* in all groups, at least at trend level ($\beta \geq .18$; $p \leq .097$), except for the “more religious” in both samples. Further there are significant effects of *extrovertive mysticism* on neuroticism/emotional stability among the US “more spiritual” ($\beta = .39$; $p \leq .001$) and “neither religious nor spiritual” ($\beta = .35$; $p = .065$) groups. All in all, H_{3b} can be completely corroborated.

Also matching with the previous findings, again all three factors of the M-Scale are highly correlated with each other across all eight groups. Correlations range between $r = .60$ ($p = .005$; correlation between *introvertive* and *extrovertive mysticism* in the German “more religious” group) and $r = .84$ ($p \leq .001$; correlation between *introvertive mysticism* and *interpretation* in the German “equally religious and spiritual” group). Thus, if there are beneficial effects of *introvertive* or *extrovertive mysticism*, they are again mediated by *interpretation*. However, as we have already seen, there are only significant effects of *interpretation* on neuroticism/emotional stability among five of the eight categorical groups. There is no mediation among the “more religious” groups in both samples, and also no mediation among the German “neither religious nor spiritual” respondents. Summing up, H_{3c} can be corroborated only for five out of eight groups.

We have already noted that the three factors of the M-Scale explain at least some of the variance of neuroticism/emotional stability among the US “neither religious nor spiritual” participants

Table 25.3 Correlations of Mysticism Factors and Standardized Regression Weights of Mysticism Factors on Neuroticism (= Low Emotional Stability) Among the Four Groups of Categorical “Spiritual” and “Religious” Self-identification

	im em (θ1)	em in (θ2)	im in (θ3)	ne. im (ζ1)	ne. em (ζ2)	ne. in (ζ3)	ei. ne (ζ4)	ss. ne (ζ5)	vs. ne (ζ6)	R2 ne (ρ1)
USA										
More religious than spiritual (n = 71)	.73***	.69**	.67**	.02	.18	-.20	.53***	.73***	.95***	.02
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 304)	.75***	.61***	.62***	.18*	.15	-.45***	.64***	.77***	.95***	.11
More spiritual than religious (n = 566)	.76***	.78***	.79***	.29**	.39***	-.79***	.69***	.75***	.96***	.19
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 172)	.76***	.82***	.77***	.39**	.35*	-.60**	.74***	.83***	.96***	.13
Germany										
More religious than spiritual (n = 79)	.60**	.68***	.61**	-.07	.06	-.20	.76***	.74***	.96***	.04
Equally religious and spiritual (n = 146)	.78***	.70***	.84***	.44*	-.06	-.73**	.67***	.76***	.96***	.21
More spiritual than religious (n = 377)	.74***	.83***	.83***	.22*	-.08	-.48**	.72***	.78***	.96***	.15
Neither religious nor spiritual (n = 171)	.73***	.77***	.76***	.31*	-.05	-.28	.63***	.75***	.95***	.04

Note Variances for error terms of *unity*, *ego loss* and *vulnerability to stress* were fixed to 1.0 to correct the non-positive definite covariance matrix of the latent variables. Model Fit Indices: $\chi^2 = 1075.265$, $df = 328$, $\chi^2/df = 3.278$, CFI = .928, RMSEA = .035 (lower bound = .033, upper bound = .037); *** = significant with $p \leq .001$, ** = significant with $p < .05$, * = significant with $p < .10$; *im* introverted mysticism, *em* extroverted mysticism, *in* interpretation (of mystical experiences), *ne* neuroticism, *ei* emotional instability, *ss* social stress, *vs* vulnerability to stress

($R^2 = .11$). Within this group, all three factors are significant predictors of neuroticism/emotional stability (*introvertive mysticism*: $\beta = .39$; $p \leq .001$; *extrovertive mysticism*: $\beta = .35$; $p = .065$; *interpretation*: $\beta = -.60$; $p \leq .001$). Additionally, *introvertive mysticism* predicts higher neuroticism/emotional stability among the German “neither religious nor spiritual” group ($\beta = .31$; $p = .052$), although the amount of explained variance of neuroticism/emotional stability remains marginal for this group. All in all, these findings contradict our expectations that there will be no significant effects of mysticism among the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups. Therefore, we have to reject H_{3d} .

Discussion

General Discussion

In general, our assumption that “spirituality”—in terms of mystical experiences as measured with the M-Scale—relates to positive adult development could be confirmed: Although the size of the effects differed slightly between the two samples and more clearly between the four categorical groups of religious and “spiritual” self-identification, mysticism was found to be positively associated with all three selected indicators of positive adult development, i.e. psychological well-being and growth, generativity, and lower neuroticism/higher emotional stability among the majority of the groups.

The findings underscore in particular the importance of the *interpretation* subscale of the M-Scale, because all positive effects of introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences have been mediated by this factor. *Interpretation* is characterized by Stace’s (1960) three aspects *positive affect*, *sacredness*, and *noetic quality*. It can be concluded from these findings that experiences of self-loss in a greater unity (*introvertive mysticism*) and of feeling united with the multiplicity of all things (*extrovertive mysticism*) are not perceived as beneficial and valuable, if they

are not experienced as emotionally positive and cannot be interpreted as sacred and noetic. Rather, they probably appear to be confusing and scaring which is most visible in the SEM on neuroticism wherein introvertive and extrovertive mysticism directly predict higher levels of neuroticism among some groups. Thus, introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences alone might potentially even be associated with symptoms of psychopathology (Byrom, 2009) while having a suitable interpretative frame (Byrd et al., 2000) and stimulating and cultivating such experiences by certain contemplative techniques in a group of adept fellows (Stifler et al., 1993) allows the individual to benefit from mystical experiences.

The importance of the three interpretive aspects *positive affect*, *sacredness*, and *noetic quality* is supported also by findings of other studies wherein the M-Scale has not been applied: In their research on people’s evaluation of extraordinary states which they have experienced, Kohls and colleagues (Kohls & Walach, 2007; Kohls et al., 2008) observed that the positive appraisal of extraordinary experiences could clearly be distinguished from scaring experiences and psychopathological symptoms. Thus, the possibility to interpret extraordinary, potentially mystical experiences as positive seems to be crucial for the way how such experiences affect one’s condition to the better or the worse. Wolfradt and Guerra (1997) detected that associations between dissociative experiences and paranormal beliefs were stronger among German than among Venezuelan respondents and concluded that beliefs which seem to be paranormal in a secular western context might not necessarily be seen as unusual in other cultures with less secular background. Thus, religious and “spiritual” beliefs which allow to understand mystical experiences as sacred might similarly provide a frame of reference to make sense of these experiences. Finally, Schnell (2006) found that the degree of meaning which individuals experience in their lives moderates the association between magical thinking and neuroticism. While there was a significant correlation between magical thinking and neuroticism among persons

experiencing few meaning, this association disappeared among persons experiencing higher levels of meaning. Thus, experiencing extraordinary states and related beliefs as meaningful seems to contribute to more emotional stability.

The differing results for our four categorical groups fit to the findings which highlight the importance of having a religious or “spiritual” interpretive frame. It makes sense that mysticism explained higher amounts of variance of well-being and generativity and lower amounts of neuroticism primarily among the groups who self-identified as either “spiritual” or, to a lower degree, also “religious”—and often highest for those who identified as both: In four of six group comparisons, the effects in terms of explained variance have been strongest for the “equally religious and spiritual” group (in both samples in the SEM on well-being, and for the German “equally religious and spiritual” group in the SEMs on generativity and neuroticism). Thus, in particular in the German context, identifying with both religion and “spirituality” seems to express an orientation which is most likely to be associated with better psychological functioning. Germans scoring high both on self-rated “spirituality” and self-rated “religion” have already been found to express the greatest religious and “spiritual” vitality (in terms of prayer *and* meditation, personal *and* impersonal God images, experiences of God’s presence *and* cosmic unity) by Huber and Klein (2011). Thus, it is not surprising that this religious and “spiritual” vitality creates the strongest effects.

The picture is less clear for the US sample, however; in general, the amount of explained variance across all four groups is higher among the US respondents than among the Germans. This slight cultural difference in our results possibly reflects the more religious and “spiritual” background of the USA and the more secular context of Germany (cf. the distributions of self-identifications as “spiritual” and “religious” reported in Chap. 3) and matches the finding that the degree of religiousness in a certain culture moderates the size of the association between religious variables and aspects of well-being (Stavrova et al., 2013). But in general, the

cross-cultural differences are much smaller than the differences between the four categorical groups of “spiritual” and religious self-identification in each sample. It can be concluded from our findings that mystical experiences contribute more substantially to the explanation of variance of the outcomes, if people self-identify as “spiritual” and/or “religious;” this is true for both the US and the German participants. Having a “spiritual” or religious worldview seems to enable them to benefit from mystical experiences for their positive development in adulthood in terms of well-being, generativity, and emotional stability.

However, there are also some differences with respect to the outcomes which have to be mentioned. Comparing the outcomes across the two samples and the four categorical groups, one gets the impression that the effects of the mysticism factors on well-being and growth and on neuroticism/emotional stability are slightly or clearly stronger among the “more spiritual than religious” than among the “more religious than spiritual” groups. By contrast, in the US sample the effects of mysticism on generativity appear to be higher among the “more religious” than among the “more spiritual” respondents. The latter is probably not due to effects of age since the US “more religious” group does not differ from the other three groups in terms of age. Nor are the strong effects among the “more religious” due to a higher percentage of women because the sexes within this group are almost equally distributed; gender distribution differed only in the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups. Thus, only the low amount of explained variance of generativity among the “neither religious nor spiritual” might be explained by a higher percentage of male respondents which maybe hold a less caring attitude than the female participants (Trzebiatowska & Bruce, 2012). In general, sociodemographic variables as age, sex, education, or income add only little to the amount of explained variance. Across all groups and models, sociodemographics on average additionally explain only 2 % of variance of the outcomes. Instead of moderating effects of age or sex, hence it seems to be possible that religiousness itself is

more prone to generativity than “spirituality,” at least in the USA. A reason might be that “spiritual” orientations are sometimes criticized for being not only individualistic, but self-centered and narcissistic (Bauman, 1998; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Heelas, 1996; Lasch, 1984). However, this would rather be an explanation for low rates of generativity among “spiritual” persons which is not the case in our sample (in fact, the US “equally religious and spiritual” and the “more spiritual” groups score even slightly higher on generativity than the “more religious” respondents; cf. Table A.2 in the Appendix). Thus, it is more likely that the higher amount of explained variance of generativity among the US “more religious” group is simply an effect of their high religiousness since McAdams’ (2001, 2006a, b; McAdams & Albaugh, 2008; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1998) research has shown vividly that highly religious Americans tend to express high levels of generativity. This could also hint to a further cultural difference because in the German sample, it is the “equally religious and spiritual” group which clearly displays the highest effects of mysticism on generativity as compared to the other three groups.

While the effects of mysticism on generativity differ across the four categorical groups between both samples, the effects of mysticism on psychological well-being and growth are consistently higher among the two groups which identify as “spiritual” (“equally religious and spiritual”; “more spiritual than religious”) in both samples. Mystical experiences in terms of “spirituality” seem to be associated with well-being and growth a bit stronger than mystical experiences in terms of religiousness (alone). Maybe the concept of a “spiritual” kind of well-being (Moberg, 1971; NICA, 1975) receives at least some plausibility from this finding? Yet we made an effort to develop a design that allows us to study beneficial effects of “spirituality” without tapping into the problems of separating “spirituality” from religion and without mingling predictors and outcomes. Thus, our findings point more strongly to the effects of general “spirituality” on psychological well-being which appear

to be observable without using a measure which confounds “spirituality” and well-being.⁴

Compared to the results for psychological well-being and growth and for generativity, the effects of mysticism on neuroticism/emotional stability are visibly lower, and there are only substantial percentages of explained variance among the “equally religious and spiritual” and the “more spiritual” groups in both samples. In general, this finding underscores that measures of religion and “spirituality” tend to be unrelated to the Big Five dimensions of personality (see Chap. 12). Conceptually, it is plausible that a personality trait which is assumed to be rather stable across long periods of time varies less depending on mystical experiences than constructs such as well-being with its state-like components or the developmental task of generativity. Yet it is noteworthy that there are still some effects of mysticism among those groups which identify as “spiritual” (and maybe additionally as religious). In particular with respect to neuroticism/emotional stability, however, it is necessary to discuss the direction of possible effects. Mystical experiences might possibly affect personality to the better (and “spirituality” might be a proper label to name such experiences). But it is also possible that emotionally more stable persons are more likely to experience mystical states as more positive and meaningful than less stable persons. Yet are more stable persons per se more likely to identify as “spiritual”? The previous findings on associations between neuroticism/emotional stability and measures trying to operationalize “spirituality” do not give a clear hint for this assumption. Although “spirituality” measures were sometimes found to be negatively associated with neuroticism, the correlations remained insignificant in the vast majority of studies (Koenig et al., 2012; Saroglou, 2002, 2010). Thus, the

⁴Although the subscale *interpretation* includes four items operationalizing Stace’s aspect *positive affect*, the wording of these items clearly refers to a single mystical experience the respondent once had. Thus, even the assessment of this aspect of mysticism does not overlap with the measurement of an individual’s current positive affect as a dimension of his actual well-being.

explanation that certain experiences which are perceived as emotionally beneficial, valuable and insightful can contribute to more emotional stability might be somewhat more reasonable than the explanation that more stable persons are more likely to experience positive mystical states (and to correspondingly identify themselves as “spiritual”). However, longitudinal studies are needed to draw more reliable conclusions.

Limitations

The critical discussion of the direction of effects leads to the discussion of several shortcomings of our study. We think that the consistency of our findings across three different outcomes and the argument that more emotionally stable and psychologically functioning persons are not necessarily more likely to identify as “spiritual” rather point to the interpretation that mysticism affects well-being, generativity, and neuroticism/emotional stability than the other way round. But of course we have to admit that our entire study design is cross-sectional, so that firm conclusions can only be drawn from longitudinal research. Whether “spirituality” (in terms of mysticism) really predicts positive adult development (in terms of psychological well-being and growth, generativity, and low neuroticism/emotional stability) remains a question of future studies.

A second limitation concerns the composition of our sample. As we searched for study participants interested in “spirituality” (see Chap. 4), our sample consists of a majority of persons which are generally sympathetic to “spirituality.” Therefore, positive effects of experiences which are often interpreted as “spiritual” (see Chap. 11) are probably more likely among our participants than among other samples. For instance, it would be interesting to test whether effects of mysticism on well-being and neuroticism/emotional stability become stronger among persons who self-identify rather as “religious” than as “spiritual” in a sample of highly devoted members of certain religious groups (cf. Hood & Williamson, 2000). Likewise, it would be exciting to

investigate whether there would be similar effects of mystical experiences among “neither religious nor spiritual” persons regularly spending some time in stunning natural sites (cf. Hood, 1977). It is up to future studies to shed further light on the role of certain populations.

The sampling of persons interested in “spirituality” also caused that some of our categorical groups are considerably smaller than others, in particular the “more religious than spiritual” groups in both samples, but by trend the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups, too. It is possible that the lower effects of mysticism on our outcomes among these groups are at least partially due to their smaller sample size. Yet we do not consider the risk that smaller groups caused lower effects to be too big for two reasons: First, from our point of view the finding that the effects among the “neither religious nor spiritual” groups are consistently among the lowest makes perfectly sense. It is plausible that mystical experiences which are very likely to be interpreted as “spiritual” (or as “religious”; cf. Chap. 11) evoke stronger positive effects among people who identify themselves as “spiritual” (and “religious”) than among people who do not—and who consequently do not rely on a religious or “spiritual” frame of reference to make sense of such experiences. Because they lack such an interpretive frame, they are less likely to perceive mystical experiences as positive, sacred, and noetic, and thus also less likely to benefit from these experiences.⁵ Second, the example of the high effects of mysticism on generativity among the US “more religious than spiritual” respondents shows that clear effects are possible although this group is the smallest of all eight groups. Thus, the findings seem to result rather from the combinations of the selected variables than from the size of the groups alone.

⁵This does not mean that “neither religious nor spiritual” necessarily exhibit less well-being, personal growth, generativity, or emotional stability. They have probably simply other sources for better psychological functioning than experiences which appear to be “spiritual” or “religious.”

Conclusion

Beside the aforementioned limitations of our study, we think that our approach to use the M-Scale as measure of potential “spiritual” (and “religious”) experiences across groups who self-identify as “spiritual” or “religious” proved to be fruitful. We see it as an enormous advantage of the M-Scale that the assessed mystical experiences relate to both “spirituality” and religion (see Chap. 11), but are probably no constitutive components of the either or the other. Thus, the M-Scale does not confuse both concepts, and the mystical experiences reported by respondents can be related both to their “spiritual” and to their “religious” self-identifications. Therefore, we regard the M-Scale to be a valid measure of experiences which many people today associate with “spirituality.”

Since we observed rather parallel patterns of findings across all three SEMs—in terms of patterns of associations between the three subscales of the M-Scale and our outcome variables, in terms of patterns across the four categorical groups among both samples, and in terms of both positive (psychological well-being and growth, generativity) and negative (neuroticism) indicators of positive adult development—we assume our results to be valid, too: “Spirituality” as measured in terms of mystical experiences is indeed associated with more psychological well-being and growth, with higher levels of generativity, and with more emotional stability—as is religiousness (at least when expressed in continuity to “spirituality”). Obviously, positive associations between mystical experiences and psychological functioning do exist, but are not so much a question of whether people label these experiences as “spiritual” or “religious,” but of whether they are concerned with their worldview and have an interpretive frame for their experiences.

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Abstract

What can we learn from narrative biographical inquiries into “spirituality” and faith development as related to crisis and suffering? Attending to subjective perspectives on “spirituality” in coping with psychological crisis and trauma we can ask: does “spirituality” have a benevolent function in a struggle for psychological balance and well-being in the face of conflict and crisis? Does “spirituality” support psychological health and well-being? Are there problematic aspects? Does finding meaning help to come to terms with trauma or does it neglect suffering? How do “spiritual” persons understand suffering in their lives? Is suffering deepening their spirituality or does it lead to doubts and leaving faith? Careful analyses of individual narratives and faith developmental trajectories allow to disentangle helpful and problematic aspects. Our analyses also suggest a culturally sensitive approach to spiritual healing as well as to spiritual crises.

Religion and Narratives of Suffering

Religion, or faith, has been portrayed as promoting health and well-being, and as alleviating suffering and a resource in the face of crises, but also as potentially sickening or even pathogenic (for a current summary see Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2012; with respect to psychiatry Pargament & Lomax, 2013, also Chap. 25 of this volume). The

current diagnostic manuals (DSM V, ICD 10, cf American Psychiatric Association 2013) list “religious or spiritual problem” among “problems related to other psychosocial personal and environmental circumstances.” Implications for counselling and therapy are widely discussed (e.g. Aten, O’Grady, & Worthington, 2012; Cobb, Puchalski, & Rumbold, 2012). Here, we tease out a narrative and case-based approach, an in-depth analysis, which, by drawing on results of objective measures, integrates quantitative research data.

Narratives of suffering, of trauma, are studied by several research disciplines. Life stories studied by personality psychology can cover turns to contamination or to redemption (McAdams, Reynold, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001). Frank (1995), when discussing illness narratives, distinguishes

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between narratives of restitution (which is culturally preferred), quest (appreciating experience gained from coping), and chaos (hardship suffered allows no coherent narrative). Talking about suffering can be a challenge to autobiographical narrating and reasoning (Habermas, 2006), characteristics of psychological disorders—or vulnerabilities—are supposed to appear in narratives (Habermas, in press). The coherence, completeness and affectivity which characterize a good story may not be available to deeply hurt persons. Their narratives can be fragmented, there may be gaps, perhaps due to gaps in memory (Van der Hart, Nijenhuis, & Steele, 2006). In addition, a hurtful or traumatic experience may be an experience which violates social expectations and which is hard to assimilate to social conventions of story telling (Granofsky, 1995) or, as Habermas (in press) points out, a result of splitting as defense mechanism and, perhaps, related to a diffuse identity. “Talking cures” which aim at the resolution and integration of suffering have been developed and studied in clinical psychology and psychotherapy (Holmes, 1999).

Narratives of suffering are also elements of religious traditions and discourse. While theological heritage has been found to influence scientific reasoning on human development, including psychological theories (Kirschner, 1996a, b) and conceptions of faith development (Keller, 2008), here we are focusing on individual appropriations in the context of biographical reasoning and narrating on personal faith.

“I Don’t See the World as a Place that Is in Control of Itself, but I See It as a Place that the Divine Is in Control”¹ - Nancy

The case of Nancy has been selected because she identifies as more spiritual than religious while also structuring her interview responses around

how she has used her spirituality to deal with crises in her life. She shows relatively high scores on *mysticism* and moderately high scores on *openness*, which places her in the upper right quadrangle of Fig. 17.2. In her online questionnaire, she defines “religion” as “the grounds in which the spiritual seed grows. Some are better for growing than others” and “spirituality” as “the innate seed that grows into the divine. It is not defined by a religious belief.”

Introductory Biographical Outline

Nancy is a 56-year-old female at the time of the interview. She identifies herself largely as a solitary practicing Wiccan, but she has in the past been (and possibly still is) a member of a local coven. She categorizes herself as a spiritual person, and incorporates ideas from a variety of religious traditions into her perspective; including Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Wicca. She characterizes her early life story as transitioning from one crisis to the next; starting with the childhood death of her brother and leading to family difficulties as well as her own suicide attempts. She notes that her life began to change due to a series of mystical experiences with the divine, leading her to her current state. She provides few details regarding her current life situation, other than to mention that she is now married, and instead focuses her discussion on her spiritual perspective.

Mapping Nancy’s Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

Nancy’s scores on the Mysticism Scale were high on both *introvertive mysticism* and *interpretation*. This suggests that she identifies more with mystical experiences in which her sense of self is subsumed within a greater unity of being, and that she tends to interpret these experiences in a joyful and specifically religious fashion. Her score on *openness to experience* (NEO-FFI) is moderately high. This suggests that she is amenable to a variety of experiences overall, and

¹End of interact 57 from Nancy’s FDI. The interview transcripts in full length for Nancy and the other case presented in this chapter are available in Appendix B (B.11 and B.12).

when combined with her very high score on *xenosophia* (RSS) we may conclude that Nancy is particularly open to experiences she sees (or interprets) as religious in nature. Her other scores on the Personality (NEO-FFI) and Psychological Well-Being (RYFF) scales are largely aligned with the averages in her focus group, with moderately high scores on *personal growth* and *positive relations with others* aligning with her score for *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* (RSS). Also, she has a comparatively high score on the *xenosophia*-scale, underlining her openness toward “other” religious traditions. These scores, based on self-report measures, give the favorable picture of an open-minded and tolerant person (Table 26.1).

Less favorable and potentially at odds with her interview answers (see below), however, are her results regarding *generativity* (LGS). At nearly a standard deviation below the focus group mean, Nancy’s scores do not display much concern for promoting the well-being of future generations. As many of the scale items in the LGS can be applied to secular and/or spiritual well-being, such a low score is puzzling. This potential conflict may be resolved by suggesting that Nancy may consider it morally good, in principle, to show compassion, love, and acceptance to others; while simultaneously being marginally driven to act upon such ideals. Unfortunately, we may have to leave this potential conflict unresolved as Nancy’s interview answers do little to address any specifics of how she applies her moral beliefs in her current life.

One additional result of note was Nancy’s moderately high score on *truths of texts and teachings* (RSS). This was somewhat surprising given her high scores on “xenos” (see above). The scale *truth of texts and teachings* measures the degree to which a person believes that the texts and stories of their religion are absolutely true and must not be changed. It is not entirely clear from her interview how Nancy applies this perspective given that she has incorporated ideas from a variety of disparate religious traditions, some which have a well-established history of religious exclusivism.

Nancy’s Semantic of “Spirituality”

In her online questionnaire, Nancy defines spirituality “the innate seed that grows into the divine. It is not defined by a religious belief.” She sees religion as “the grounds in which the spiritual seed grows. Some are better for growing than others.” Nancy has some difficulty differentiating a religious person from a spiritual person, though, answering:

A religious person, I guess I would define a religious person as one who is very bound up more in their religion and what their religion teaches and what their religion is, very attached to their religion to sp- to me it’s spiritual, is the essence that we all are. Religion again is just a path to that spirituality, so a religious person is really involved in their path that’s not quite right but they are really maybe dealing with that physical reality and that’s not quite right either but spiritual is people who are not necessarily religiously bound in some way to a form [...] (interact 178)

This somewhat cumbersome attempt at clarification, when taken with Nancy’s initial definitions for religion and spirituality, suggests that Nancy considers religion to be a means to the ultimate end that is spirituality. Elsewhere, she states it more clearly, noting that she sees all religions as teaching the same thing that ultimately leads to oneness with the divine (interact 121).

Nancy’s Faith Development

In applying the evaluative methods in Fowler, Streib, and Keller’s *Manual for Faith Development Research*, Nancy’s interview elicited results largely clustered around the Synthetic-Conventional stage (Fig. 26.1).

Occasional exceptions were noted in which her results strayed into Mythic-Literal or Individual-Reflective stages, with the latter exceptions appearing almost entirely within Aspect F: Form of World Coherence. These results suggest that Nancy is largely operating by way of reference to recognized authorities; be they moral, social, or epistemic. She is able to discern the solution to a problem, but has difficulty explaining the mental process that brought

Table 26.1 Comparison of Nancy T. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for Nancy T.	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theists” focus group in the USA	
		M	SD
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	22	20.6	8.6
<i>Extraversion</i>	26	29.7	6.7
<i>Openness to experience</i>	38	33.3	6.6
<i>Agreeableness</i>	33	32.3	6.1
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	33	32.4	7.3
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)	143	119.9	23.7
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	55	44.1	10.2
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	32	28.4	7.8
<i>Interpretation</i>	56	47.4	8.7
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	29	27.0	4.1
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	25	24.5	4.6
<i>Personal growth</i>	32	29.4	3.7
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	31	27.9	4.4
<i>Purpose in life</i>	25	26.8	4.5
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	25	25.7	4.7
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)	53	60.6	8.5
Attitudes toward God (ATGS)	70	75.1	20.8
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	17	13.4	5.9
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	24	21.8	3.0
<i>Xenosphia/inter-religious dialog</i>	24	18.7	3.9

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

her to that solution. In alternating fashion, she advocates for both relativism and utilitarianism. Upon recognizing her contradiction in doing so, she instead collapses this conceptual tension by proceeding to the moral reciprocity of the Golden Rule (interact 148). Such an approach is not uncommon in Stage 3, as rigorous systematic thought tends to appear in later stages. One notable exception to this trend, mentioned above, is Nancy’s results in Aspect F: Form of World Coherence. Therein she scores almost entirely within

Stage 4, with only the question regarding definitions of religion and spirituality eliciting a stage three assignment. Stage 4 is often typified by an awareness of the systematic nature of one’s worldview coupled with a desire for consistency, coherence, and comprehensiveness—often to the point of reductionism. Nancy’s admitted difficulty with advocating for a moral theory reflects this stage well, indicating the ability to reflect upon and strive for logical consistency while also outright disregarding ideas that prove difficult to reconcile.

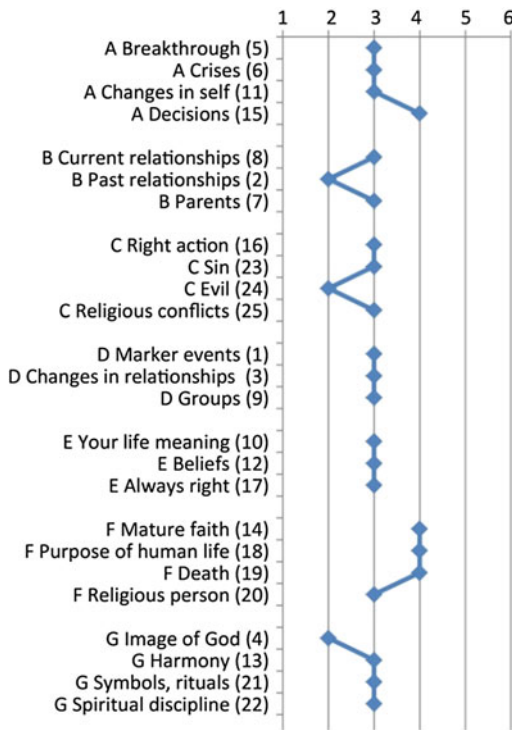


Fig. 26.1 Nancy's FDI Ratings in the Different Aspects of Faith

Summary of Nancy's Faith Development

In the aggregate, Nancy largely exhibits characteristics of the Synthetic-Conventional stage. She has appropriated ideas from a variety of religious and philosophical traditions in a manner that prioritizes thematic consistency over logical consistency, and all but ignores aspects of these traditions that advocate conflicting notions of truth, morality, or appropriate paths to spirituality/enlightenment.

Mentalization and Attachment in Nancy's Interview

Nancy's descriptions of her relationships are highly reminiscent of Stage 3 perspective taking in Fowler's Faith Development model, a stage in which the other person is recognized as having an interiority of his or her own, however, typified

by blending fantasy and projection with observation. In one especially illustrative case, she describes the death of her father. She describes a felt or imagined closeness when he passes, even though she is not physically present with him. She describes it as follows:

[...] my father was a person, he's not just my father and I have to come to understand why all this means. So going from a point of total hatred with my father I eventually turned it totally around to where in the last years of his life I was his care taker and actually on the day he died, even though I was not physically with him, we communicated and I had an experience of him passing over and I feel like I know what I saw what he saw when he passed over and I know what that is so that's pretty profound [Chuckling] going from wanting to... at one point in my childhood literally wanting to murder him, I hated him so badly to finally finding myself so close to him and so with him that when on his death he was talking to me and I was helping him pass over into the death. (middle of interact 53)

Nancy provides no clear chronology of events that helps us see when she began developing her spirituality, but she does indicate that this occurred prior to her taking on the role of caregiver for her ailing elderly parents (see first half of interact 71). Her strong focus on a divinity that is loving and accepting is reminiscent of Kirkpatrick's (1992, pp. 6–8) conception of religion as an attachment process, while it might also be framed in Rizzuto's (1979) concepts of how early relationships to parents shape God representations. Dealing with negative self- or object representations may inspire a turn to a God not involved in hurtful family history. In place of her relationship with her father, Nancy arrived at a conception of divinity that fulfilled her felt need for caring and security. She also ties the discussion of her relationship with her husband back to spirituality as well:

Now with my husband it started out. (Laughing) I think it was different, the opposite, was an intense attraction. I almost felt like he was like Shiva in person and just an intense attraction to my husband. We went through difficulties especially in the years taking care of both my parents who were very elderly and [...] and it caused some differences in our marriage to say the least. But I think it

helped me in ways I'm just now coming out and beginning to understand and make changes and grow in my spirituality and only now I'm beginning to mesh through that [...]. (interact 53)

This decision to tie her narratives back to her spirituality may reflect a preference for spiritual over interpersonal attachment, there may be a defensive function involved linked to an ultimately insecure or ambivalent attachment to others due to their perceived unreliability. It may also reflect her expectations regarding the overall theme of the interview.

Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in Nancy's Interview

Life Review

Nancy structures her life into (1) the beginning (the awareness), (2) the growth, (3) the darkness, and (4) the real. She does not provide clarification regarding how these chapters correspond to her life, be it chronological, ideological or otherwise. Though she also does not explicitly integrate them into these life chapters, Nancy does list a number of marker events that have been important to her. As noted above, her brother was hit and killed by a car during her childhood. She also notes a second marker event during her college years in which she read the Bhagavad Gita, and a third marker in which she saw Shiva some time later when visiting another city. She later recalls a fourth marker event when she first encountered the Buddhist idea that life is suffering. Reflecting on how she once marked her life chapters by her experiences of extreme pain, but now marks them by her spiritual experiences, she notes:

[...] when I think of my life and I think of the experiences in my life they are kind of divided between the extreme pain and then the spirituality and I think the marker was a pain which I have come through and don't really... at one time I did tie myself to those markers but I don't really now anymore [...]. (interact 22)

Nancy exhibits a consistent focus on redemptive narratives. For example, she states during her interview that it is always moral to show

compassion and help others understand how much they are loved and accepted (interact 156). This also demonstrates a generative quality that is unanticipated given her relatively low scores on the corresponding scale (see above). This discrepancy is also surprising in light of literature stressing a link between redemptive imagery and high assessment of generativity (McAdams 2006, p. 90). McAdams (2008) also suggests that the redemptive narrative is a strongly admired narrative in American culture. It may well be that Nancy is attempting to use redemptive narratives as a substitute for her insecure attachment and generate the personality traits associated with those who typically tell these kinds of stories. Or, perhaps she's adopting a well-regarded American cultural model in order to be admirably perceived as a person with more generative traits. Does Nancy, scoring nearly a standard deviation below her focus group mean for generativity, demonstrate high disinterest in or is she dissatisfied with contributing towards the establishment and guidance of the next generation? She confesses to have distanced herself from her involvement in politics, of no longer being what she calls a "crusader rabbit." Instead, she has opted to give the world the love and compassion it needs (middle of interact 57). While she leaves unstated how she applies this approach in actual practice, she may also indicate that she does not think that her personal imprint on how exactly the next generation lives in this world would be so important. Thus, the removal from the affairs of the world might point to modesty.

Narrative Segments

In her FDI, Nancy reflects on the mystic path and the dark night of the soul when reflecting on her transition from hating her father into becoming his caretaker. She responds with a narrative as described by Labov and Waletzky (1967) when asked if she had times of crisis in her life. This involves a powerful experience in a psychiatric department after a suicide attempt (Table 26.2).

Note that in this Coda Nancy does not only link her experience with her current experience of being loved but that she also locates it in her

Table 26.2 Nancys Narrative Segment “You are Loved”

Title	You are loved
Orientation	The last time again I was in a bad relationship and I just couldn't take it. And this time the guy got me to the hospital and of course they put me in the psych ward, but something very interesting happened to me in the psych ward
Complication	I was in the psych ward and it was like 4:00 in the morning and the guy next to me, in the room next to me screaming and yelling and I'm in a locked room and the room is slanted and I'm thinking oh dear Jesus God I've hit the bottoms now and I just thought what I'm I going to do, I'm lost and I'm really truly-truly lost and I was sitting, I just heard this voice, not outside of myself but it was in my voice, but I just heard this voice a very soft [not very] softly, but just a voice that said you are loved
Evaluation	And I met him and I turned around and I thought I'm going to get out of here, it's going to be okay, I'm going to make it, I'll make it
Resolution/Coda	So I just slowly started acting like, okay don't want to act crazy, I want to act like really calm about everything and within two or three... two days or so they didn't send me to the [bin] they were like, okay, you just had this thing with your boyfriend, so get the hell out of here and get some counseling (Laughing) After that point I just started feeling like it's okay, I am well [...] and I can start moving forward and I think that was probably before the Bhagavad Gita incident, yeah I think that was before that, then after that came the Bhagavad Gita incidence, so it just kind of reaffirmed yes not only are you loved but I love you so (interact 69)

reconstruction of her spiritual development by referring back to the marker event of having read the Bhagavad Gita. The above narrative illustrates Nancy's capacity to draw upon a loving and secure representation of the divine in times of distress. It is particularly intriguing that she conceives of the voice as simultaneously being within her and also issuing from without (i.e. “and I met him...”). This narrative also serves as an excellent example of how Nancy's narratives provide effective orientation for the interviewer using an omniscient point of view, periodically transitioning from past to present tense in a fashion that induces the perspective of the protagonist and heightens dramatic tension (Habermas, 2006, p. 505).

Relationships

Nancy states that she has always been close to her mother, and that the most profound change of experience was with her father (interact 75). In terms of attachment theory, her conception of the divine as loving and compassionate aligns well with the theory's prediction of how those who connect most closely with their mothers will conceptualize the divine. Nancy does not describe the religious views of either of her

parents, however, and as such we cannot determine the degree to which her biography aligns with either social correspondence or compensation of attachment (Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999, Kirkpatrick, 1992, 2005). The theme of compensation for less than satisfactory relationships is unfolded in the narrative segment above: Nancy's relationship is bad, the mental health professionals lock her up, however, loving attention is provided by the divine. She then lists the following important relationships in her life now: her husband, her friends, her family and sisters (i.e. extended family cousins) (interact 83). When asked whether she identifies with any groups or institutions, she alludes back to some comments indicating that she used to be very much into political activism (interact 57), but has since attempted to identify more broadly with “this earth and this planet and here is how we all are together in this boat” (interact 87).

Present Values and Commitments

Nancy sees the meaning of her life as being to grow closer to divinity and to open herself up more (interacts 89 and 91). Of all the parts of herself, she would most like to change her bad

temper (interact 115). She finds herself most at harmony when she is interacting directly with nature and without other people being around (interact 123). At the same time, she believes strongly in the idea that everyone is a “seed of the divine,” and that Jesus’s teachings provide a good template for being both spiritual and for dealing with things on a day to day basis. Her ideal for a mature faith is one that recognizes and is open to the answers being 1) relative between people, and 2) not set in stone (interact 131).

As noted above, Nancy has difficulty articulating a coherent moral viewpoint. When asked to discuss what makes actions right or wrong, Nancy initially suggests that the moral value of most actions is relative to the perspective of the person(s) that they affect (interact 148). Nancy states that right actions are those that show compassion and that make others feel positive (interact 150), while wrong actions are those that cause hurt to yourself or another (interact 154). She then admits of sounding contradictory, implicitly realizing that she’s advocating for both a relativistic and utilitarian (though she doesn’t use the term) set of moral principles. Later, she suggests that

I think you really, again, you got to fall back on kind of like how do I want to be treated how... what would I want to experience and that’s what makes an action right or wrong maybe. (interact 154)

On somewhat firmer ground, she then suggests that making someone feel accepted is always morally right, and that everyone should agree upon and accept the Golden Rule as the best moral standard.

Religion and World View

Nancy sees the purpose of human life as to discover or recover your divinity, though she’s not sure whether there is a plan for our lives. She states, “I don’t know I think there is a path and maybe there is a reason why but I think there is a lot of freedom on that path for you to choose what you need and what you want” (interact 167). She sees death as a transition from the material into the spiritual realm. She suggests

that those who have put their emphasis on considering and learning about the spiritual world will be comfortable with the transition, while those who emphasized the material world or failed to think about the spiritual side may find themselves so uncomfortable with it that it feels like hell (interact 174).

When asked whether she considers herself a religious, spiritual, or faithful person, she initially laughs and asks, “Are those three different things?” She then attempts to break down what each term means to her. She sees religion as being an instance of a spiritual path that is “bound to a form.” Spirituality is the essence of what we all are. A spiritual person is described as someone who is on the same path as a religious person, but is not bound to a particular form. And when addressing what it means to be faithful in her mind, she indicates “and faithful, that could be anything, faithful to your religious teachings, faithful to God, I guess in some ways I’m faithful” (interacts 176 and 178). Echoing Alston (1996) and Plantinga (2000), Nancy acknowledges that the term “faithful” can incorporate a wide variety of meanings. Her use of the term suggests that she doesn’t apply it to herself to denote some variation on “belief,” “trust,” or “hope,” but instead perhaps some form of loyalty or adherence. She neglects to clarify on this point, though, so this is an admittedly conjectural conclusion.

Nancy places particular emphasis on seeing in mystical experience. In a passage that strongly evokes Diana Eck’s descriptions of “darśan”—seeing (and being seen by) the deity (1981), Nancy describes an experience of seeing Shiva for the first time.

I was in [City A] for this Krishna retreat and family there had this different pictures of different Hindu gods and there was a picture of Shiva and at then, that point on it was like I was lo- I mean I was just it sounds so crazy and (Laughing) [...] But it’s just, I saw this picture and I just knew that it was like again, there was no looking like a picture, it was like I knew that he was looking at me and I was looking at him.” (interacts 32 and 34)

Nancy’s description of direct reciprocal visual perception with Shiva through an image corresponds to, what in that tradition is understood as

darśan. Eck clarifies that “In the Hindu tradition [...] there has never been the confusion of “image” with “idol”² (1981, p. 5). Rather, the image provides a sort of conduit through which the divine can be present while the worshipper receives its reciprocal sight.

From a more psychological perspective, Nancy’s experience of seeing deity and feeling that deity sees her is crucial and can be interpreted as stemming from an “attachment instinct” which makes humans look for connectedness, first with their early caretakers, and later, with a transcendent other, a deity or God (Ostow, 2007).

When it comes to important religious rituals and symbols, Nancy identifies the Wiccan circle as an important ritual and the Moon as an important symbol. She indicates that she likes “to just go out and under the moon and commune with the moon and just talk, feel that just that energy that comes in, so the moon is a very important symbol, I would say religious symbol that I have not touched on maybe...” (interact 181). Generally, though, Nancy doesn’t engage in prayer or rituals at set times. Rather, she tries

to commune with God all day, I just talk, we just talk. I don’t really necessarily ask for something or say thank you for anything, I just, may just talk about what’s going on in my day. (interact 183)

This notion is strongly akin to Broen’s (1957) conception of “nearness to God,” wherein the divine is constantly near and accessible. “Constantly near and accessible” describes a perfect object. In Nancy’s case, having lost her brother and living with mourning parents who could not appreciate her as they might have in the absence of this loss, this conception of the divine is suggestive of a form of compensation. Her spirituality may fill “gaps in satisfaction or contentment” in her life (Ostow, 2007, p. 84).

Nancy understands sin to be “negative actions that hurt you or other people” (interact 201). She suggests that we are in a quarantined part of the universe due to our sickness of sin, and that we

don’t realize how sick we are. This confusion is a result of the dualistic nature of our world, and she sees evil as a result of this confusion as well as from fear (interacts 207 and 209). Nancy isn’t sure that religious conflicts can be resolved, as it requires rational thinking which she sees as uncommon. That said, she’s also not sure that resolving religious conflicts is even the point of our world. She suspects that things may just get to a point where it’s

so damn bad that at some point everybody is going to say, we can’t take this anymore and we all have to come to a consensus of this isn’t going to work it’s got to be this way because we are dying the other way. (interact 211)

Nancy relates that she has gone through “dark nights of the soul” in which her confidence in her spirituality is shaken. Nancy speaks to these times later when she notes that

is not that God’s [not] there, is just that that reality is so overwhelming you can’t quite see it.

At the same time, she also notes that she does sometimes ask herself whether

I’m believing this because I just want to feel like I’m loved or is this truly really happening or what is going on here[?]

Ultimately, though, she sees her situation as coming out of a profound darkness and now coming into the light (interact 71).

This approach is highly reminiscent of Pargament’s (1996) description of the religious coping method of reframing, wherein a person reframes the problem to originate in themselves rather than in the divine. The withdrawal is their own fault, not that of the divine. She is then able to act to reorient herself and re-establish her connection to it.

General Interpretation of Nancy’s Spiritual Journey

The trajectory of Nancy’s life chapters from depressive and angry beginnings through multiple suicide attempts and finally to a point of growing in her divinity and embracing

²This might be criticized in Christian western cultures as a form of Hindu idolatry, a conclusion given potential support by a variety of Biblical passages, e.g. Exodus 20:1–8, Psalm 135:15–18, Jeremiah 51:17, Jonah 2:8.

compassion for all is structured conventionally according to chronology. Nancy presents herself as someone who has overcome the dark periods of her life through intense experience and direct personal communion with the divine or spiritual aspect of herself and existence. She finds that Wicca provides her with rituals and symbols that speak to her need for growing into her divinity and for developing compassion for others.

When it comes to moral judgment, she appears to alternatively prioritize motivations, consequences, and developing the virtues of compassion and openness. Given the conceptual challenges in integrating some of the moral theories that spring out of these different priorities, it is no surprise that we see her also embrace aspects of moral relativism. Alternatively, her notion that the afterlife is the same for everyone, but that their perception of it is different based upon their previous experience, is a perspective that assumes an objective metaphysics. Her view that only rationality or crisis could resolve religious conflicts is interesting, though, in that it is the only time during the interview that she mentions rationality or any process akin to it. Given that she expresses uncertainty as to whether resolving religious crises is even the point (interact 211), it would be fascinating to hear how Nancy integrates rationality into her views, and whether she sees it as complementing or detracting from spiritual pursuits.

Taken together with her very high results for *introvertive mysticism*, *interpretation*, and *xenosophia*, the above analyses suggest that Nancy is very open to alternative religious traditions. On the other hand, she seems to lack a critical method for weighing the ideas contained within (and without) these traditions against each other. Nor does she seem to give a passing thought to what such a method might look like. Instead, she appears to rely entirely upon emotional responses to texts she has encountered and experiences she has had. So long as these sources engender feelings of oneness and connection, Nancy is compelled to appropriate them. This paints a picture of Nancy's spirituality that may be called self-interested—or as guided by her attachment needs and relying on her experience.

“A Wolf Cub Will Always Be a Wolf, Even Though It Grows up Among the Sons of Men”—René³

Another case that will be discussed in this chapter is that of René. This case is selected because of the intense picture of searching for orientation by engaging in various religious and spiritual groups and their teachings, which led to a spiritual conversion (from “neither religious nor spiritual” to “more spiritual than religious”). Especially the content and the form of the interview with this participant gives an idea of the significance of his spiritual approach in confrontation with his own psychiatric disorder, his inner conflicts, his social life and life choices.

At the time of the interview, René was 35 years old. He grew up in an academic family, in an urban region in Germany. The parents are described as not open to religious and spiritual questions. In the questionnaire, he describes his environment at age 12 as “neither religious nor spiritual.” As a nineteen-year-old, René saw himself confronted with his first crisis and he began to look for Chinese spirituality, which could integrate sexuality, quoting the “Tao of love.” In 200X, when he was in his twenties, he had psychiatric treatment. During the years that followed, he had to fight against several episodes of his psychiatric disorder, which he tried to handle by an orientation towards and adoption of the worldview of e.g. Sufism and a so-called New Religious Movement with influences from Asian and other religions. Thereby, he had an experience of awakening, which made a lasting impression on him.

Mapping René's Case Based on Questionnaire Responses

Compared to his focus group of the “more spiritual than religious, not atheists or non-theists in Germany” (FG 3), René's scores average on most scales. As presented in the table below, the results on the Mysticism Scale and also on the

³“Ein Wolfsjunges wird immer Wolf werden, auch wenn es unter den Söhnen der Menschen aufwächst.”

Table 26.3 Comparison of René G. With Respective Focus Group on the Most Important Scales in the Questionnaire

	Single case variable values for René G.	Mean values for “more spiritual than religious, not atheist or non-theists” focus group in Germany	
		M	SD
Personality (NEO-FFI)			
<i>Neuroticism</i>	28	19.1	8.4
<i>Extraversion</i>	29	27.6	6.4
<i>Openness to experience</i>	38	35.9	5.2
<i>Agreeableness</i>	31	33.8	5.6
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	20	30.5	6.3
Mysticism (Mysticism Scale total)			
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	40	47.7	10.9
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	26	31.3	7.9
<i>Interpretation</i>	44	48.7	9.0
Psychological well-being			
<i>Autonomy</i>	22	25.7	4.0
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	26	24.8	4.6
<i>Personal growth</i>	29	30.4	3.4
<i>Positive relations with others</i>	28	27.5	4.3
<i>Purpose in life</i>	18	25.8	4.2
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	26	26.9	4.6
Generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale)			
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	66	74.3	19.1
Religious Schema Scale (RSS)			
<i>Truth of texts and teachings</i>	10	10.4	4.4
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rational choice</i>	17	21.5	2.8
<i>Xenosphia/inter-religious dialog</i>	20	19.7	3.6

Note All mean values are based on covariance analyses with the variables for country and focus group as predictors, while controlled by sex, age, cultural capital, and per-capita income

variable *openness to experience* (NEO-FFI) do not stand out against his reference group. In the two-dimensional space of Fig. 17.2, he is located in the lower half of the map, indicating rather low *mysticism* and moderate *openness to experience*.

Remarkable are the differences between René and his reference group in regard to the NEO-variables *neuroticism* (more than a standard deviation higher) and *conscientiousness* (more than a standard deviation lower). On *purpose in life* (Ryff Scales on Psychological

Well-being) and *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* (RSS), René scored more than a standard deviation lower as compared to the other members of his focus group. This portrays him as a highly vulnerable person, not much protected by self-discipline or rational thinking.

The vulnerability indicated by his high *neuroticism* (emotional instability) points to the aforementioned psychiatric disorder, which included recurrent episodes of despair, feelings of inferiority and doubts in regard to the purpose of his life.

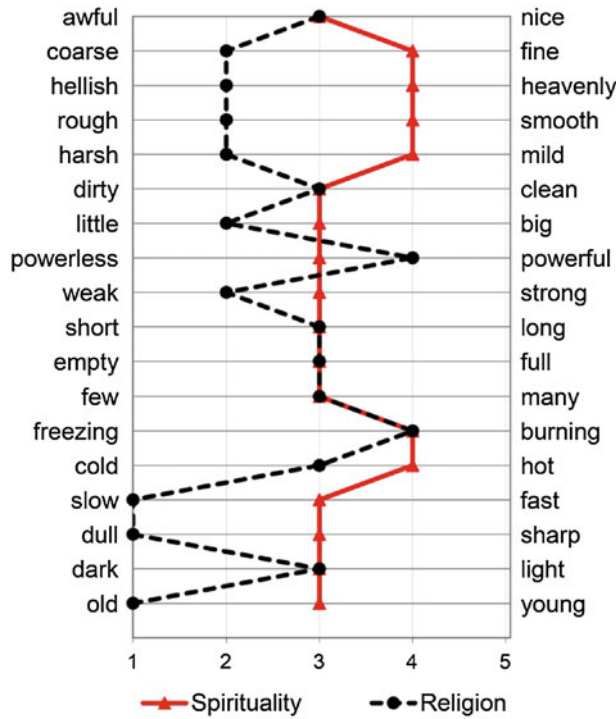


Fig. 26.2 René's Ratings on the Osgood Semantic Differential

Neuroticism appears to influence risk for depressive illness in two distinct ways. First, at every level of stress exposure, it directly increases risk of illness. Second, neuroticism moderates the pathogenic effects of stress exposure. Individuals with low levels of neuroticism are much less sensitive to the depressogenic effects of adversity than are those with high levels of neuroticism. (Kendler, Kuhn, & Prescott, 2004).

As described later in this chapter, René developed throughout the last years a radical attitude which means a resistance to take over responsibility for his own behavior. This could imply that conscientiousness is not prioritized as social ability by René, who described himself as unconcerned and careless.

The RSS subscale *fairness, tolerance and rational choice* captures the willingness to discuss one's own position and relates to the individuative-reflective faith of Fowler's stage four and to the religious style which Streib (2001) labeled individuative-systemic. We have to speculate why René scores lower on *fr* than his reference-group. In earlier studies (Streib, Hood,

& Klein, 2010), *fr* had a positive correlation to *openness to experience, purpose in life* (in US samples) and *xenos* and a negative one to *fundamentalism*, which positively correlates to *itt*. Excepting *purpose in life* and *neuroticism*, all of René's scores of these variables are about average with regard to his reference group. These observations and the impression from René's interview do not indicate any fundamentalist attitudes nor an unwillingness to respect other religious or spiritual ways. Rather, he seems reluctant to argue in a rational manner (Table 26.3).

René's Semantic of "Spirituality"

René defines "spirituality" as: "Spirit, Being, Consciousness, Love, Life, Joy, Happiness, All that is, Nothing-Everything, THAT, Mysticism, Tao."⁴ "Religion" is to him: "Partly more

⁴Geist, Sein, Bewusstsein, Liebe, Leben, Freude, Glück, Alles was ist, Nichts-Alles, DAS, Mystik, Tao.

Fig. 26.3 René's Ratings on the Contextual Semantic Differential



interesting, nicer, but unnecessary nonsense, which confuses people a lot over and over again and can make them to fanatics.”⁵

Spirituality is here associated with warm feelings with experiences of depth and consciousness. René listed also relevant spiritual teachings. In contrast, religion is described with positive but also negative characteristics. René does not comment on the relationship of both concepts.

The semantic differentials reflect René's statements. Whereas in Osgood's Semantic Differential in Fig. 26.2 religion is associated with negative characteristics as “coarse,” “hellish,” “rough,” “harsh,” “slow,” “dull” and “old,” spirituality is characterized as “fine,” “heavenly,” “smooth” and “mild.” No negative descriptions are given in regard to spirituality. Interestingly, René sees religion as more powerful than spirituality. “Burning” characterizes spirituality to the same degree as religion.

In Fig. 26.3, the Contextual Semantic Differential, a similar impression is given. Here, ratings of

⁵Teilweise interessanter, schöner, aber unnötiger Unsinn, der die Menschen leider immer wieder sehr verwirren und zu Fanatikern machen kann.

“religion” and “spirituality” impress as opposites of each other. For example, religion is described as “inflexible,” “demanding,” “traditional,” “old,” “dwelling,” spirituality as “flexible,” “tolerant,” “relaxing,” “creative,” “laissez-faire,” “modern,” “selfless,” “altruistic,” “universal,” “mature” and “interconnected.” Here, too, this consistent image is complicated by specific negative characteristics of “spirituality” (“irrational,” “immoral” and “complacent”) while “religion” is rated “moral.” However, the overall impression is that the ratings reflect René’s self-identification as “more spiritual than religious” (for a comparison with the results of his focus group see Appendix A, Figures A.7 and A.21).

René’s Faith Development

René’s profile includes synthetic-conventional faith (mutual religious style), while in the area of “Relationships” (see Fig. 26.4), René’s answers point to Stage 2 of faith development (Mythic-Literal faith or Instrumental-Reciprocal Style). For example, René tends to commit himself to a guru. His approach to relationships, his way to describe his family or intimates both seem very general. Rarely are answers rated Stage 4 (Individuative-Reflective faith or Individuative-Systemic style). As described above, the mutual religious style tends to smooth out inconsistencies or potential conflict for the sake of agreement with the group to which one is attached.

Summary of René’s Faith Development

As described above, a synthetic-conventional (mutual) style is the most dominant. René engages with a broad range of religious and spiritual teachings, focusing, during the interview, on Sufism and a New Religious Movement based on Eastern religions. He also describes a current rapprochement to the Christian religion.

Mentalization and Attachment in René’s Interview

In the course of the interview, René’s relationship with the interviewer is characterized by an intense examination of the questions. He makes

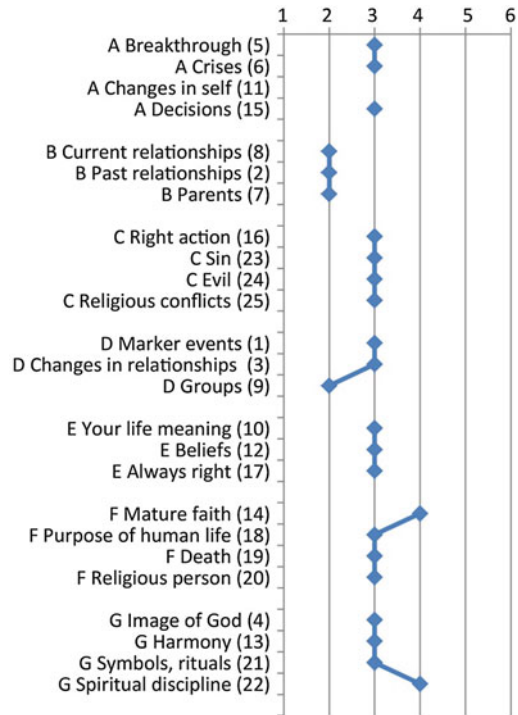


Fig. 26.4 Stage Assignments to René’s FDI Answers

contact by asking the interviewer to repeat the question, although he just has begun to answer. While answering, the smiles noted in the transcript sometimes appear at unexpected moments:

... 200X, um, low point of my crisis, ...um, in the psychiatry. (chuckle)⁶

The chuckles may indicate insecurity, which occurs while he is trying to reflect unpleasant or problematic experiences. When he engages with spiritual and religious themes, he seems more self-confident and at ease. His answers show a great deal of intellectuality, he sometimes seems to get lost in details, some trains of thoughts are hard to follow. He seems not to be aware of whether the interviewer can follow his descriptions or not. Explanations are barely given. What is the function of his display of details of specific teachings? It could be a form of impressing the interviewer or just represent his manner to think

⁶“...200X, ähm, Tiefpunkt meiner Krise, ... äh, in der Psychiatrie. (Lächelt).”

aloud in a philosophic way. In the end of the interview, René refers to the possibility that the interviewer doesn't understand everything, but in the same sentence, he denies his responsibility and leaves the interviewer alone.

Um, yes. I hope that I wasn't now too, um, squishy and inconcrete, but that all is simply not so concrete.⁷

To identify a definite attachment style turns out to be difficult. Our additional ratings do not show a clear picture. The relationship with the interviewer and the descriptions of relationships give an impression of a mostly dismissing attachment style.

Narrative Structure and Content Aspects in René's Interview

René's answers obviously relate to the questions of the interviewer, the length of the interview is within normal scope. The structure of the answers is often coherent, but hard to follow because of René's ample use of terminology from various groups he has been interested in. Structured narratives described by Labov and Waletzky are not discerned. His answers are often characterized by enumerations.

Life Review

Asked to divide his life in chapters, René doesn't seem to have difficulties to structure his life. Although he seems to be familiar with a conventional way to structure, he orders his account around his crises.

...Um, ...well, childhood just to...childhood and early youth to 10, 12. Um... then we moved from [City A] to [City B], so 12 to...19, maybe just the... puberty and teenager-years, gymnasium... Then an episode with longer crises begins in my case. But also going to university, so from 19 to 23. Then there again comes a very critical time—23 to...27!...And from 27, yes, to...um...33,34, then a stabilization time, school resumed with, um,

[subject of study]. Well, and now, since, um, ... yes 200Y, that means, um, that's [City C] until now, yes..."⁸

We learn that René's parents were rather indifferent regarding their Protestant faith. René assumes that the conditions in his family were chaotic and that he thus was distressed in the later years of his growing up. More details are not given. A traumatic experience as a 19-year-old is evaluated as relevant and as starting point of his periods of crises. He found help in Chinese spiritual teachings (Taoism) that served him, as he says, to resolve his inner dilemma. He began his studies at university which he had to drop because of the recurrent episodes of his psychiatric disorder. In these times, he also consulted pastoral care and went deep into various spiritual teachings. Especially Sufism and later the New Religious Movement he still defines as important teachings. In 200X, he experienced a mystic awakening. When he stabilized, he resumed his studies, of a different subject.

Relationships

René names his parents, an old friend from school and the sheik of his Sufi-group as relevant relationships. The descriptions of René's parents and of others are rather general. All of these persons are measured against his own spiritual "level." Intimate relationships are only mentioned in passing. He speaks generalizing about Muslims he is attracted to. A reader or listener can hardly get an impression of the persons mentioned. People are listed, rather than characterized. Questions about relationships are answered tangentially by focusing on irrelevant aspects of the questions ("What

⁷"Äh, ja, ich hoffe, ich war jetzt nicht zu, äh, schwammig und unkonkret, aber es ist eben auch alles nicht so konkret (lächelt)."

⁸"Ähm, na ja Kindheit so bis ... Kindheit und frühe Jugend bis zehn, zwölf. Ähm, ... dann sind wir von [Stadt A] nach [Stadt B] umgezogen, also zwölf bis ... neunzehn, vielleicht so die ... Pubertät und Teenager-Jahre, Gymnasium. ... Dann beginnt bei mir, äh, eine Phase mit, äh, längeren Krisen. Allerdings auch noch Studium, also von neunzehn bis ... 23. Dann kommt noch mal eine sehr krisenhafte Zeit – 23 bis ... 27! ... Und von 27, ja bis ... ähm ... 33, 34, dann so eine Stabilisierungszeit, Studium wieder aufgenommen mit, äh, [Studienfach]. Na ja und jetzt seit, ähm, ... ja 200Y, das heißt, äh, das ist jetzt so [Stadt C] das ist dann die [Stadt C] bis jetzt, ja ..."

is ‘significant’? Um... everything is significant and nothing,” interact 36) or evaded by speaking about spiritual attitudes or teachings.

The way he discusses his parents demonstrates René’s difficulty to detach from them. His parents are described as not being aware of the depth of existence and to distrust transcendence and God. His mother is portrayed as emotionally disorganized, desperate and unhappy, his father as someone who denies emotions and only believes in science. His assumed—dismissive—attachment style as a grown-up man may have developed as self-protective response to his mother’s using the relationship to her son to balance her own emotions (Neumann, 2002).

To comprehend the relationship to his parents, it seems necessary to take a closer look at his psychiatric disorder. He suffered several episodes of illness which involved despair and feelings of loss of meaning and inferiority. The first symptoms occurred after afore mentioned traumatic experience, which threw him into a moral and religious dilemma. He described himself as not being interested in religion before this experience. Perhaps religion or “spirituality” offered him a frame for understanding what had happened to him? René felt misunderstood by his parents. Later, in times of psychiatric treatments, he hated them and developed states of anxiety when being in touch with them, which led him to avoid contact. Now, more stabilized, he speaks frequently with them on the phone and acknowledges that they try to understand him. René also names his medication in this time. Taken together, this gives the impression of depressive symptoms but also of a perhaps even psychotically distorted view of the world, and a belief in which his parents figured as negative and threatening. Then, René also believed that God was punishing him.

Today, he sees the relationship with his parents as good. However, he describes his parents in a critical way, which may indicate ambivalence and dismissive attachment:

Um...I still don’t have much confidence in them in regard to emotional and developmental growth.⁹

⁹“... ich traue ihnen halt emotional und entwicklungsmäßig immer noch nicht viel zu.”

Later in the interview, René describes his parents by referring to an image and proverb in Sufism as wolf children which can’t negotiate their trauma and existence as wolves, while René has, with the help of medication, achieved this and has become a lamb.

People are differentiated in those who are capable of going into dialogue with him about spiritual questions and those, who are not capable of doing this. The impression is given that his relationship to his parents is still unresolved, while he went through a process of disengagement with a guru to whose group he had been attached. Here, he first seemed to idealize his spiritual authority, than to depreciate him and today, he increasingly finds a more balanced attitude.

Values and Commitments

Asked about present values and commitments, René refers to his development from an attitude inspired by Eastern religions (“Nothing matters, it doesn’t matter what I do, everything is beyond good and evil”), which he was attracted to since his awakening in 200X, to a Christian approach, which includes more responsibility and charity, by referring to the categorical imperative. Further on in the interview, he often lists different religious concepts without giving his own position or attitude.

To love God and to follow God’s will and to attend to one’s own feelings/intuition represents to him a mature faith and a way to manage a problem in life. He creates the image of the wolf children as mentioned above to explain his “personal myth” and his interpretation of the purpose of his life centers on his not having to be a wolf, which might be read as redemptive turn.

He still feels committed to Sufism. However, he is not involved in a group but actively participating in an internet mysticism forum. The abstract description underlines the impression of a restricted ability or interest to build and maintain relationships.

Religion and World View

Remarkably, in this part, which also forms the last section of the interview, the answers seem

increasingly unfocused and incomprehensible. To state his own position seems difficult for him, religious and spiritual terms and images are used in a manner which is hard to follow. Explanations give impressions of euphoria including a tendency of losing reference to himself.

René's definition of "spirituality" as mentioned above ("Spirit, Consciousness, Love, Joy, Happiness, All that is, Nothing-Everything, THAT, Mysticism, Tao"), implies an analogy to his explanation of the purpose of human life: "To be whole, to be suffused, to love, salvation of man, mankind and the planet"¹⁰

In an extensive and detailed way, René describes various constructs related to religious and spiritual imagery to answer the questions. For instance, he sees the offspring of evil as the counterpart to God which is created by and within God to restrict Him in His infinity. According to his attitude, an unforgivable sin does not exist. He refers to a merciful God which again shows the transformation of his God image following his major crisis.

Compared to his ambitious descriptions of spiritual and religious imagery, his own rituals almost appear trivial: to smoke a cigarette and to drink a coffee in the morning.

General Interpretation of René's Spiritual Journey

Taking it all together, René's interview and his results on the scales convey an impression of a person who lives with a synthetic-conventional faith (mutual religious style). He gains strength from different spiritual and religious teachings and seems to construct his "personal religion"/ "myth" to manage his psychological problems, keeping fear and chaos at bay. Questions are answered in an intellectualizing way. It is hard to get an impression of René as a person in everyday life. His relationships to others also seem to have an elusive quality. He seems to

have problems with mentalization, with imagining others' inner worlds. The interviewer is mostly addressed as listener to his spiritual reflections. Could his specific way of being spiritual help him to feel that he can be superior to others (who do not understand this) rather than run the risk of being seen as a misfit or outsider? Could he compensate then fearful attachment /ambivalent inner objects when he turned to a guru or sheikh and developed a reliable relationship which was structured by the tradition? Then development may have meant to first idealize the spiritual teacher, later gain a more realistic perspective and finally leave. At the time of the interview he is using the mysticism forum for getting as close to like-minded persons as he can tolerate.

Both Nancy and René refer to experiences which might be called "mystic": Nancy experienced an encounter with Shiva, and René speaks of his mystic awakening. Both also refer to difficult family conditions with insecure or ambivalent attachments, or, drawing on a different vocabulary, ambivalent inner objects. Were they perhaps specifically prone to mystic experience because of these developmental conditions (cf Granqvist, Hagekull, & Ivarson, 2012)?

The traditions they draw on when discussing these experiences which were, in their view, formative for their faith development, may have appealed to them as not contaminated by troublesome early relationships, because they are different in content from the religion handed down to them by their family.

Is their turn to such experience regressive? In a sense it may be, as it may draw on early experience. Rejecting assumptions on early natural religiosity, Ostow writes:

Rather, I am suggesting that on occasion, later in life, when current attachments and prospects seem to wane or leave a defect in our view of our opportunities for maintaining a sense of composure, when current opportunities for gratification fail to protect against depression or despair, we seem to be able to reactivate a complex of affects and dispositions that prevailed early in childhood. These present themselves as the seemingly transcendent affective experiences that we call spiritual. (Ostow, 2007, p. 69).

¹⁰ "... ganz Sein, erfüllt Sein, Lieben. [...] Und die Erlösung des Menschen, der Menschheit und des Planeten."

This turn to “spirituality” is functional in that it relieves suffering by using basic experiences, as response to attachment needs (or again, in another vocabulary: the search for good objects) which persist across the life span.

Traumatized persons in particular tend to think about how they could have prevented the trauma or what they might do in the future to avoid such an experience. Fischer and Riedesser have termed this the “traumacompensatory schema” (Fischer & Riedesser, 2009). Drawing on laws of the universe, a higher system of rules than our notions of justice may give relief of feelings of, perhaps, anxiety, guilt and shame. One might argue that New Age philosophies as well as traditional religion can be used to neutralize trauma and give meaning to hurtful experiences. One might argue that it is possible to draw on “spiritual” or “religious” authorities and teachings to deny suffering and conflicts, thus using them in a defensive way. This might invoke the accusation of “spirituality” and “religion” being used effectively, however, as a “crooked cure” (Freud, 1921). On the other hand, defenses can be understood as creative coping with adverse circumstances—and the alleviation of suffering may be the first step toward further options of development. We need careful longitudinal observations of single trajectories to learn what helps in the long run.

Conclusion

Thinking again on mental health, religion, spirituality and faith development, what have we learned from the cases studied? We have here focused on persons who have known great losses, suffering and mental illness. Their narratives demonstrate an emphasis on openness to alternative religious traditions: Nancy from the predominantly Christian USA has drawn input for her spiritual development from Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Wicca. René, German, and from a religiously indifferent family, relies on New Religious Movements and Sufism besides his recent turn to Christian religion.

These choices reflect different compensatory functions: Nancy has shared that seeing and being seen by Shiva has been a special experience. Her spiritual development may have been inspired by her attachment needs not fulfilled when she grew up in a family which was mourning a lost child. She may have turned to foreign Gods because they were not involved in her grievous family history. René, who after a conflicted relationship with his mother and a distant relationship with his father, and a breakdown due to a traumatic experience has looked toward Taoism which promised help with the cultivation and integration of conflicting strivings. Sufism may have offered a protective frame for a relationship with a paternal figure. There are gains: Nancy seems content with her life as she reports a reconciliation with her father and a focus on her closer relationships. René, who has problems relating to others, can now imagine a merciful God, perhaps eventually develop some trust in other persons. His experience with the sufi sheikh may have paved the way to current efforts at contact with his parents.

Are there drawbacks? From a faith-development perspective, Nancy might be suspected to dwell in her experience-based approach rather than systematically scrutinize the traditions she uses to arrive at a higher level of understanding. René may be seen as immersed in intellectualizing comments and restricting his emotional experience of spirituality to internet discussion with rather remote others. Both draw on the teachings they adopted to understand their “special” experiences and make them comprehensible to others: For Nancy, Hinduism offers a frame for her experience of seeing deity and being seen by deity. René uses the Sufi image of the “wolf cub” to understand and frame what makes him different from others.

The spiritual teachings serve as frames for narratives that make sense of “special” experiences to them and help them to position themselves toward others. The unusual or even exotic traditions they draw on may serve as a niche. Thus, it is possible to work toward a culturally embedded and socially comprehensive narrative

while insisting on the idiosyncratic character of the experiences involved.

How can we better discern what is stabilizing and what is defensive, what is promoting and what is inhibiting development? So far, we may conjecture that appropriations of “spirituality” can help to transform “special” experiences (sensations, perceptions) to comprehensible, if unusual, narratives. Thus, we hope to have illustrated how interpretation of spiritual or “mystic” experiences is used in individual narratives to promote growth and mental health. We have seen how these persons understand and use the very individual “spiritual” spaces they have created for themselves at a single point in time and in their lives. To learn more about their development we need to study how they continue to fare with their personal “spiritual” ways to cope with the challenges of trauma and mental illness from a longitudinal perspective.

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Part VII
Conclusion

The Contribution of the Study of “Spirituality” to the Psychology of Religion: Conclusions and Future Prospects

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Abstract

This concluding chapter places our study in context by linking it not only to our first book on deconversion (Streib, Hood, Keller, Csöff, & Silver, 2009), but by suggesting how this text is a second in a trilogy that compliments this cross-sectional etic and emic study of the semantics of spirituality with a longitudinal study of faith development forthcoming. We begin with philosophical support for our stand of methodological agnosticism which sustains our use of ultimate concern and transcendence (vertical and horizontal) to map individuals and groups in a two-dimensional space, the religious field. In addition, for empirical reasons we create an additional two dimensional space to map individuals and groups in our study in terms of Hood’s M-scale as a measure of spirituality and the *openness to experience* scale. Finally, we address criticisms of cross-cultural psychology applied to universalizing measures such as mysticism. We claim that mysticism and the religious styles perspective are appropriate for investigating—and mapping—commonalities and differences between Germany and the USA on the semantics of “spirituality.”

We have covered much ground in the preceding chapters and it would be foolish to summarize in brief what we have detailed in individual chapters, especially those focused upon emic

descriptions. In this concluding chapter we will place our work in the larger context of what contribution we believe it makes to the psychology of religion as a focused area of study and in the process also situate this book within what amounts to a trilogy. However, first we ought to note that this research is a cooperative project not simply between two universities, one German and the other American, but also between two multidisciplinary teams that combine unique talents with training in theology,

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sociology, psychology, and psychoanalysis. Our team includes some with training in two disciplines. For instance, Barbara Keller holds the doctorate in psychology and also is a licensed psychoanalyst with a practice in Köln, Germany, while Constantin Klein holds a doctorate in theology and works toward a doctorate in psychology. Others could be noted but the point is simply that our research team is truly interdisciplinary and is able to bring to our project a broadened understanding of the breadth of psychology of religion and the place of spirituality within it.

Furthermore, our team combines two major theoretical orientations: one, faith development theory, long associated with Fowler and Emory University in Atlanta, but now clearly linked to the University of Bielefeld and Streib's research; the other, the study of mysticism, linked to the phenomenological common core thesis first proposed by Stace and developed empirically by Hood. As our work developed we found it useful to locate much of our data in a two-dimensional space defined by mysticism and degree of *openness to experience*. This combination was not uninformed by previous research on both faith development and religious styles as well as by previous research on mysticism and its relationship to *openness*. However, before we explore some of the implications of this for the psychology of religion, we will find it helpful to note some of the broader methodological and theological/philosophical assumptions that frame our research. They are not unrelated to the fact that both within faith development theory and mysticism unifying factors are explicit that are neither naively accepted nor ontologically denied. Elsewhere we have identified this stance as one of methodological agnosticism and a brief review is warranted here.

Methodological Agnosticism

Our efforts in this second volume advance more than just the spirit of Emmons and Paloutzian's call for "a new *multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm*" first announced in (2003, p. 395, emphasis in original) and echoed again in Park and

Paloutzian (2005), Paloutzian and Park (2014). However, our theoretical and methodological orientations, including the use of both faith development theory as advanced by Streib and mysticism as advanced by Hood, address the almost ignored call for this paradigm in sociology of religion. Our efforts expand upon Porpora's (2006) critical analysis of the sociology of religion whose overarching assumption is the methodological atheism most forcefully championed by Berger (1967, p. 100) and best summarized by the claim that "every inquiry that limits itself to the empirically available must necessarily be based upon 'methodological atheism.'" While Berger speaks to sociologists, he echoes a sentiment of over a hundred years ago by the psychologist Flournoy (1903) who argued for the methodical exclusion of the transcendent in the then emerging empirical psychology of religion. Our efforts instead call for a methodological agnosticism, addressed more fully elsewhere (Hood, 2012). Here we will simply indicate how our theoretical orientation and methodological triangulation allows for advancing the field by a reconsideration of classic theorists, especially Troeltsch and Weber and placing the contemporary study of spirituality within the religious field as we have argued in Chaps. 1 and 2 of this volume.

Porpora's criticism of methodological atheism is based on the fact that insofar as one raises social constructionism to a methodological absolute, reality as empirically investigated is necessarily incapable of referring to anything outside of social constructs that may contribute to experience. Porpora argues for a more epistemologically adequate methodological agnosticism. Part of Porpora's reasoning is based upon the philosophical limits of social constructionism which become self-negated if reflexively applied to the discipline that champions such views. Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 13) recognized that if the principle was reflexively applied to sociology, it would be like trying to push the bus from the inside. Likewise, Collins and Yearly (1992) refuse to apply social constructionism to sociology in what has not so playfully been identified as the epistemological chicken and egg

debate. Bhaskar (1994, pp. 10, 30) suggests his own neologism, in what is a vain effort at ending philosophical reflection of the overarching assumption, “TINA” (there is no alternative). Our project rejects this absolutist claim and provides an alternative.

If we return now to the call for a new paradigm noted above, an interdisciplinary paradigm offers possibilities that, while not denying the relevance of social constructionism, are not bound by its philosophically self-imposed limits (Coleman & Hood, 2015). If we focus upon psychology, one of the earliest reviews of the social psychology of religion by Dittes (1969) identified four conceptual options available to those who study the psychology of religion.

Two of Dittes’ options are reductionist and implicitly subscribed to methodological atheism. The first two options are that variables operating in the study of the religious field are the same as in other fields or, perhaps in the case of religion, simply more salient. Both of these options are consistent with methodological naturalism which is inherently atheistic.

The other two of Dittes’ conceptual options suggest that something is unique about religion and thus it may need methods that mainstream social science ignores. They are implicitly methodologically agnostic. The least controversial of these is that established variables uniquely interact with specific variables in the religious field. This is consistent with Porpora’s claim that transcendent realities may contribute to the totality of what is religiously experienced. Dittes’ fourth option is that there are unique variables operating in religion that either do not operate in other contexts or are ignored by mainstream scientists. Insofar as both of these options can give credence to ontological claims associated with religion, they can be identified as supporting a methodological agnosticism.

Hood, Hill, and Spilka (2009) has used Dittes’ four options to suggest ways of studying religion and spirituality that are not limited by social constructionist assumptions. Options three and four noted above transcend social constructionist assumptions by noting that, with respect to religious and spiritual experiences, the claim that

something is an object or source of the experience moves from a purely social constructionistic assumption to a social expressionism in which social and psychological mediators are efforts to express an experience that transcends its mere social construction (Hood, 2006). Note that agnosticism here simply affirms that for the believer the object of experience has an ontological status that must enter into assessing relative interpretations offered by theories based upon methodological atheism or agnosticism. Porpora (2006, p. 23) refers to this in general terms as “super-mundane objects of experience.” Elsewhere in this volume (Chap. 1) we have noted that by placing the study of spirituality within the religious field, variations in ontological considerations of not only the “search for” but the “response to” ultimacy can be located along the dimensions of transcendence, conceived as vertical or horizontal.

Thus, it is scientifically legitimate to explore the possibility that part of the experience of God comes from God (Bowker, 1973; Hood, 1989). Porpora does not provide a description of the kind of science that is open to the ontological possibilities associated with taking reports of religious and spiritual experiences seriously. However, he suggests that psychology is ahead of sociology in acknowledging a transcendence that does not, in Berger’s own explicit concern, provide anything more than a “quasi-scientific legitimation of a secularized worldly view” (1974, p. 128). By briefly reviewing our own alternative to the dilemma of a methodological atheism we can place the relevance of our major findings in perspective.

Mediators of Transcendence

In Chap. 1 (see especially, pp. 1–4; also, Streib & Hood, 2011) we took care to return the study of spirituality to what we think is its proper home, the social scientific study of religion. In reviewing both the theoretical and conceptual literature on “spirituality” we argued that the overlap is so substantial that we do not need two concepts

(‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’) nor do we need to subscribe to the fact that such terms must be polar opposites. Our solution to such conceptual and empirical dead ends was to return to classic theorists (James; Troeltsch; Weber) and to create an ideal type in which under the *genus proximum* ‘religion’ are the three *differentiae specifica*, noted by Troeltsch with reference to Weber: privatized, experience-oriented (mysticism), charismatic, prophecy/protest-oriented (sect) and organized, tradition-oriented (church). Further, we argued that this ideal typology organizes Bourdieu’s religious field in empirically explorable ways by allowing the identification of mediators within the perspective of a methodological agnosticism. We need not explicitly refer to God nor support any religious apologetics if we but seek to identify mediators of both transcendence and ultimate concern. Transcendence is further specified as either vertical (suggestive of two of Dittes’ non-reductive options) or horizontal (suggestive of Dittes’ two reductive options). Thus, by focusing upon ultimate concern and transcendence we return spirituality to the study of religion, its classic home.

Thus mediation and vertical/horizontal transcendence serve as coordinates for the religious field. Mediation results from conceptual clarification with reference to the sociology of religion of Weber, Troeltsch and Bourdieu, and is helpful in opening the perspective and understanding the variety of religions and their various forms of organization; but, with mysticism, the perspective is open for forms of more or less radical forms of religious individualization. The distinction between vertical and horizontal transcendence is rooted in another tradition of the sociology of religion: the social-phenomenological tradition of Schütz, Luckmann and Knoblauch. And also here, as Knoblauch’s work demonstrates, the perspective opens up for understanding new developments in the religious field that are outside organized religion—and thus called “invisible” or perhaps “implicit” forms of religion. Taken together, these two streams in the sociology of religion provide a framework for understanding “spirituality.” And in fact, we conclude from our study of self-attributed “spirituality” that

is detailed in the chapters of this volume that the scientific study of religion in general and the psychology of religion in particular are well advised to consider these two coordinates for outlining the religious field in a way that is open for and responsive to new developments such as self-attributed “spirituality.”

Here we might note that also others, working from different theoretical perspectives, have arrived at similar conclusions. For instance, Wiseman (2006), who is also careful to place spirituality within its proper “religious” home, appeals to the work of Schneider (1989) in which her definition of spirituality as “the ultimate value one perceives” (p. 678) parallels our own view summarized above in this book and elsewhere (see e.g. Chap. 1; Hood, 2006; Streib & Hood, 2011). Wiseman (2006) notes that Schneider argues that transcendence is a fundamental dimension of human existence, and while her focus is upon what we identify as vertical transcendence within the Christian tradition, it need not be confused with a subtle Christian apologetics, a concern that some have with “spirituality” as implicit religion. As Wiseman (2006, pp. 4–5) notes:

Schneider’s [1989, p. 678] broad definition of spirituality in terms of transcendence “toward the ultimate value one perceives” makes it quite legitimate to speak, for example, of Hindu spirituality or Jewish spirituality. Indeed, since the ultimate value need not be perceived as a personal God ... one could just as properly speak of Buddhist or Daoist spirituality, where there are clearly transcendent horizon of ultimate value (the Buddha, nirvana, the Dao) even though none of these is understood as a personal God.

Wiseman’s summary of Schneider’s position on spirituality nicely meshes with our own arguments on spirituality as implicit or invisible religion (Chap. 1, Streib & Hood, 2011).

Acknowledging the significant overlap between the semantics of “religion” and “spirituality” (Chaps. 7 and 8) and our review of measures of spirituality in Chaps. 10 and 11, we decided that, given our commitment to exploring the religious field empirically, it would be useful to use an existing measure that might be related to participants’ understanding of the semantics of

both “religion” and “spirituality” and to empirically test whether they are associated with the binaries. Our decision was to use Hood’s M-Scale as a measure of spirituality. The basis for this decision was partly justified in Chap. 11. However, here we can point to some additional considerations relative to the use of the M-Scale as a measure of spirituality that are empirically justified and consistent with our concern that social scientists ought not to attempt to study spirituality as if it were independent of religion.

Mysticism as a Measure of Spirituality

First, the M-Scale (Hood, 1975) was developed to operationalize and measure Stace’s (1960) common core thesis, developed independent of and before the concern with the “religion/spirituality” binary. The scale quickly became and continues to be the most widely used measure of reported mystical experience (Hood & Francis, 2013; Lukoff & Lu, 1988).

Second, as noted in Chap. 11, in both Germany and the USA the self-identified binary “more spiritual than religious” has higher mysticism scores than other groups, but importantly “equally religious and spiritual” people also have high mysticism scores. While some refinements and qualifications have been noted in Chap. 11 relative to gender and to minor differences between Germany and the USA, here it is important to note that the M-Scale is appropriate for use with all cells in the binary, including our selected focus groups in which the binaries are utilized with those who self-identify as “atheist/non theist” and those who self-identify as “not atheist or not non-theist” (see Chap. 4, Table 4.7).

Third, it is our concern that social scientists need not create a new domain of study identified as “spirituality,” since both empirically and conceptually the phenomena associated with spirituality have classically been under the umbrella of religion. One need but note that Paulist Press is in the process of producing a proposed twenty-five volume set titled, “*World*

spirituality: An encyclopedic history of the religious quest” (Wiseman, 2006, p. 1) to realize that the recent effort of social scientists to divorce spirituality from religion is, at best, historically naïve. Likewise, Paulist Press has extended its initially limited series titled “*The Classic of Western Spirituality*” to a continuing open ended series. Currently one can purchase 126 volumes published between 1977 and 2013, containing 45,391 pages and involving 163 authors. Only one volume deals with the emergence of the “spiritual but not religious” binary that some social scientists are trying to divorce from a religious context. Its editor, Van Ness (1996), notes that for many Americans being religious is not a necessary condition for being spiritual and explores various means by which individuals in this cell of the binary express their ultimacy and horizontal transcendence in such areas as ecological activism, 12-step programs, and various psychological systems. That this is but one volume (vol. 22) in a series that now exceeds 130 volumes and clearly supports our contention that “spiritual but not religious” is best placed within an implicit or invisible religious context, not an independent domain social scientist have only recently uncovered.

Fourth, in their own review of eight traditions across both history and cultures that can be identified with totalizing world views of interest to what Americans identify as positive psychology, Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) noted that of seven virtues identified across eight traditions transcendence of self (mysticism) is explicitly mentioned in the three Abrahamic faith traditions of the West (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) and in the two explicit faith traditions of the East, Hinduism and Buddhism. However, Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) argue that transcendence is also implicit in the two indigenous faith traditions of China, Confucianism and Taoism, traditions not associated with claims to the existence of God or gods. While we know of no studies to date that have used the M-Scale with either Confucians or Taoists, this is a fruitful area for research given that anthologies have explored Taoism in light of Stace’s universal core claim which is the basis of Hood’s operationalization in

the M-Scale (Van Owen, 1973). However, based upon methodological agnosticism the distinction that is useful here is to remember that transcendence can be vertical (and hence explicitly religious) or horizontal (and hence implicitly religious). As we noted previously, horizontal transcendence, associated with the spiritual but not religious binary, involves individuals who are not ontologically or epistemologically bound by any theological limits (Chap. 10, p. 24), but this does not make them any less embedded in religion, albeit implicitly so (Anthony, Hermans, & Sterkens, 2010; Hood et al., 2009, p. 282, 286; Streib & Hood, 2011). Furthermore, the M-Scale's validity as a measure of spirituality is attested to by the fact that it has been validated in each of the three Abrahamic faiths—among Muslims in Iran (Hood et al., 2001), among Jews in Israel (Lazar & Kravetz, 2005), and among Christians in America (Hood & Williamson, 2000). It has also been validated in cultures expressing the two Eastern spiritual traditions where Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) assert transcendence is also an explicit value, namely among Buddhists in Tibet (Chen, Yang, Hood, & Watson, 2011; Chen, Zhang, Qi, & Hood, 2011) and Hindus in India (Anthony et al., 2010). Validation refers to the similarity of factor structure across the traditions for which M-Scale studies exist and support for a common core to mysticism across cultures (Hood, 2006).

Here, our claim is more limited to the usefulness of the M-Scale to assess spirituality in both Germany and the USA and to test explicit hypotheses as noted in Chap. 11. Here we simply note that the use of the M-Scale in this second volume of what will be a trilogy was partly predicated on the fact that, in our first volume on deconversion, in both Germany and the USA high rates of “more spiritual than religious” were reported among deconverts and this was associated with high rates of mysticism supporting early findings by Zinnbauer et al., (1997) and Hood (2003).

However, more nuanced analyses in this volume using structure equation modelling (SEM) take account of the fact of the inter-correlations between the three mysticism factors

and of the influence of the partial covariances represented in regression weights in the report of introvertive and extrovertive mystical states of consciousness. This reveals that neither extrovertive nor introvertive mysticism is associated with self-rated “spirituality,” unless associated with interpretation that includes positive affect, sacredness and noetic quality. The take-away point here is simply that those who see themselves as “spiritual” are likely to have high M-Scale scores. This suggests that the M-Scale as a measure of “spirituality” has greater content validity than other measures we reviewed in Chap. 11, even though the M-Scale was created to measure mysticism, not “spirituality.” This suggests further that, as argued elsewhere (Streib & Hood, 2011; Hood et al., 2009, pp. 372–378), some versions of “spirituality” are best seen as implicit religion, especially in America where they are associated with vertical (religious and spiritual) or horizontal transcendence (spiritual but not religious) or simply with the self-identification as “religious” (Hood, 2003; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Chap. 11 this volume).

The Special Usefulness of Openness and Mysticism for Perceiving and Understanding New Developments in the Religious Field

The failure of personality (as measured by the “Big Five”) to be very useful in predicting either “religion” or “spirituality” (Chap. 12) is not surprising given that it also fails to predict fundamental personality changes following conversion (Paloutzian, Richardson, & Rambo, 1999) or to have a strong effect size in predicting deconversion (Streib et al., 2009)—which appears in line with other empirical studies indicating rather limited power for personality to predict religion (Saroglou, 2002). Thus, much of this volume is devoted to a focus upon emic study of persons, with the clear recognition that the semantics of spirituality must emerge from the interactive effect of method, context, and personal biography. As summarized in Chap. 23, the

focus upon lived experience of persons as revealed by their narrative construction of faith development in terms of individual biographies reveals a depth of understanding that etic explorations of personality as measured by the “Big Five” fail to uncover. Thus, the qualitative and emic data is a necessary complement to our more quantitative explorations.

With respect to the personality profiles of our focus groups and their deviation from established normative values (Chap. 12, Table 12.3), the main findings are that “spirituality” is strongly associated with *openness to experience* in both countries. The strong effect size for the “more spiritual than religious” and also for the “neither spiritual nor religious” in both Germany and the USA is suggesting that both the rejection of orthodoxy as associated with explicit religion and a positive secularity that denies *both* implicit and explicit religion are associated with *openness to experience*.

Thus the NEO-FFI scale *openness to experience* has emerged as clear predictor and as coordinate for “spirituality.” However, the major finding of usefulness in this study was combining *openness to experience* and mysticism to predict self-rating as “religious” or “spiritual.” Both coordinates are particularly helpful in understanding “spirituality”—and the variety of semantic versions of “spirituality,” as demonstrated for example in Figs. 14.8 and 14.9, where the ten components which are derived from factor analysis of the free entries “spirituality” are mapped on the two-dimensional space with *openness to experience* and *mysticism* as coordinates. Thus it is our conclusion that these coordinates should be considered, when the aim is understanding and mapping the variety of new developments and future migrations of individual cases in the religious field such as self-attributed “spirituality” (see e.g. Fig. 17.2).

As the SEM (Chap. 13, Fig. 13.7) demonstrates, *mysticism* positively predicts “spirituality,” while *openness* negatively predicts “religion.” In a more complex SEM model employing the *Religious Schema Scale*, its subscales are mediators for predicting self-ratings as “religious” and “spiritual;” the most significant

mediators are *xenos* for self-rated “spirituality” and *ttt* for self-rated “religion” (Chap. 13, Fig. 13.8). This compliments what is a consistent theme throughout our study: that “religion” is associated with ontological and epistemological claims that, while meaningful for some, are rejected by many of those who self-identify as “spiritual.” However, in terms of implicit or invisible religion, “spiritual” as secular or horizontal transcendence is not without its own epistemological and ontological claims.

Without repeating the mapping of the results of the subjective definitions of “spirituality” of the Religious Schema groups on the two dimensional space of *openness to experience* and *mysticism*, here we merely want to re-emphasize the conceptual usefulness of not divorcing “spirituality” from “religion.” Accepting the M-Scale as a measure of spirituality links those who are spiritual but not religious to those who are equally spiritual and religious, as a considerable body of empirical work demonstrates (Hood et al., 2009, pp. 375–379). Both groups report spiritual experiences. However, our mapping in this book considerably extends the spiritual, not religious grouping and includes the “spirituality” of the self-identified atheists and non-theists who need not be divorced from religion. While we note that individuals may not explicitly use the term “religious,” this does not mean that such persons do not identify as “spiritual” and while respecting their own choice of terms, as scholars we need not adopt lay terms for theoretical guidance that, as we have noted previously, is deeply rooted in classic and contemporary theories of implicit or invisible religion. While this does not exhaust the semantics of spirituality mapped by our two-dimensional space, it does suggest “spirituality” among the “spiritual, not religious” has ideological dimensions as a symbol system in conscious opposition to “religion” (hence, the “spiritually but not religious”). However, as we have emphasized throughout this book, self-identifications that stand in opposition to “religion” need not be divorced from “spirituality.” Mapping our results in the two-dimensional space created by *mysticism* and *openness to experience* show both

overlaps and differences in shared feelings with those who are explicitly committed to self-identification as “religious and spiritual.” To emphasize again, our point is that secularity is not in opposition to religion. Insofar as “spirituality” is seen as implicit religion, we can reasonably speak of “secular religion” or even “secular faith” (Bailety, 2010, p. 271).

Cross-Cultural Versus Cultural (Indigenous) Psychology

For the first time two areas of research, long separated are brought together. Each of these is predicated on the assumption that there may be universal patterns in which particular cases are embedded and that for many the universal follows a developmental trajectory. For faith development/religious styles research, exclusivist and limited perspectives, however meaningful and effective they may be for the believer, such as mythical-literal faith, are linked to more literal interpretation of sacred texts (measured by the RSS subscale *truth of texts and teachings*), while higher or more advanced stages/styles are associated with universalizing tendencies that allow for more inclusiveness, even if limited to exploration of other perspectives or traditions (measured by the RSS subscale *xenosophical inter-religious dialog*).

Interestingly there is a relation between faith stages/religious styles and mysticism. This relationship, as presented in Figs. 14.10 and 14.11 is not unexpected, since mysticism is perhaps the single best exemplar of a universalizing or inclusive experience. Here we need not endorse any ontological claim but simply note that the loss of self and its possible absorption into a larger self that diminishes the empirical ego leaves little room for exclusive distinctions between individuals. Hence we are not surprised to find that those who are more advanced in religious styles/on higher stages of faith are more likely to have spiritual but not religious identifications and to have reasonably high overall *mysticism* scores. Uniting what we might call two

universalizing traditions, one faith development and the other mysticism, seems to present additional reasons for accepting that those who are spiritual but not religious remain within the religious field as we have defined it, even when their own spirituality distances itself from organized religion in church and sect.

Of course, we have two cautionary notes with respect to criticism that apply to both faith development research and mysticism—each addressed to the issue of cross-cultural generalizations that some purely cultural psychologists find suspect. Here we will focus upon how the criticism has been directly applied to mysticism using Hood’s measure as we have been explicitly able to respond to criticism that tends to blur the distinction between indigenous cultural psychologies and cross-cultural psychologies. Our research is an example of the latter and cannot be challenged by criticism that applies to the former.

In a specific criticism of Hood, Belzen, a cultural psychologist of religion, noted that the apparent success of Hood’s M-Scale cross-culturally was essentially a magician’s trick. Hood’s scale is derived from Stace’s (1960) phenomenological universal core theory of mysticism. However, as Belzen notes:

He [Hood] designed an instrument to answer the question, tested it out, and lo and behold, a common core shows up – *but* the instrument was based on a conceptualization of mysticism, by Stace (1960), that *presupposes* a common core. So: Hood got a common core out of the empiricist’s hat (the M-scale), so to speak, but only after he put it (Stace’s theory of a common core) in there before (Belzen, 2010 pp. 217–218, emphasis in original).

Here Belzen’s basic criticism of Hood’s study of mysticism is the general criticism he applies to all cross-cultural studies of religion. The basic critique is that, ironically, they are not cultural or, if so, hegemonic. We have simply put mysticism along-side religion to illustrate the generality of Belzen’s (2010, pp. 50–51) critique:

... a cultural psychology approach takes into account the specific forms of life (Wittgenstein) in which subjects are involved. I must grant that in so doing the results obtained are not valid for every person and/or group in every religion [mystical

tradition], but it is exactly this sort of aspiration that should be abolished from psychology (not just in psychology of religion!) the results obtained are not valid for every person and/or group in every religion [mystical tradition]. As there is no such thing as religion [mysticism] – in – general, but only specific forms of life going by the label “religion,” [“mysticism”] and ...the psychology of religion [mysticism] should try to detect how a specific religious form of life constitutes, involves and regulates the psychic functioning of its adherents.

Belzen’s specific critique of universalist tendencies in light of his general criticism of cross-cultural psychology of religion echoes Parsons who worries that contemporary psychoanalysts sympathetic not to religion but to mysticism may in fact harbor a more “insidious form of Orientalism” (Parsons, 1999, p. 131) than classical Freudian analysts who view all mysticism as pathological from what can be viewed as a hegemonic Western individualist tradition (Hood, 1976).

We think such criticism is wane in the face of the reality of how both mysticism and faith development/religious styles researchers have developed. Neither was simply created out of thin air or ad hoc maneuvering. The universalizing claims of each are rooted first in inductive generalizations from cross-cultural consideration of either faith or mysticism and both then have a long tradition of refinements in their measures. For instance, we need not belabor the point that the M-Scale items were in fact derived from Stace’s universal core thesis, by a “Catholicity of evidence” (1960, p. 38). Stace culled descriptions of mystical experiences from the three Abrahamic faiths as well as various Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist mystical traditions. He sought texts that were expression of mystical experience and from these he created his universal core. Thus, Belzen is inaccurate when he claims that items were presupposed. Like James and others, Stace simply recognized a commonality of self-loss common across numerous traditions, including among atheists unattached to any tradition. Hood then simply took Stace’s common core and created a scale in which individuals can indicate the extent to which they have had an experience

associated with eight different core elements or facets Stace identified. Stace’s work expanded upon Otto’s (1926/1932) mysticism of introspection and of unifying vision. The former Stace identified as introvertive mysticism, the latter as extrovertive mysticism. Introvertive mysticism is a unitary experience of pure consciousness that transcends both space and time. In the extrovertive mysticism, the unity includes a sense of the inner subjectivity that characterizes the unity perceived amid diversity. Clustered to the experience of unity are less central core criteria or facets of sacredness, positive affect, ineffability, and a noetic sense. We anticipate and empirical studies confirm that these facets can vary within a context of family resemblances (Stace, 1960 pp. 45–47). For instance, among Israeli Jews (Lazar & Kravetz, 2005) and Iranian Muslims (Hood et al., 2001) ineffability is linked with interpretation while among American Christians (Hood & Williamson, 2000; Hood et al., 2001) ineffability is linked with introvertive mysticism. The shifting of facets is expected within Wittgenstein’s notion of family resemblances, a position some have challenged (King, 1988) but one that we accept for both conceptual (Hood & Williamson, 2000) and empirical reasons (Chen et al., 2012).

The use of the M-Scale cross-culturally has been noted above. Our use of the M-Scale is not to engage in a positivist methodology suggesting that experiences are empirically verified as identical in other than a measurement identification that demands further exploration. Consider our response to Belzen’s critique (Hood, 2010): (1) Stace did *not* presuppose a common core. He claimed to identify it empirically from a Catholicity of cross-culturally derived phenomenological descriptions of mystical experiences; hence Stace used the term ‘universal core’; (2) Hood created a scale that reliably measures Stace’s ‘universal core’ and referred to it empirically as a ‘common core’; (3) in a variety of cultures individuals are presented with Belzen’s “hat” containing Hood’s items assessing Hood’s operationalization of Stace’s ‘universal core.’ If the items were adequately indicative of

indigenous mystical traditions they should be identifiable; (4) the 32 items measuring the common core are “pulled out of the hat” *not* by Hood but by individuals in the various cultures; (5) the pattern or clustering of these items are consistent across cultures. This is cross-cultural psychology and firmly grounds the research reported in this book on a legitimate comparative basis, both between Germany and the USA and with our specific focus groups in each country. Similar defenses of stages or styles of faith can be made and have been through this text.

Finally, the concern that we do not over-generalize from our etic data has been repeatedly noted and is balanced by our emic data. Many of the psychological correlates are illuminated by specific case studies chosen precisely to illustrate the “flesh and blood” and “lived” specific forms of life. Here not only faith development/religious styles, but personal narratives and biographical trajectories of participants placed within the context of our etic data reveal in ways that cannot be easily summarized here that neither faith development research nor the empirical study of mysticism fail to acknowledge the reality of lived religion, implicit or explicit.

If there is a take-away conclusion from the massive amount of data, both qualitative and quantitative, in both our previous deconversion text and this text, it is that, as we noted in Chap. 24, we can say little directly about true developmental changes as our data remains cross-sectional. Still, the data are suggestive. For instance, it appears that deconverts occupy a significant and increasing amount of space in the religious field, perhaps more so in America than Germany. Furthermore, many of these, at least in the USA, self-identify as “more spiritual than religious,” but with relative small tendencies to claim atheism. It is this persona who also appears to be mystical and at higher levels of faith development, and in our own theoretical framing, exploring the multiple options available to those whose religion remains implicit. To explore these possibilities in a truly developmental study, using both etic and emic data is our next study, already underway, and will complete the trilogy that began with our book on deconversion.

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Appendix A

Tables and Figures

See Tables [A.1](#), [A.2](#), [A.3](#), [A.4](#) and [A.5](#).

See Figs. [A.1](#), [A.2](#), [A.3](#), [A.4](#), [A.5](#), [A.6](#), [A.7](#), [A.8](#), [A.9](#), [A.10](#), [A.11](#), [A.12](#), [A.13](#), [A.14](#), [A.15](#), [A.16](#), [A.17](#), [A.18](#), [A.19](#), [A.20](#), [A.21](#), [A.22](#), [A.23](#), [A.24](#), [A.25](#), [A.26](#), [A.27](#) and [A.28](#).

Table A.1 Means and Reliabilities for all Scales Used in the Study

	US sample (<i>N</i> = 1,113)		German sample (<i>N</i> = 773)		Total sample (<i>N</i> = 1,886)	
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	α	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	α	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	α
<i>Neuroticism (NEO-FFI)</i>	20.8 (8.6)	.88	18.8 (8.3)	.88	20.0 (8.5)	.88
<i>Extraversion (NEO-FFI)</i>	28.9 (6.9)	.82	27.6 (6.5)	.80	28.3 (6.7)	.81
<i>Openness to exp. (NEO-FFI)</i>	31.7 (6.9)	.81	35.2 (5.5)	.70	33.1 (6.6)	.77
<i>Agreeableness (NEO-FFI)</i>	31.3 (6.1)	.78	33.3 (5.6)	.76	32.4 (6.0)	.77
<i>Conscientiousn. (NEO-FFI)</i>	32.2 (7.1)	.86	31.0 (6.4)	.81	31.7 (6.9)	.84
<i>Introvertive mystic. (M-scale)</i>	41.1 (11.2)	.89	42.5 (13.4)	.92	41.7 (12.1)	.90
<i>Extrovertive mystic. (M-scale)</i>	26.1 (8.3)	.89	27.3 (9.6)	.92	26.6 (8.9)	.90
<i>Interpretation (M-scale)</i>	45.2 (9.8)	.87	44.4 (11.5)	.90	44.9 (10.5)	.89
<i>Mysticism (total) (M-scale)</i>	112.4 (26.3)	.95	114.2 (31.8)	.96	113.2 (28.7)	.95
<i>Autonomy (Ryff scale)</i>	26.5 (4.1)	.74	25.7 (3.9)	.68	26.1 (4.0)	.69
<i>Environmental mastery (Ryff)</i>	24.4 (4.6)	.77	25.0 (4.7)	.81	24.6 (4.7)	.79
<i>Personal growth (Ryff scale)</i>	28.9 (3.9)	.78	29.9 (3.2)	.65	29.3 (3.7)	.74
<i>Positive relations (Ryff scale)</i>	27.7 (4.6)	.80	27.2 (4.2)	.76	27.5 (4.4)	.78
<i>Purpose in life (Ryff scale)</i>	26.8 (4.4)	.77	26.0 (4.1)	.67	26.5 (4.3)	.73
<i>Self-acceptance (Ryff scale)</i>	25.6 (4.7)	.84	26.5 (4.6)	.85	26.0 (4.7)	.84
<i>Generativity (LGS)</i>	59.7 (8.6)	.86	56.4 (8.2)	.83	58.4 (8.7)	.85
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	75.1 (21.9)	.88	69.2 (20.9)	.85	72.7 (21.7)	.87
<i>Truth of texts & teach. (RSS)</i>	14.2 (6.5)	.92	10.8 (5.3)	.87	12.8 (6.2)	.91
<i>Fairness, tolerance ... (RSS)</i>	21.4 (3.1)	.77	22.0 (2.5)	.57	21.7 (2.9)	.71
<i>Xenosophia/inter-relig. (RSS)</i>	17.4 (4.2)	.73	18.1 (4.2)	.71	17.6 (4.2)	.72

Table A.2 Means of the Scales for the Six Focus Groups in the US Subsample

US sample	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	F	Part. η^2
N 1110	70	302	540	26	107	65		
<i>Neuroticism (NEO-FFI)</i>	22.1 (7.6)	20.3 (8.1)	20.6 (8.6)	20.8 (10.2)	21.5 (9.5)	21.1 (9.6)	0.542	.002
<i>Extraversion (NEO-FFI)</i>	28.5 (6.9)	29.6 (6.4)	29.4 (6.7)	27.9 (6.8)	27.1 (7.7)	25.2 (7.2)	6.346**	.028
<i>Openness to experience (NEO-FFI)</i>	26.0 (5.4)	28.5 (6.2)	33.3 (6.6)	38.7 (4.9)	32.7 (6.4)	35.4 (5.6)	42.592**	.162
<i>Agreeableness (NEO-FFI)</i>	30.2 (6.3)	32.8 (5.9)	32.3 (6.1)	30.6 (4.8)	29.4 (6.3)	29.9 (5.5)	5.869**	.026
<i>Conscientiousness (NEO-FFI)</i>	32.0 (6.9)	33.1 (6.9)	32.3 (7.3)	30.7 (6.7)	31.5 (6.9)	29.8 (7.4)	2.559*	.011
<i>Introverted mysti-cism (M-Scale)</i>	36.8 (9.0)	41.9 (9.3)	44.1 (10.2)	45.7 (9.6)	32.3 (11.1)	29.6 (13.4)	45.395**	.171
<i>Extroverted mysti-cism (M-Scale)</i>	23.0 (7.1)	25.8 (7.4)	28.4 (7.8)	28.3 (8.4)	21.1 (8.0)	19.1 (9.5)	29.855**	.120
<i>Interpretation (M-Scale)</i>	43.3 (7.7)	47.9 (8.0)	47.4 (8.7)	43.1 (7.5)	35.9 (9.7)	32.5 (9.7)	64.120**	.226
<i>Mysticism (total) (M-Scale)</i>	103.1 (20.0)	115.7 (21.0)	119.9 (23.9)	117.1 (22.4)	89.2 (25.7)	81.2 (30.0)	56.035**	.203
<i>Autonomy (Ryff Scale)</i>	24.6 (3.7)	25.9 (4.0)	26.8 (4.1)	27.5 (3.8)	26.9 (4.0)	27.6 (4.5)	6.642**	.029
<i>Environmental mastery (Ryff Scale)</i>	23.8 (5.1)	24.6 (4.3)	24.5 (4.6)	24.4 (4.5)	23.8 (5.2)	24.0 (4.6)	0.477	.002
<i>Personal growth (Ryff Scale)</i>	26.7 (4.0)	28.3 (3.9)	29.4 (3.7)	30.2 (3.3)	28.9 (3.9)	28.7 (4.2)	8.015**	.035
<i>Positive relations (Ryff Scale)</i>	26.3 (5.0)	28.3 (4.2)	27.9 (4.4)	28.0 (4.4)	26.1 (5.2)	26.3 (4.9)	4.901**	.022
<i>Purpose in life (Ryff Scale)</i>	26.4 (3.9)	27.3 (4.2)	26.8 (4.5)	25.3 (4.1)	26.2 (4.8)	25.5 (4.6)	2.752*	.012
<i>Self-acceptance (Ryff Scale)</i>	24.6 (4.7)	25.8 (4.5)	25.9 (4.7)	24.9 (4.2)	25.2 (5.4)	25.2 (5.0)	1.290	.006
<i>Generativity (LGS)</i>	57.6 (8.0)	60.3 (8.2)	60.6 (8.5)	59.3 (8.5)	57.2 (9.5)	56.2 (9.6)	5.993**	.027
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	86.1 (14.2)	89.7 (12.6)	75.1 (20.8)	49.0 (12.0)	50.7 (14.5)	46.5 (8.0)	133.497**	.378
<i>Truth of texts and teachings (RSS)</i>	17.9 (4.2)	19.1 (4.3)	13.4 (5.9)	7.6 (4.2)	7.9 (3.9)	6.5 (2.9)	135.303**	.381
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rat. choice (RSS)</i>	20.0 (3.4)	21.0 (3.1)	21.8 (3.0)	22.3 (2.5)	21.2 (3.5)	21.9 (2.5)	5.775**	.026
<i>Xenosophia/inter-relig. dialog (RSS)</i>	15.4 (3.6)	16.7 (4.5)	18.7 (3.9)	16.2 (2.1)	16.3 (3.6)	13.7 (3.5)	28.713**	.115

Note Standard deviations in brackets;

*Significant at the $p < .5$ level; **Significant at the $p < .001$ level;

Variables for sex, age, cultural capital and per-capita income have been controlled in the analyses; *FG1* the “more religious than spiritual” focus group; *FG2* the “equally religious and spiritual” focus group; *FG3* the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; *FG4* the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group; *FG5* the “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; *FG6* the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” focus group

Table A.3 Means of the Scales for the Six Focus Groups in the German Subsample

German sample	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	F	Part. η ²
N 763	75	140	337	40	94	77		
<i>Neuroticism (NEO-FFI)</i>	19.4 (8.1)	19.3 (8.7)	19.1 (8.4)	18.9 (8.8)	18.6 (8.0)	16.7 (7.2)	1.373	.009
<i>Extraversion (NEO-FFI)</i>	28.1 (6.0)	28.6 (6.5)	27.6 (6.4)	26.5 (6.2)	27.1 (6.6)	26.2 (6.8)	1.556	.010
<i>Openness to experience (NEO-FFI)</i>	31.4 (5.5)	34.4 (5.9)	35.9 (5.1)	35.9 (5.6)	35.6 (5.2)	36.5 (4.7)	10.198**	.063
<i>Agreeableness (NEO-FFI)</i>	34.6 (5.0)	34.3 (5.9)	33.8 (5.6)	31.9 (5.2)	31.7 (5.3)	30.6 (5.4)	4.849**	.031
<i>Conscientiousness (NEO-FFI)</i>	32.0 (6.1)	32.3 (6.2)	30.5 (6.3)	29.2 (6.0)	30.8 (6.2)	30.7 (7.5)	2.127*	.014
<i>Introverted mysticism (M-Scale)</i>	38.1 (10.9)	47.4 (10.2)	47.7 (10.9)	44.1 (10.8)	33.5 (13.5)	25.8 (10.4)	61.395**	.289
<i>Extroverted mysticism (M-Scale)</i>	24.0 (8.0)	31.5 (7.2)	31.3 (7.9)	27.4 (7.9)	19.8 (8.2)	15.0 (6.2)	71.929**	.323
<i>Interpretation (M-Scale)</i>	44.1 (9.6)	50.4 (7.9)	48.7 (9.0)	41.1 (11.7)	35.3 (10.7)	28.9 (7.5)	77.319**	.339
<i>Mysticism (total) (M-Scale)</i>	106.3 (24.6)	129.3 (22.8)	127.8 (24.9)	112.6 (27.1)	88.7 (28.3)	69.7 (21.2)	88.789**	.366
<i>Autonomy (Ryff Scale)</i>	24.6 (3.9)	25.7 (3.7)	25.7 (4.0)	25.6 (3.8)	25.6 (3.9)	26.5 (3.3)	2.533*	.017
<i>Environmental mastery (Ryff Scale)</i>	25.1 (4.5)	25.1 (4.8)	24.8 (4.6)	25.3 (5.3)	24.9 (4.6)	25.5 (4.4)	0.866	.006
<i>Personal growth (Ryff Scale)</i>	28.9 (3.2)	29.7 (3.2)	30.4 (3.4)	29.5 (3.1)	29.5 (3.3)	29.3 (2.6)	3.962*	.026
<i>Positive relations (Ryff Scale)</i>	27.4 (4.4)	27.8 (4.2)	27.5 (4.3)	27.0 (3.7)	26.2 (3.8)	26.0 (4.3)	1.842	.012
<i>Purpose in life (Ryff Scale)</i>	27.4 (3.7)	26.9 (4.1)	25.8 (4.2)	24.9 (4.1)	25.8 (4.1)	25.5 (3.9)	3.369*	.022
<i>Self-acceptance (Ryff Scale)</i>	26.0 (4.3)	26.8 (4.5)	26.9 (4.6)	26.4 (4.3)	25.6 (4.9)	26.2 (4.1)	1.329	.009
<i>Generativity (LGS)</i>	56.1 (7.6)	58.3 (8.4)	56.8 (8.4)	53.4 (7.5)	55.3 (8.4)	54.8 (7.6)	3.656*	.024
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	81.2 (16.0)	81.5 (17.0)	74.3 (19.1)	51.8 (8.8)	50.9 (14.1)	47.2 (6.8)	72.950**	.326
<i>Truth of texts and teachings (RSS)</i>	16.6 (4.5)	14.4 (4.7)	10.4 (4.4)	7.8 (3.2)	7.0 (4.0)	5.9 (2.0)	77.810**	.341
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rat. Choice (RSS)</i>	22.5 (2.0)	22.4 (2.2)	21.5 (2.7)	22.2 (2.3)	22.3 (2.0)	22.0 (2.0)	3.721**	.024
<i>Xenosophia/inter-relig. dialog (RSS)</i>	16.8 (4.2)	19.7 (3.9)	19.7 (3.6)	17.4 (3.2)	15.1 (3.6)	13.4 (4.3)	53.282**	.261

Note Standard deviations in brackets;

*Significant at the $p < .5$ level; **significant at the $p < .001$ level;

Variables for sex, age, cultural capital and per-capita income have been controlled in the analyses; *FG1* the “more religious than spiritual” focus group; *FG2* the “equally religious and spiritual” focus group; *FG3* the “more spiritual than religious, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; *FG4* the “more spiritual than religious atheists/non-theists” focus group; *FG5* the “neither religious nor spiritual, not atheist/non-theist” focus group; *FG6* the “neither religious nor spiritual atheists/non-theists” focus group

Table A.4 Correlations Between Most Important Scales and Self-Rated “Religion,” Self-Rated “Spirituality” and “Atheist/Non-Theist” Self-Identifications

	US sample			German sample		
	Rel	Spir	Ant	Rel	Spir	Ant
<i>Neuroticism (NEO-FFI)</i>	.01	-.09**	.01	.03	-.00	-.07
<i>Extraversion (NEO-FFI)</i>	.13**	.18**	-.12**	.12**	.07	-.08*
<i>Openness to experience (NEO-FFI)</i>	-.40**	-.03	.19**	-.24**	-.00	.08*
<i>Agreeableness (NEO-FFI)</i>	.11**	.21**	-.08**	.19**	.24**	-.17**
<i>Conscientiousness (NEO-FFI)</i>	.10**	.12**	-.09**	.14**	.05	-.04
<i>Introvertive mysticism (M-Scale)</i>	.10**	.43**	-.18**	.16**	.58**	-.34**
<i>Extrovertive mysticism (M-Scale)</i>	.03	.34**	-.15**	.18**	.61**	-.36**
<i>Interpretation (M-Scale)</i>	.28**	.54**	-.29**	.33**	.66**	-.42**
<i>Mysticism (total) (M-Scale)</i>	.16**	.49**	-.23**	.24**	.66**	-.40**
<i>Autonomy (Ryff Scale)</i>	-.14**	.05	.07*	-.06	.07	.05
<i>Environmental mastery (Ryff Scale)</i>	.02	.10**	-.02	.02	.01	.04
<i>Personal growth (Ryff Scale)</i>	-.15**	.13**	.02	-.04	.15**	-.07*
<i>Positive relations (Ryff Scale)</i>	.08*	.18**	-.06	.11**	.13**	-.09**
<i>Purpose in life (Ryff Scale)</i>	.08**	.13**	-.09**	.19**	.07	-.09*
<i>Self-acceptance (Ryff Scale)</i>	-.01	.10**	-.03	.05	.12**	-.03
<i>Generativity (LGS)</i>	.08*	.22**	-.09**	.12**	.15**	-.13**
<i>Attitudes toward God (ATGS)</i>	.64**	.51**	-.38**	.48**	.53**	-.43**
<i>Truth of texts and teachings (RSS)</i>	.72**	.45**	-.33**	.66**	.36**	-.32**
<i>Fairness, tolerance and rat. Choice (RSS)</i>	-.10**	.09**	.05	.10**	-.04	.02
<i>Xenosophia/inter-religious dialog (RSS)</i>	-.05	.24**	-.20**	.18**	.53**	-.33**
<i>Faith development interview rating^a</i>	-.35**	-.15	.08	-.21	.12	.15
<i>IAT effect for religion^b</i>	.54**	.45**	-.47**	.51**	.37**	-.16
<i>IAT effect for spirituality^b</i>	.45**	.52**	-.52**	.65**	.54**	-.28

Note *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed); Rel self-rating as “religious,” Spir self-rating as “spiritual,” Ant self-identification as “atheist” or “non-theist;”
^an_{USA} = 54, n_{GER} = 47; ^bn_{USA} = 67, n_{GER} = 36

Table A.5 Correlations of the Three RSS Subscales and With Most Important Scales and Single Items

	US sample			German sample		
	<i>ttr</i>	<i>ftr</i>	<i>Xenos</i>	<i>ttr</i>	<i>ftr</i>	<i>Xenos</i>
<i>ttr</i>	1			1		
<i>ftr</i>	-.06*	1		.07	1	
<i>Xenos</i>	-.13**	.42**	1	.18**	.23**	1
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-.04	-.12**	.03	.02	-.09*	.00
<i>Extraversion</i>	.16**	.19**	.12**	.12**	.20**	.12**
<i>Openness</i>	-.47**	.37**	.32**	-.32**	.21**	.17**
<i>Agreeableness</i>	.15**	.32**	.10**	.15**	.25**	.26**
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	.12**	.26**	.02	.11**	.25**	.10**
<i>Introvertive mysticism</i>	.11**	.11**	.32**	.23**	-.01	.44**
<i>Extrovertive mysticism</i>	-.01	.10**	.40**	.23**	.01	.52**
<i>Interpretation</i>	.35**	.18**	.23**	.43**	-.01	.43**
<i>M-Scale total</i>	.18**	.15**	.35**	.32**	-.01	.50**
<i>Autonomy</i>	-.10**	.27**	.03	-.05	.04	-.02
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	.03	.18**	.03	.01	.19**	.04
<i>Personal growth</i>	-.12**	.51**	.26**	-.07	.24**	.29**
<i>Positive relations</i>	.12**	.32**	.09**	.09*	.23**	.15**
<i>Purpose in life</i>	.13**	.30**	.03	.20**	.24**	.08*
<i>Self-acceptance</i>	-.01	.21**	.06	.04	.13**	.09*
<i>Generativity</i>	.05	.24**	.18**	.13**	.20**	.16**
<i>Attitudes toward God</i>	.71**	-.04	-.01	.51**	.00	.32**
Self-rating as “religious”	.72**	-.10**	-.05	.66**	.10**	.18**
Self-rating as “spiritual”	.45**	.09**	.24**	.36**	-.04	.53**
Self-identification as “atheist/non-theist”	-.33**	.05	-.20**	-.32**	.02	-.33**
<i>Faith development interview rating</i> ^a	-.35**	.05	.16	-.26	.17	.18
<i>IAT effect for religion</i> ^b	.51**	-.21	.16	.60**	-.05	.37*
<i>IAT effect for spirituality</i> ^b	.51**	-.27*	.09	.69**	-.12	.45**

Note *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed); **correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed);

^a $n_{USA} = 54, n_{GER} = 48$; ^b $n_{USA} = 67, n_{GER} = 37$

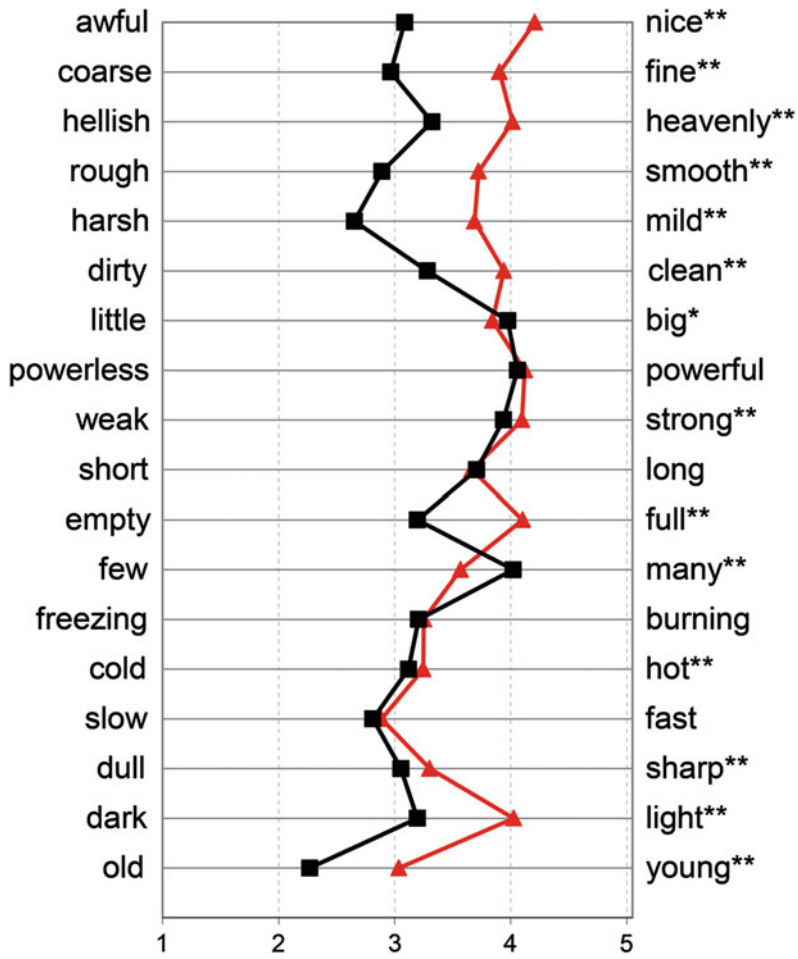


Fig. A.1 Ratings of all Respondents in the US Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 1,082$)

Note * = Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level;
 ** = Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

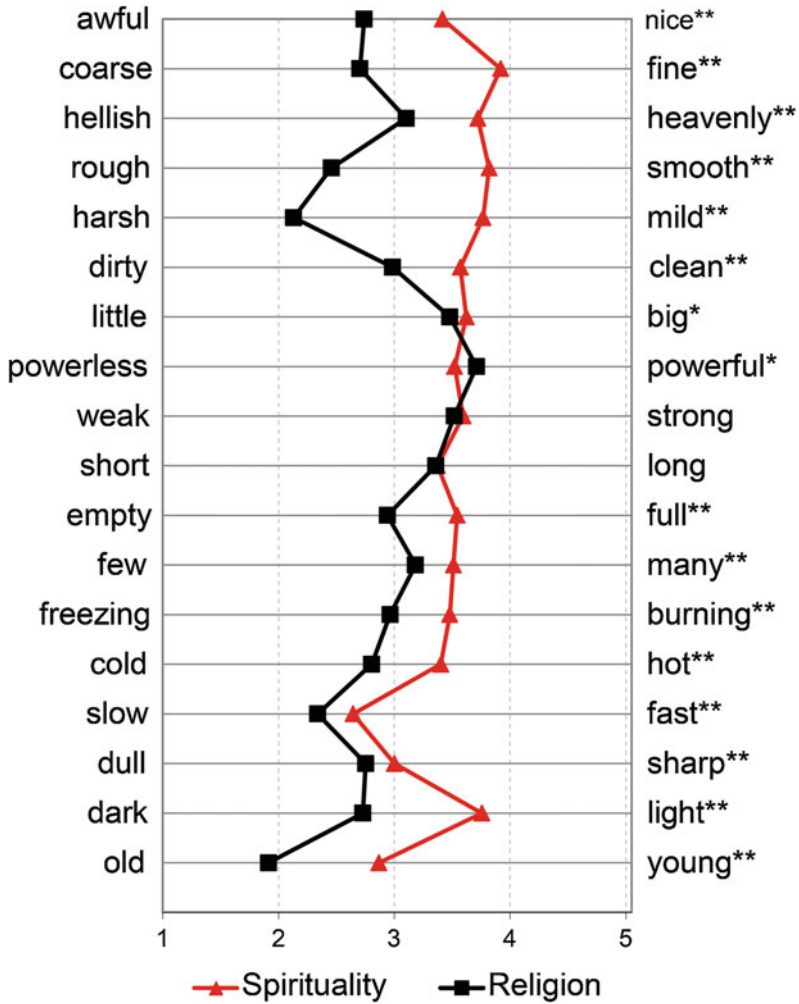


Fig. A.2 Ratings of all Respondents in German Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 703$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

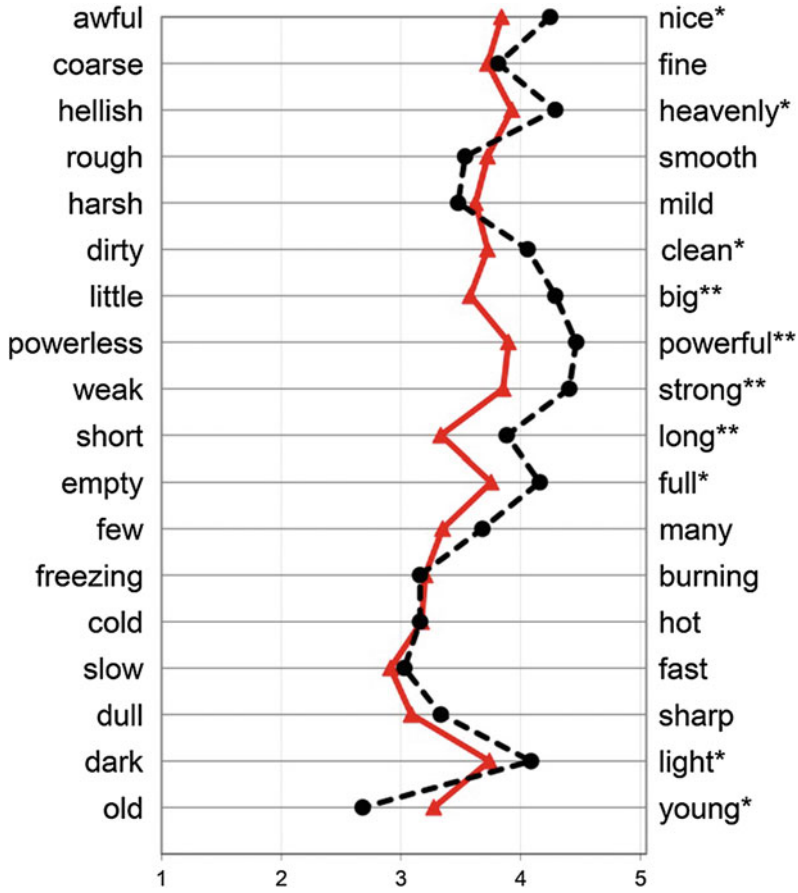


Fig. A.3 Ratings of “More Religious than Spiritual” (FG1) Respondents in the US Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 69$)

Note *difference between the means for “religion” and “spirituality” is significant on the $p < .05$ level; **significant on the $p < .001$ level

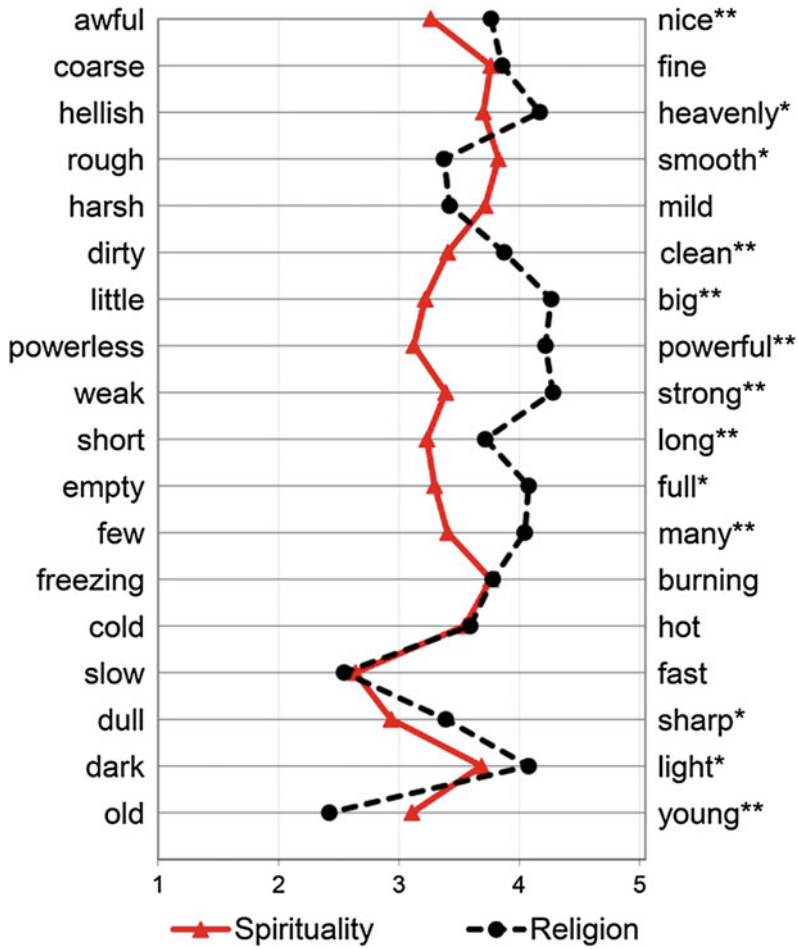


Fig. A.4 Ratings of “More Religious than Spiritual” (FG1) Respondents in German Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 64$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

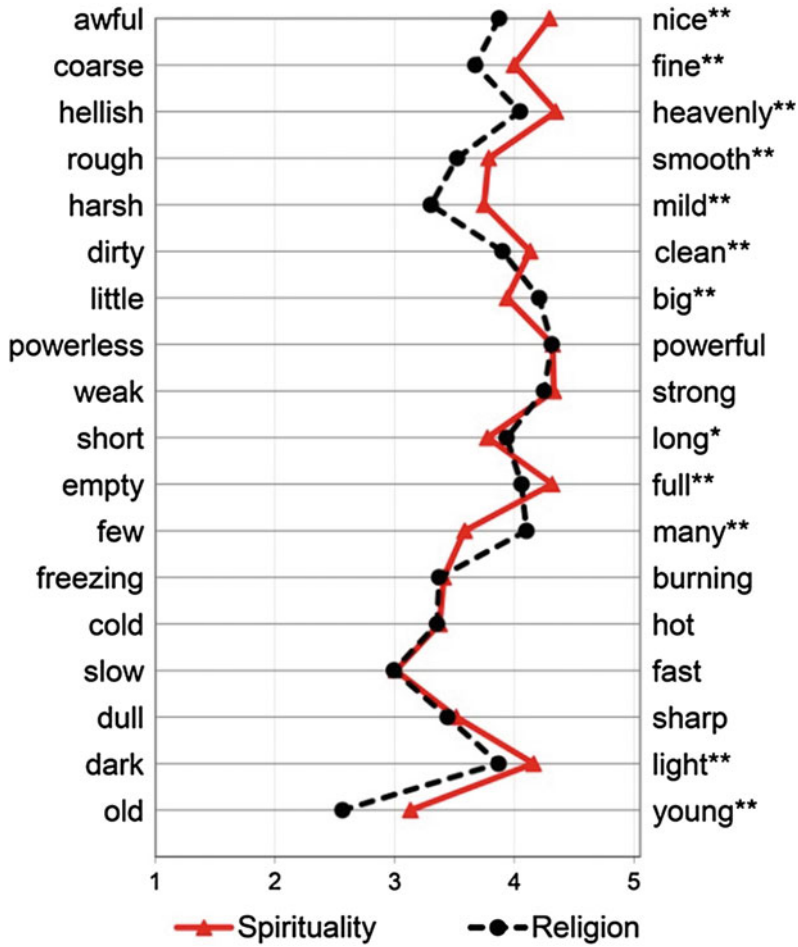


Fig. A.5 Ratings of “Equally Religious and Spiritual” (FG2) Respondents in the US Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 288$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

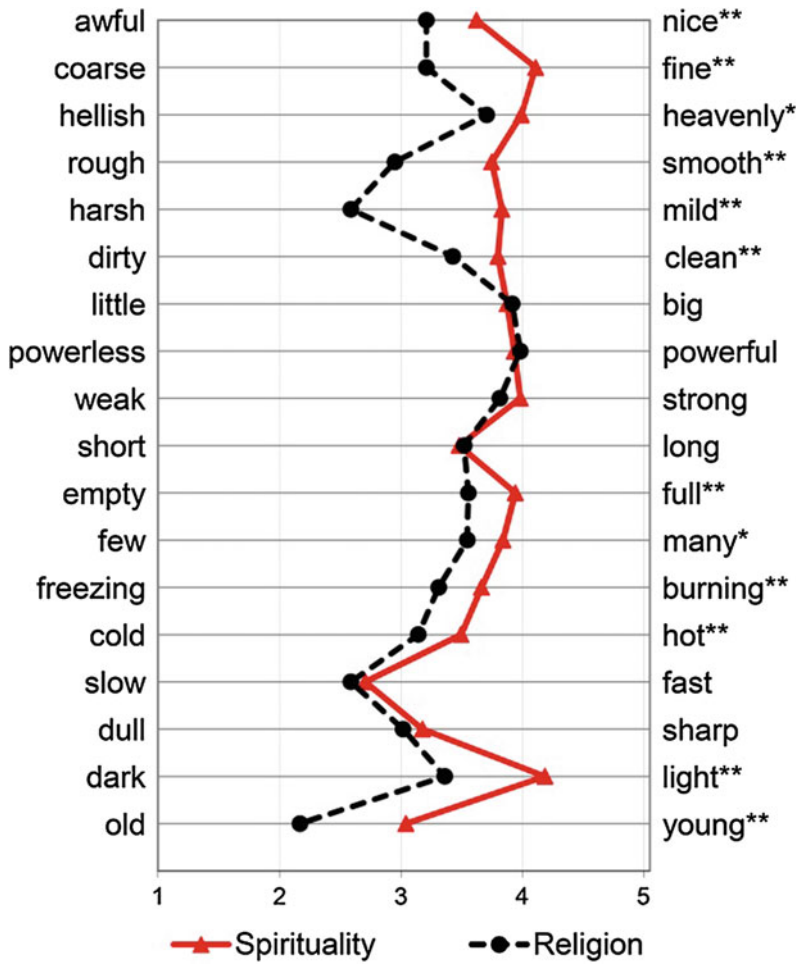


Fig. A.6 Ratings of “Equally Religious and Spiritual” (FG2) Respondents in German Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 119$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

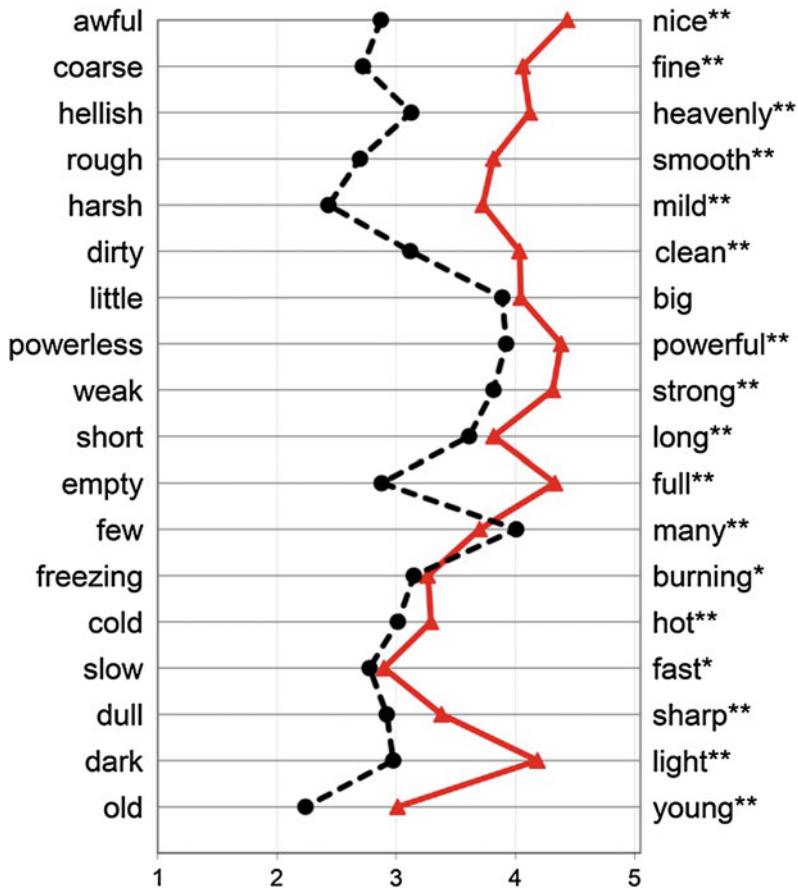


Fig. A.7 Ratings of “More Spiritual than Religious, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG3) Respondents in the US Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 523$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

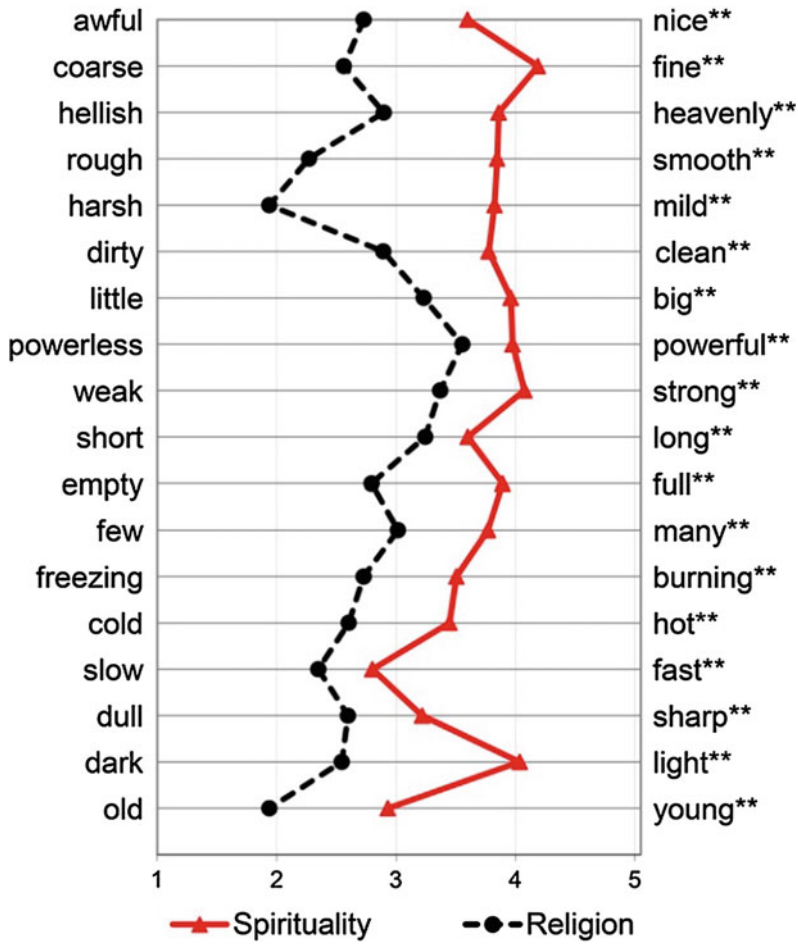


Fig. A.8 Ratings of “More Spiritual than Religious, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG3) Respondents in German Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 308$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level



Fig. A.9 Ratings of “More Spiritual than Religious Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG4) Respondents in the US Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 25$)

Note * = Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; ** = Significant on the $p < .001$ Level



Fig. A.10 Ratings of “More Spiritual than Religious Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG4) Respondents in German Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 38$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

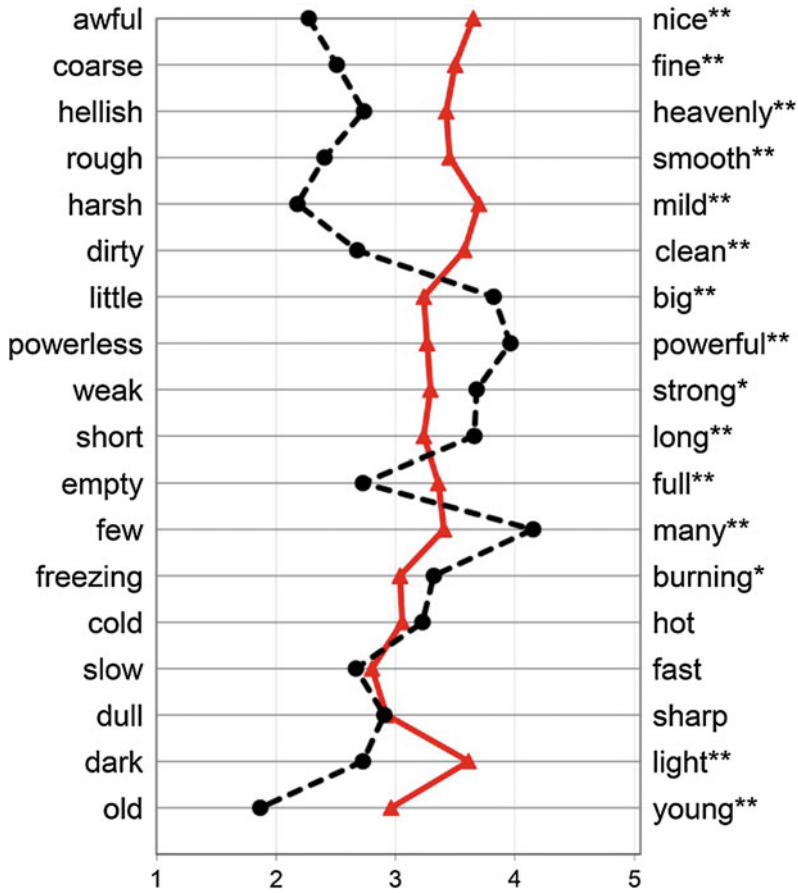


Fig. A.11 Ratings of “Neither Religious nor Spiritual, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG5) Respondents in the US Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 106$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

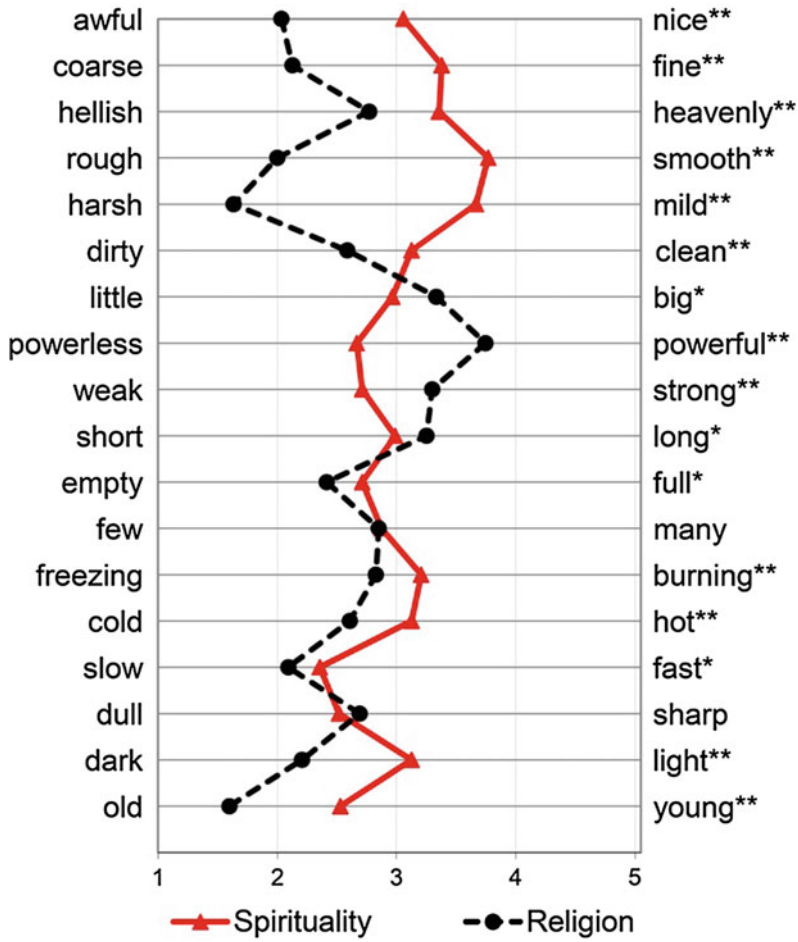


Fig. A.12 Ratings of “Neither Religious nor Spiritual, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG5) Respondents in German Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 87$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level



Fig. A.13 Ratings of “Neither Religious nor Spiritual Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG6) Respondents in the US Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 62$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

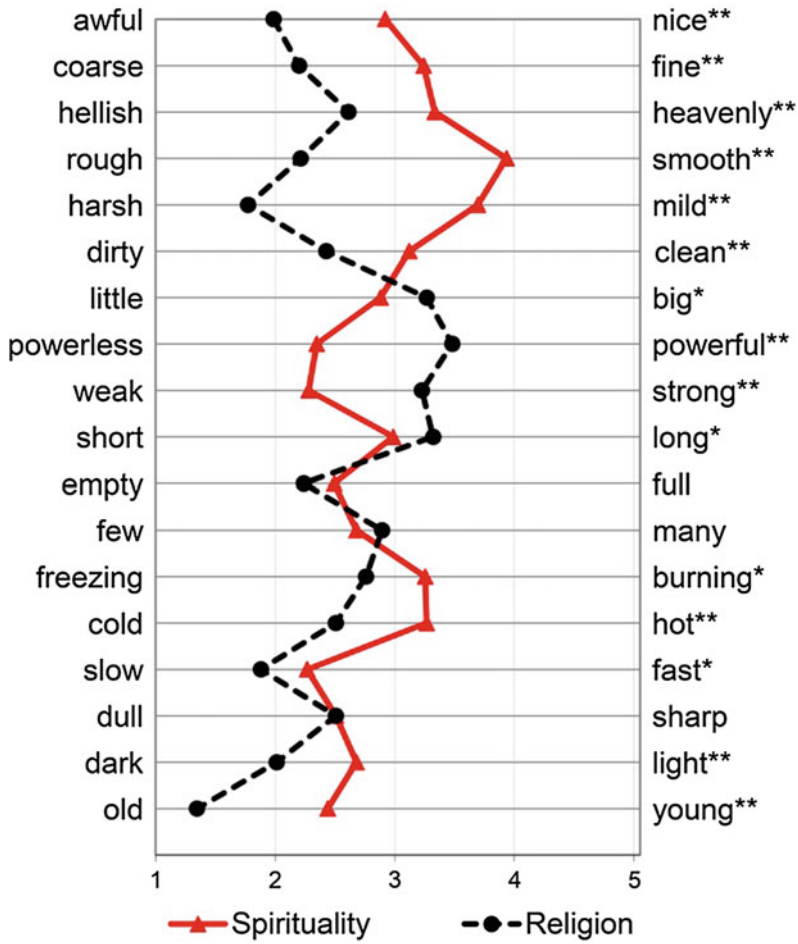


Fig. A.14 Ratings of “Neither Religious nor Spiritual Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG6) Respondents in German Sample on the Osgood Semantic Differential ($n = 75$)

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

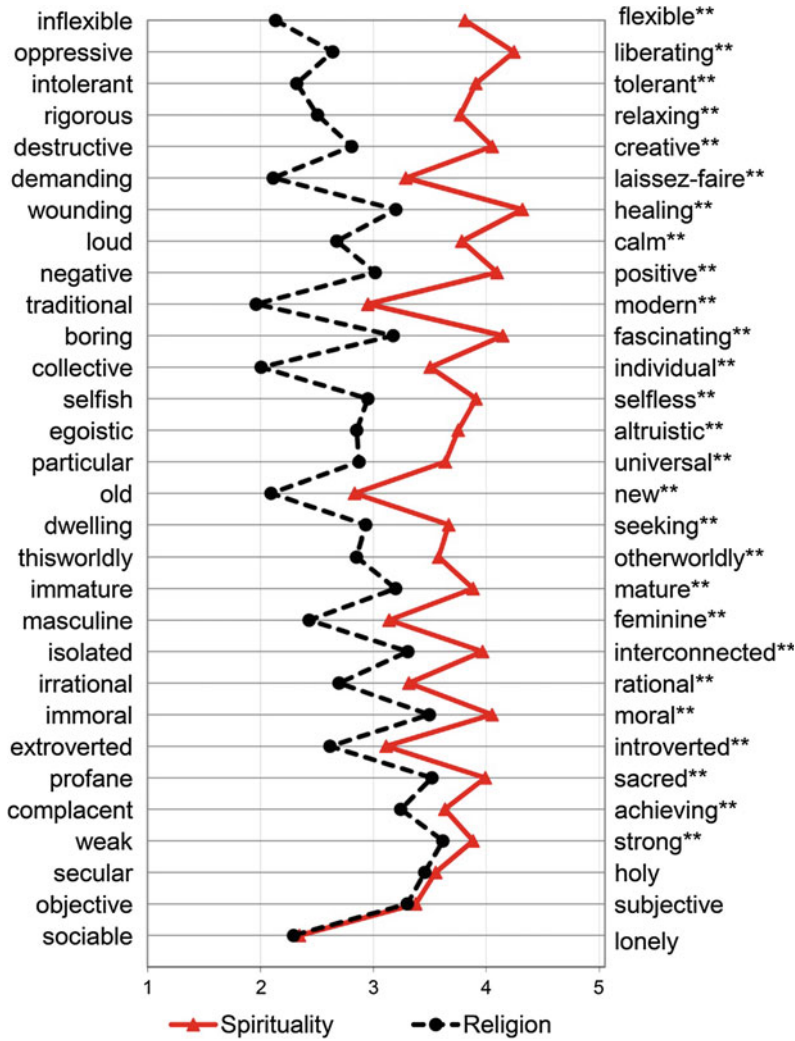


Fig. A.15 Ratings of all Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 1,082$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

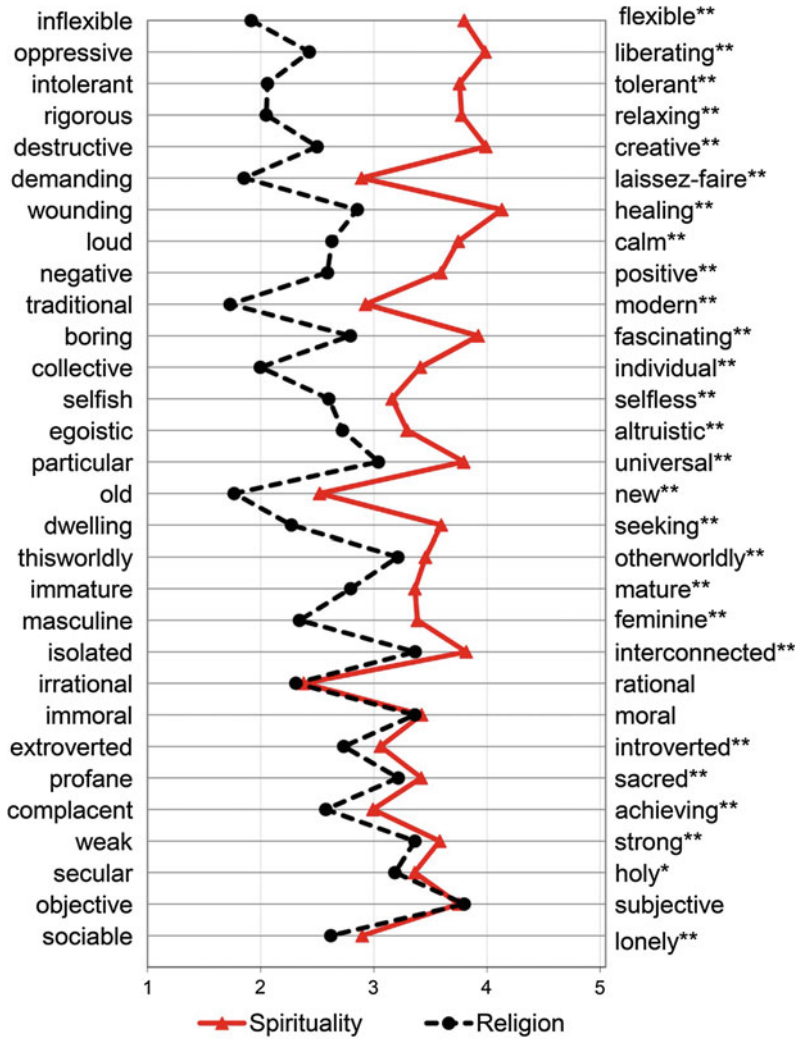


Fig. A.16 Ratings of all Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 703$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential
Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

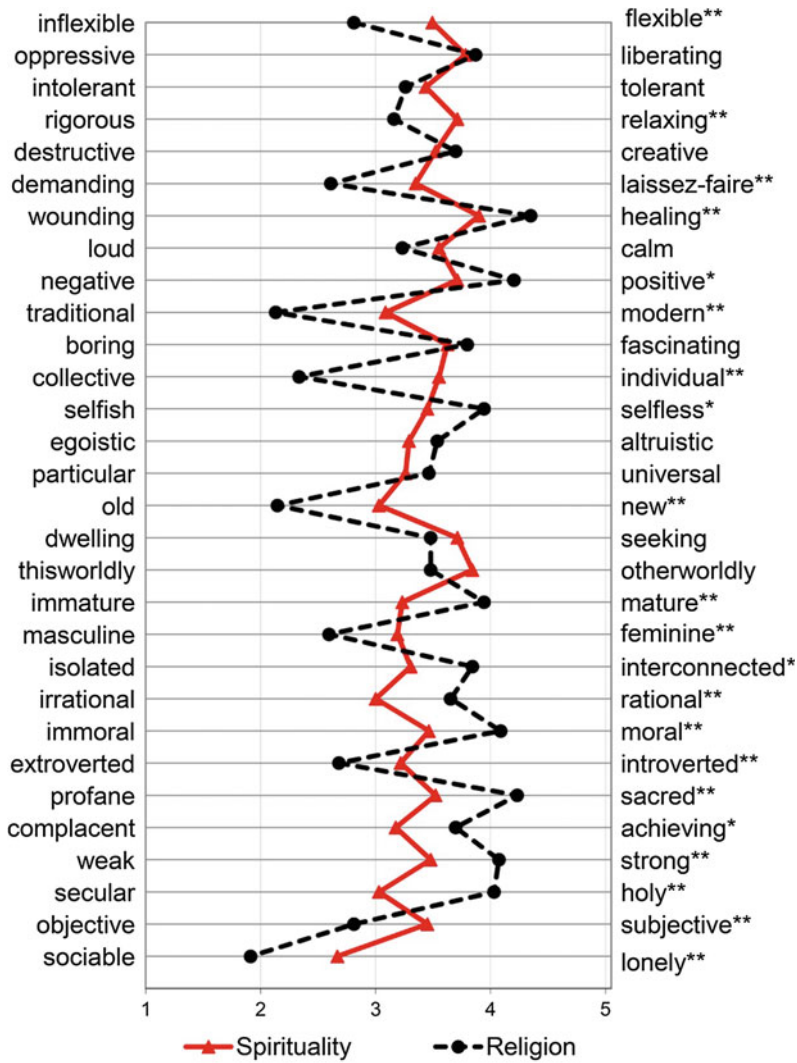


Fig. A.17 Ratings of the “More Religious than Spiritual” (FG1) Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 69$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

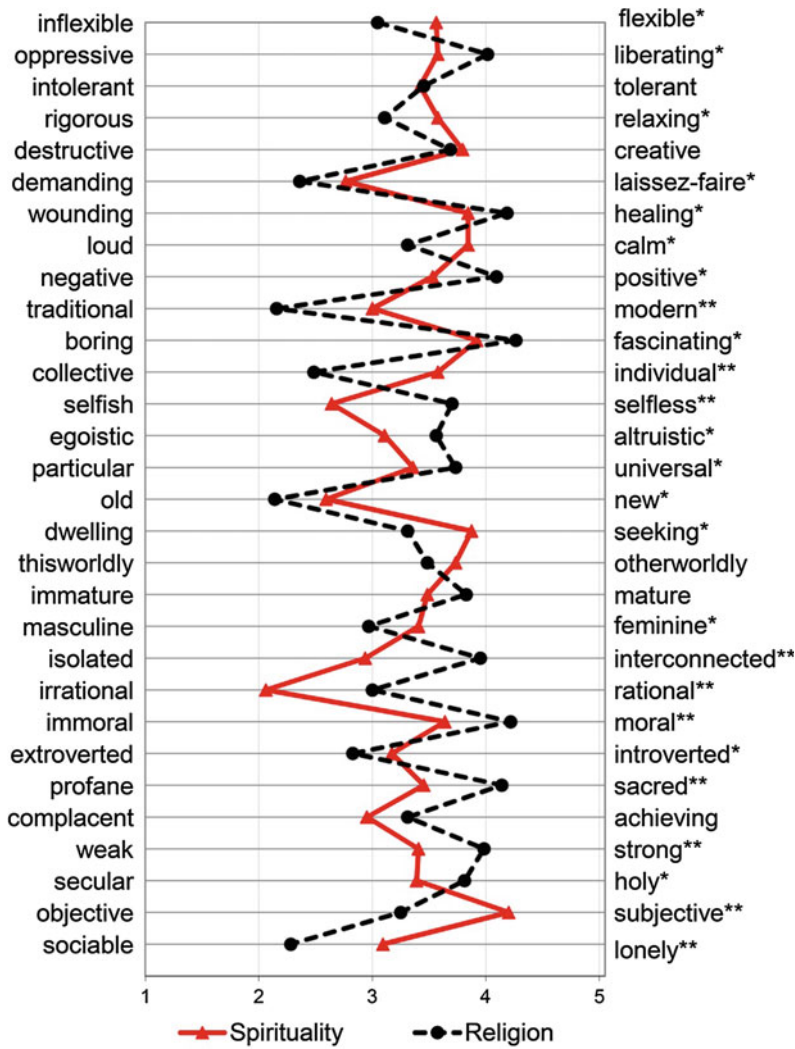


Fig. A.18 Ratings of the “More Religious than Spiritual” (FG1) Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 64$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

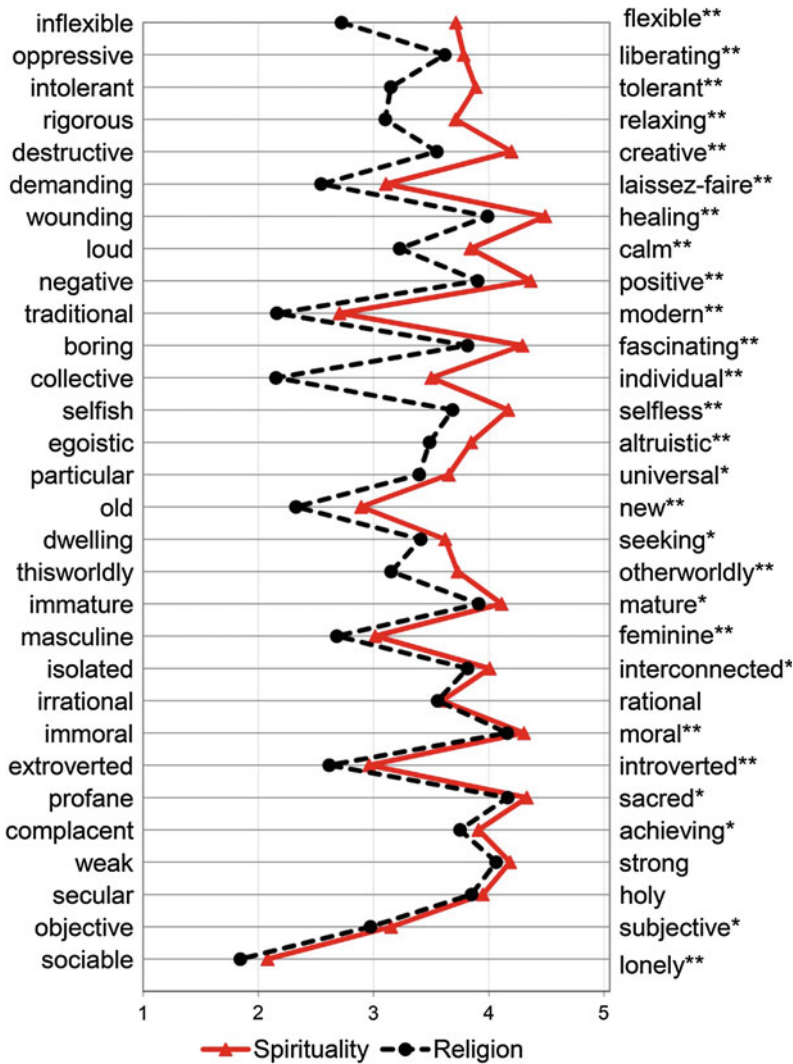


Fig. A.19 Ratings of the “Equally Religious and Spiritual” (FG2) Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 289$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

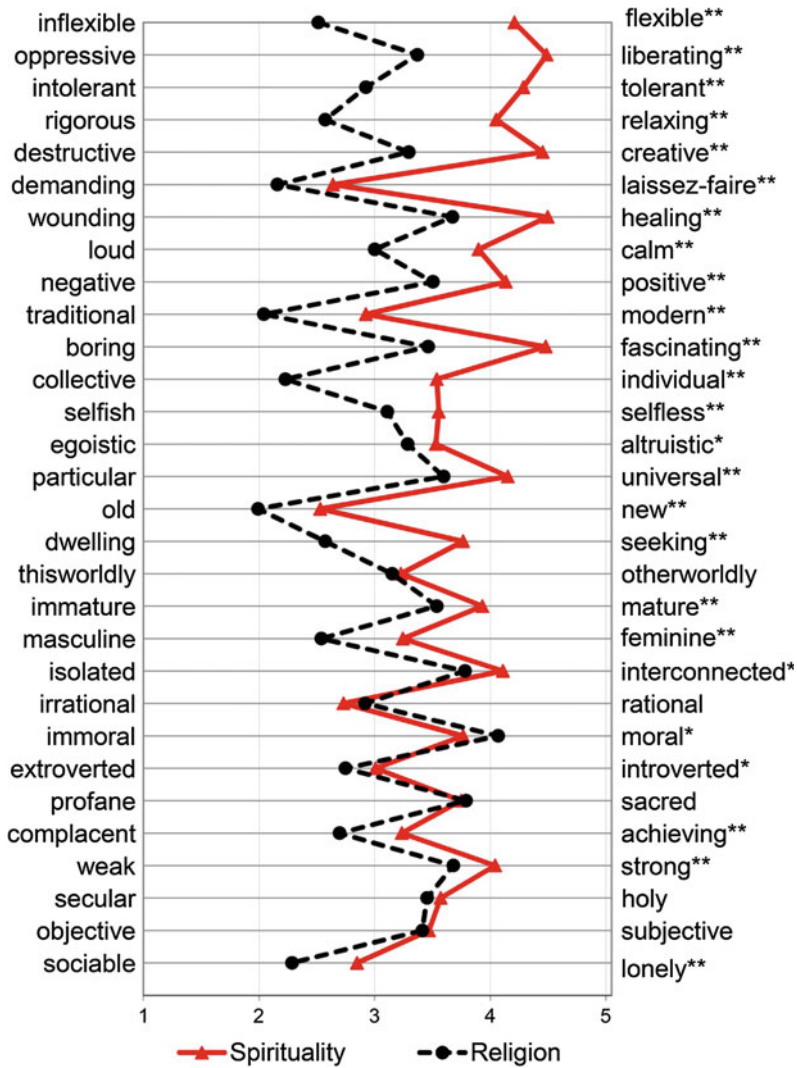


Fig. A.20 Ratings of the “Equally Religious and Spiritual” (FG2) Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 119$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

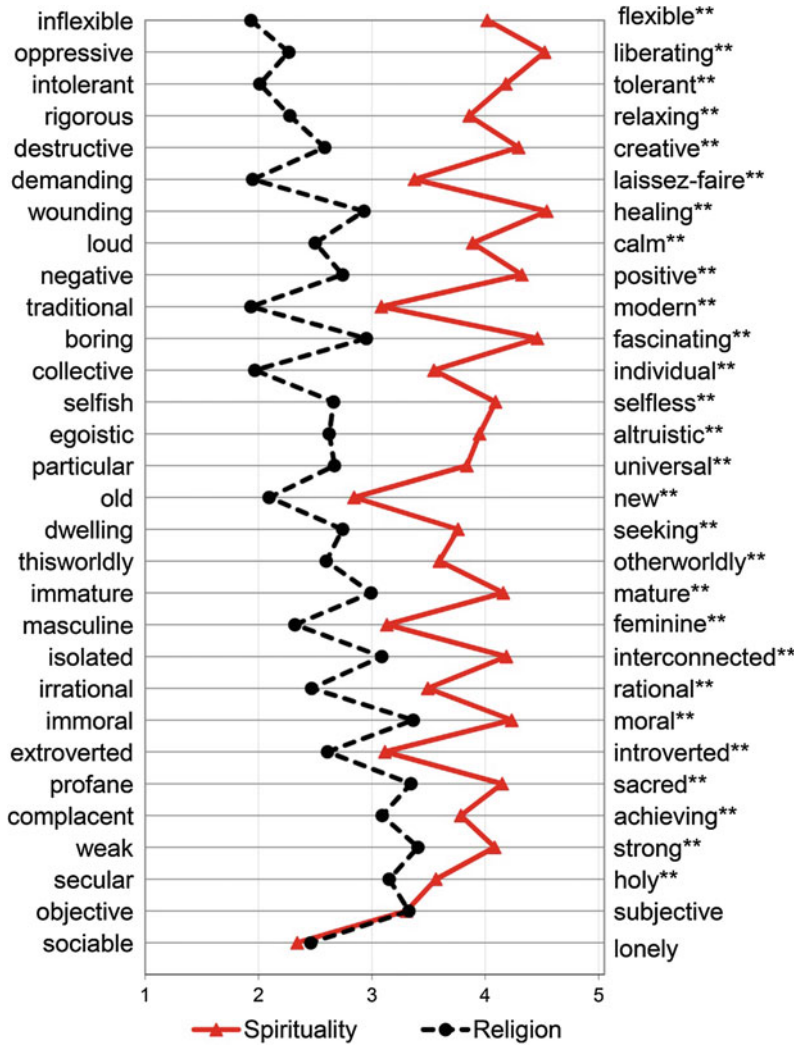


Fig. A.21 Ratings of the “More Spiritual than Religious, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG3) Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 523$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

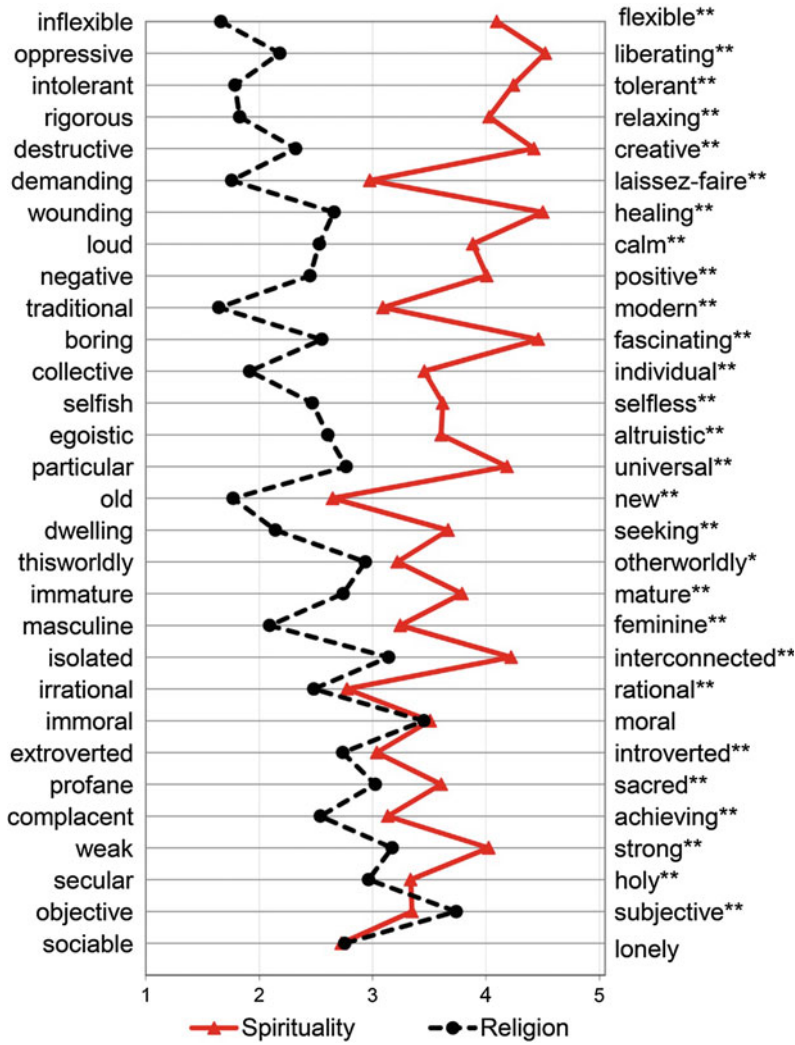


Fig. A.22 Ratings of the “More Spiritual than Religious, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG3) Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 308$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

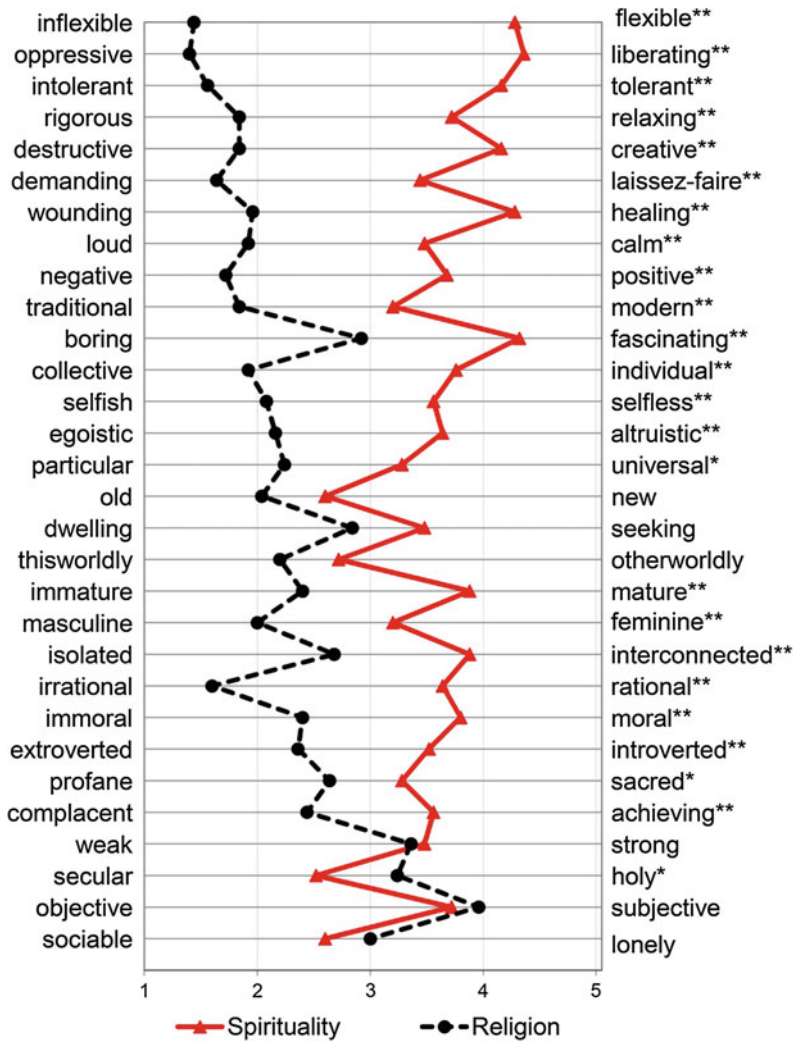


Fig. A.23 Ratings of the “More Spiritual than Religious Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG4) Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 25$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

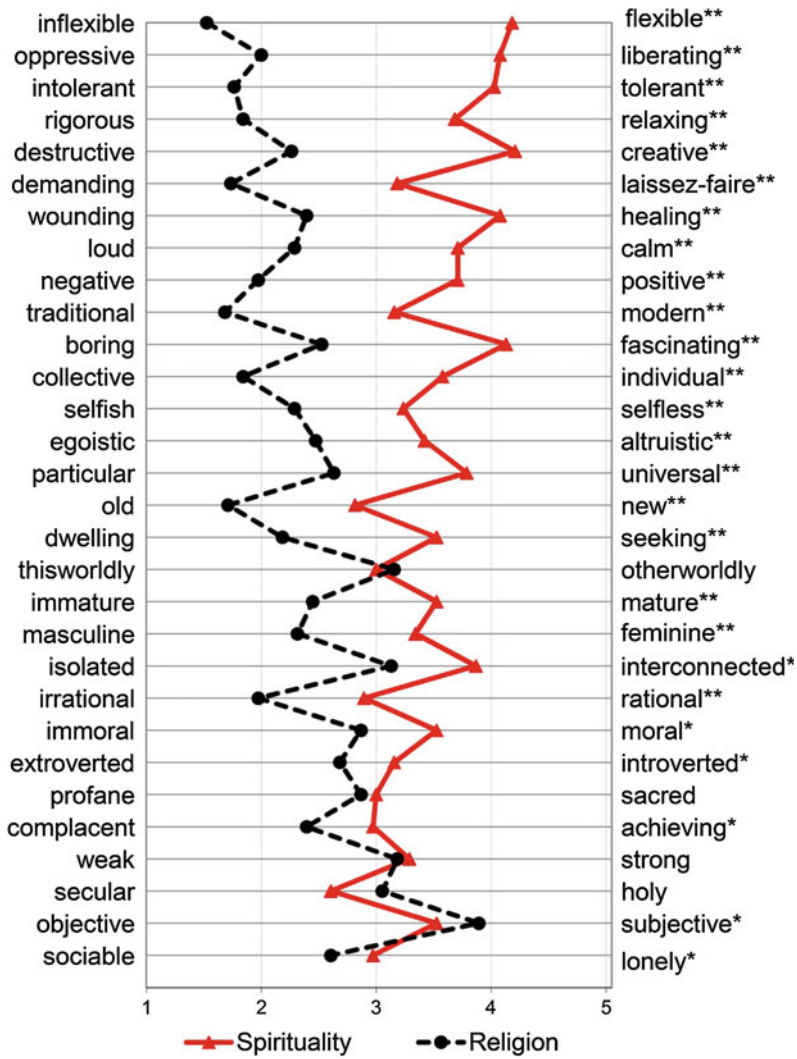


Fig. A.24 Ratings of the “More Spiritual than Religious Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG4) Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 38$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

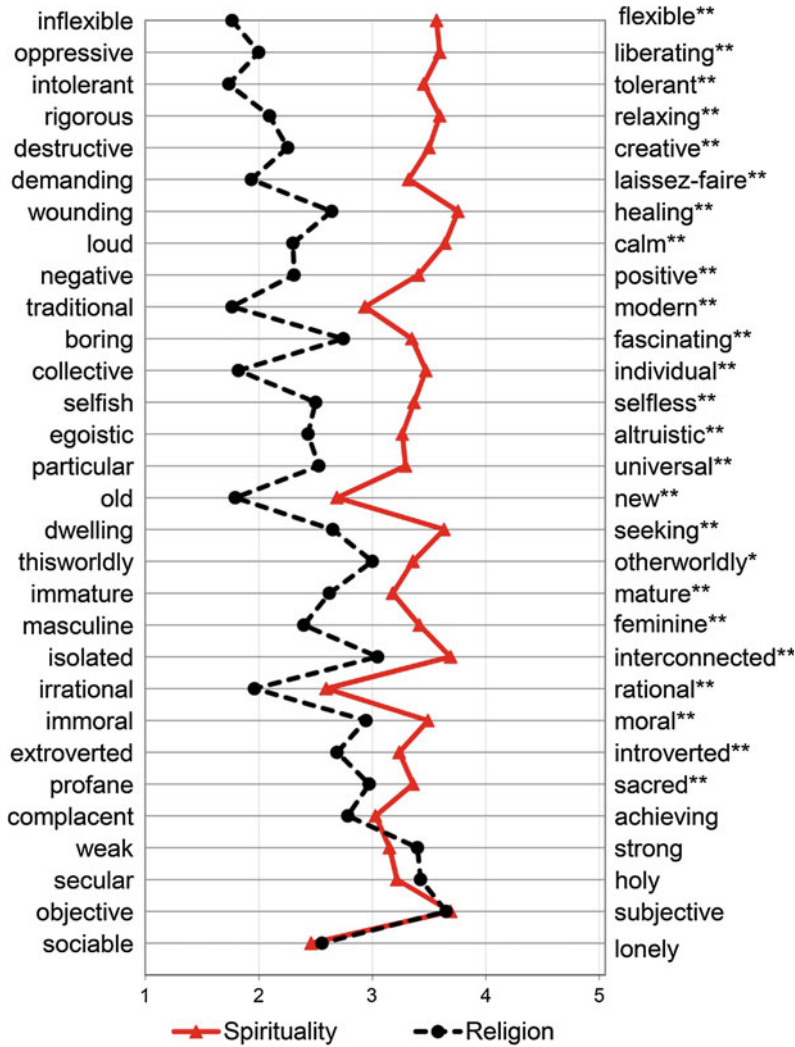


Fig. A.25 Ratings of the “Neither rReligious nor Spiritual, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG5) Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 106$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

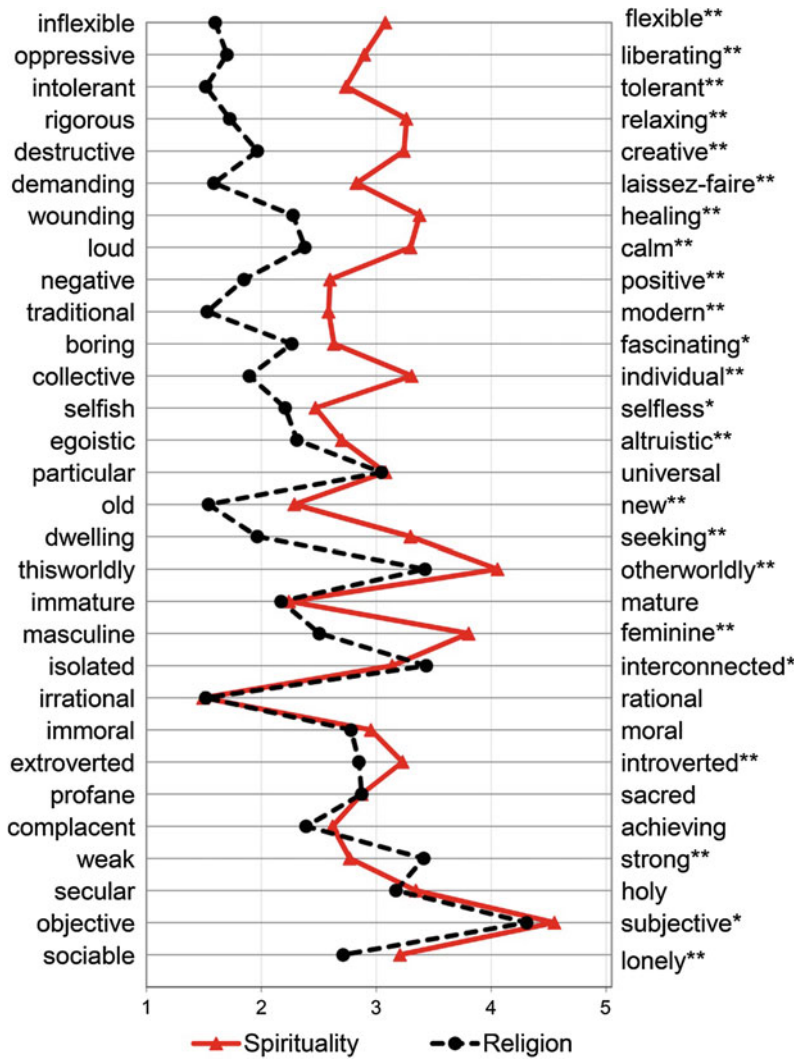


Fig. A.26 Ratings of the “Neither Religious nor Spiritual, not Atheist/Non-Theist” (FG5) Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 87$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

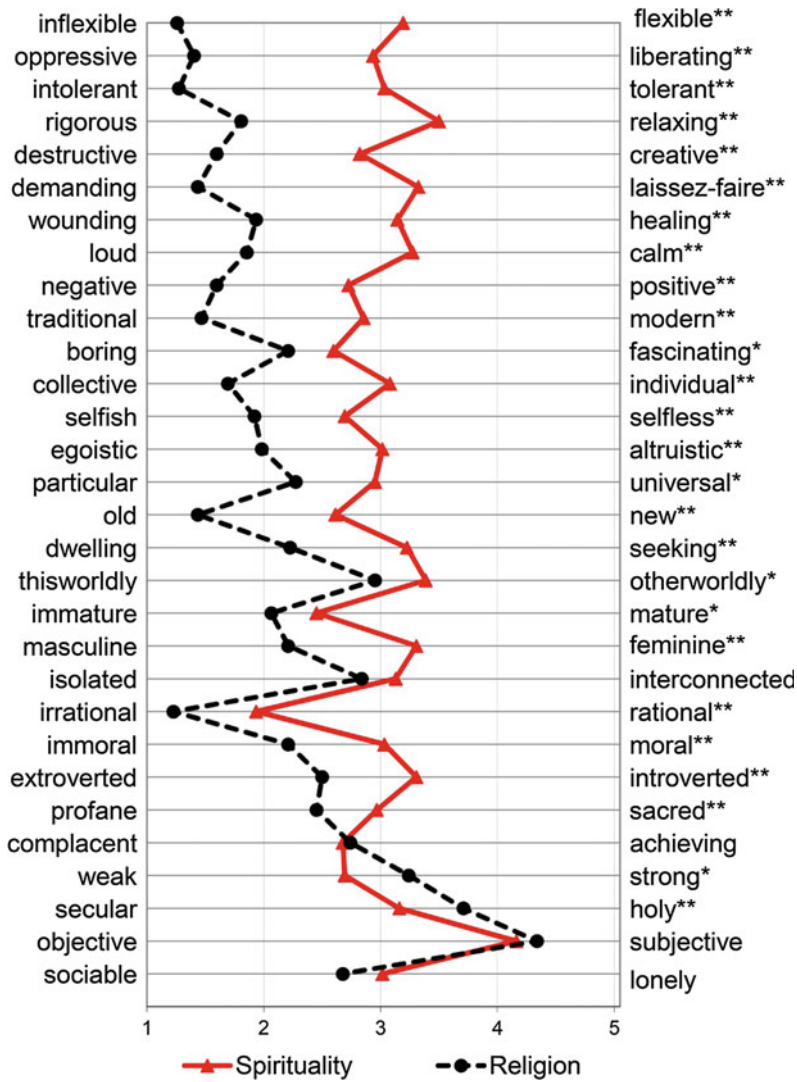


Fig. A.27 Ratings of the “Neither Religious nor Spiritual Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG6) Respondents in the US Sample ($n = 62$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

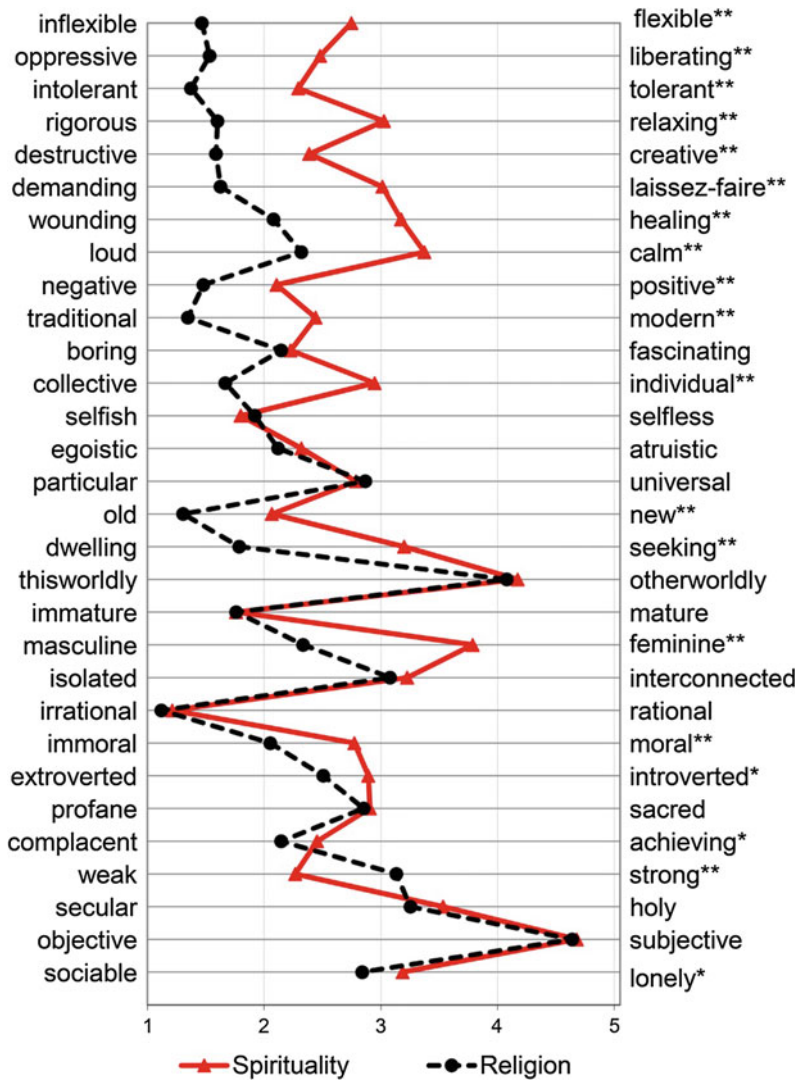


Fig. A.28 Ratings of the “Neither Religious nor Spiritual Atheists/Non-Theists” (FG6) Respondents in the German Sample ($n = 76$) on the Contextual Semantic Differential

Note *Difference Between the Means for “Religion” and “Spirituality” is Significant on the $p < .05$ Level; **Significant on the $p < .001$ Level

Appendix B

Interview Transcripts

B.1 Faith Development Interview with Sarah L.

1. I: I'm calling from UTC.
2. N: Hi. It's finally good to hear from you.
3. I: I know. Can you hear me okay?
4. N: I can.
5. I: Okay. I think we have gotten the kinks worked out.
6. N: Okay. (laughing)
7. I: All right.
8. N: I think we—I think this needs to get some kind of award for the maximum number of times rescheduled though.
9. I: I know. I agree completely, but it should be a really interesting interview, right?
10. N: I hope so.
11. I: (laughing) All right, let me just get my recording—I gotta click a button here.
12. N: Sure.
13. I: All right, we should be rolling, and I gotta get this thing to stay. [...] right volume turned up. Okay. I sent you a copy of the informed consent.
14. N: Mhm.
15. I: I just need you to agree to that.
16. N: I do.
17. I: Great and we can begin.
18. N: Okay.
19. I: And so this is interview with participant number [X]. Here we go. Reflecting on your life thus far, identify its major chapters. If your life were a book, how would you name the different chapters and what marker events stand out as especially important in those chapters?
20. N: Okay, um, I might get a little off track so if I need to you just let me know. The first chapter I would probably say, um, I came from a household that was, unfortunately, filled with domestic violence. My father was extremely physically abusive, um, so the first thing I really remember is growing up with fear. So if I had to give it a chapter that's what I would call, growing up until I was about eleven or twelve when he finally left the home. After that, um, I made some friendships that really pulled me out of my head and were really great and supportive, um, but it—it took a long while to get there, so I guess the second chapter would be kind of finding my way out.
21. I: Mhm.
22. N: And, um, the third chapter, um, probably, that the first time I fell in love, um, with a guy named [Bill], so I'd probably just call that "[Bill]." Um. And then I was in college and then my best friend died and she committed suicide so that, um, was kind of a game changer for me and, um, I would probably again name that chapter of my life, "Grief and Loss." Um. I moved away after graduating from college and kind of learned to grow up to be an adult on my own after I graduated, and I was living with someone named [John] in a great town called [Town A], [State B in the Northeast of the USA], and I would probably call that "John"

- because we lived together in [Town A], and then we moved to [Town C], [State D in the Northeast of the USA], and then we moved to [City E in the South of the USA], but he was kind of the main family in my life at that time. And then the next chapter would probably be called “The Job.” I had a job that was extremely work intensive at [a non-profit organization], and it also took a lot out of me emotionally. And after I quit that, I would probably call this chapter of my life may be something about moving on, something about growing. I’ve been in a lot of therapy and I’ve been in some great relationships and I’ve been really happy where I am now so that’s kind of takes me to now.
23. I: Are there past relationships that have been important to your development as a person?
24. N: Um, definitely. Um, the first one is actually someone that I haven’t seen in over ten years but I still dream about him pretty regularly. He was my best friend when—when I was living with my parents, when my parents were abusive and his name is [Jared]. Um, and he was, uh, someone who was also [a kid who was really lonely in?] adolescence. And then after that was the guy that I fell in love with, [Bill], and that kind of happened at the same time that I met my two other best friends. [Mary] who killed herself when we were in college and then my best friend [Tina], who lives in New York now. And both of them are kind of my support system. And two other relationships that have been really important and kind of redefined me as an adult. Um, I moved out for the first time when I was sixteen so I never really got the chance to know my mom as an adult. Um, and I got to know her before she died and she died about seven years ago. She and I—you know—we really didn’t have a parental relationship. We just got to know each other as adults. And it was great. It turned out to get along really well. And so that’s when things, I think [...] And then of course living with my ex-boyfriend [John], lived together for almost five years, um, so definitely [John]. Um—
25. I: You—
26. N: Mhm?
27. I: No. Go ahead.
28. N: I was just reading ahead on the thing you had given me.
29. I: Oh!
30. N: If there were changes in the relationship—was that what you were going to ask?
31. I: Yes, do you recall any changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or your way of thinking about things?
32. N: Yeah. Um, when—I know that this is going to sound terrible, but my mom’s death had less of an impact on me than my best friend committing suicide. You know at some point we all expectable to lose our parents, but [Mary] killed herself when we were nineteen and that really changed kind of who I was and what I thought about loss and it made me kind of panicky about losing the people I had finally built into a new family for myself.
33. I: Mhm.
34. N: (sighing) Um, and then the other major change that has taken me a lot of time to get over is the fact that [John] and I broke up, um, kind of badly, um, and so, I’m still kind of grieving that relationship and probably within ten months he was married to someone who is almost ten years younger than we are, so that—like both—both breaking up with him and that—the way that it ended was not good.
35. I: How has your world view changed across your life’s chapters?
36. N: Okay, um, I think I used to be someone who was very fearful. Not only that I had this strong, authoritarian, abusive parent, but I really lived in fear of, um, of adults of, um, of not being good enough, and, um, as I got older I started to be really hopeful, you know, when I moved out when I was

sixteen and when I [get?] into the support system, I was really hopeful. But, kind of touching a little bit on, I guess the first part about spirituality. I—I was driven to the church when I was younger by fear. I grew up Southern Baptist. So, and we frequently went to the baptist church. So, we, um, probably one of the first things I remember was being afraid of hell. And that really stuck with me and [...] me. I was really, really involved with my church probably until I was about thirteen or fourteen. I even, like, got saved, you know as a Born-Again Christian, um, but I kind of—the older I got the less realistic that seemed to me. And I also became depressed. I wanted to believe in a hopeful future for myself, and that there was a loving God, but I never felt it. I never actually felt that there was anyone out there listening to me. Anything larger than myself. And I wanted a reason why I had suffered so much in my life. You know I was probably fourteen at the time, maybe fifteen, and I realized that I was the only one I could depend on. I never—and—you know I never could count on support from anyone and I think that's the first time I ever really thought there was no God. And my world view changed a lot. I went from fear to belief and then kind of almost to fear and longing like I wished that there was something more to life that I wished that my life had meaning. Um, and one of the things that has really—you know like—you have those pivotal moments in your life where it changes really like what you believe and who you are. When I was in college I took a Philosophy of Religion course. And our professor had her Masters in Divinity from [University F] and she was talking about her personal change. You know, why she believed what she believed. And she said that no one could explain suffering to her. If there is a just and loving god, why do innocents suffer? You know, why—you know why aren't our voices heard? And I think at that moment I kind of

totally let go of any sort of Judeo-Christian God.

37. I: We had a little technical difficulty, so I just want to repeat back what you just said. You were saying that that was a moment, and could you finish me from that point?
38. N: Oh, sure. Sure.
39. I: She made the statement ...
40. N: That is was a really pivotal moment.
41. I: Okay.
42. N: For me that I, you know when she said, that there is no reason—no one could ever give her a reason why there was suffering and why innocent people suffer. Essentially why bad things happen to good people if there is a just and loving god. And I, from that moment on, I kind of let go of any idea that there was any sort of Judeo-Christian god.
43. I: So you discussed how those things have affected your image of God or the divine, what does it mean to you now?
44. N: What does the term God or the divine mean to me?
45. I: Mhm.
46. N: I honestly I kind of would call myself an gnostic, so—but I also believe at my core, actually I hope, I don't think I actually believe, I hope that there is some force for good in the universe. You know, just maybe it's just people. Maybe, you know, that's all we have is what we have here which is like the kindness that we do to each other that there is no afterlife that—that we just you know that—that... that there is no nothing there other than us. But I hope there is.
47. I: Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning?
48. N: Um, yeah, I think twice I have. The first time was actually at this place called xy Abbey, it's, you know a working abbey, where monks live. And I had just gone there for a picnic and was with my best friends [Tina] and [Mary], and there was something about the day that was so beautiful and so

- real and just... I don't know. It made me feel so full of life that I just like that—there's nothing I can really put my finger on. I felt more alive and more in love with the world than I ever felt. Everything was just more beautiful than it had ever been. And then, um, let me think, um I was in the depths of a horrible depression when I was living in [Town C], [State D] and I was working at a dead-end job that I hated and I couldn't figure out why I had gotten so far away from the things that I loved. And I realized that I had gotten away from the world of the senses. You know that—that what we have in this world, you know, is really beautiful and really wonderful, and the gifts we've been given, of sight, of sound, you know, and of hearing how amazing they are, and that, you know, the sensuous world like that can have awakening really made me realize, you know, but that's always with me.
49. I: Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life?
50. N: Yeah I definitely say “yes.” Growing up I felt like I was always in crisis. You know when you have an abusive parent, um, every thing feels like the end of the world, so you, um, know that was really stressful and I want to get away from that. The next biggest crises that I had was my relationships ending, you know, first with [Bill] and then with [John]. But I feel like I've also had just a crisis of identity. That I've had to, you know, I've had to grow up and grow through a lot of the painful things that were behind me, like [Mary] dying and my mom dying.
51. I: Have you experienced times when you felt profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning?
52. N: Um, yes. Um, I would say specifically that what we were talking about a little bit earlier when I was fifteen, right after I had gotten so involved in our church and was really, trying to kind of “walk the right path,” and I remember being so upset and so depressed about my parents and my family situation that I prayed. And you know, Christians pray pretty regularly so that wasn't that weird, but I said, “To any sort of god that was out there, that was listening. You know if you're here, why can't you send me some sort of comfort? Why can't you send me something outside of myself, some help, some friend, you know, someone.” And it never came. And so I think from that moment on I started closing my heart off to the idea that there was a god with a capital G.
53. I: Focusing now on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them? And I know some of this is going to be redundant. I just have to read all the questions.
54. N: Oh, no, that's okay. I—my mom died about seven years ago, almost eight, and my relationship with her growing up was really tumultuous. She was kind of an enabler of my dad and also abusive herself. But then she kind of woke and she went to therapy. So when she died, she and I had a really great relationship. We really bonded. We talked about all sorts of things we never talked about before but unfortunately, you know, she did pass away when she was forty-nine. And my dad, um, wow my dad has really changed a lot. After my mom died he got remarried to someone who was essentially a gold digger, but she put this veneer of normality onto my dad. He was still the same person behind all of that. So he was an alcoholic. He's still an alcoholic. He's been in rehab, and he and I have a somewhat distant relationship. He is a toxic person and I've been involved in a codependent relationship with him growing up so I have to be very distant emotionally from him.
55. I: Have there been any changes in your perceptions of your parents over the years and if so talk to me about what caused the changes?

56. N: Oh yeah absolutely. Um, when I moved out and I didn't talk to my mom for several years, like when I was in college, that—when she and I started talking again as adults, I realized that she really was another person like me, that she was as broken and that she'd been trying to do her best and had been basically psychologically terrorized by her parents which explained why and how she became the adult that she became. Um, so that with her, you know, who she was changed in my mind totally. And my dad as well, after he divorced my mom he kind of had a breakdown and he realized that the way that he had treated us was really poorly and that he regretted it. But he didn't know how to deal with it, I don't think, which is why I think he became an alcoholic. So now my role with my dad almost feels more parental. That I have to take care of him, and I have to be considerate of him and his feelings.
57. I: Are there any other current relationships that are important to you?
58. N: Um, yes. Um, my brother is actually my roommate, and he is the most supportive, interesting, amazing person ever. Um, and I have—I'm really physically separated from a lot of my good friends, but I have this online community that I'm a member of that is really amazing and really kind of keeps me grounded and sane.
59. I: Can you tell me a little bit more about the online community?
60. N: Sure, it's actually how I found the first survey that I answered. It's called [Social Network G].
61. I: Mhm.
62. N: And there is a section of [Social Network G] called [name of section]. You know it's about women and kind of women's issues. And then they actually have a live chat IRC channel. Do you know what "IRC" is?
63. I: Yes.
64. N: Okay they have an IRC channel that I started going to about a year and a half ago and I started meeting people there, I really like them, and now I've met them in real life. I dated someone from there. In fact, I just got back from a trip where I was meeting a guy I was dating, and uh, but eventually I stayed around long enough and became a moderator and um, now I feel like, you know, these people are my friends, they might be 2000 miles away, or even more, but they know me really well.
65. I: What groups, institutions, or causes do you identify with and why are they important to you?
66. N: Okay, um, (sighing) right off hand just because I've been involved in volunteering with them lately, is Planned Parenthood. I really have seen in my life a lot of women get into kind of danger situations where they really needed access to birth control or abortion, and I also had a cancer scare. Several years ago where I needed a biopsy and the surgery to remove the precancerous cells and I didn't have any money, and Planned Parenthood was able to give me the surgery that I needed on a sliding scale that I could actually afford. So I—I'm a big crusader for reproductive rights and they've really been there for me. Um. I probably have given the most money [regularly?] to Oxfam. Um, because, you know, like not to [be kind of?] sarcastic, but I get really caught up in first-world problems, and I can—you know it hurts me a lot that people are suffering and that we can stop that, you know that they need basic things like medical care. You know that people are dying of malaria and hunger still. Um, so I really identified with them, and I also really identify with [Social Network G]. Mainly, you know, it worries me—I'm a pretty radical feminist and that's obviously one thing that I really identify with, that I define myself in a lot of ways as a feminist, and [Social Network G] can be really misogynistic and really hate on women, especially their bodies. Which has led me to form a group. Instead of join a group, I started a

- group about body acceptance and fat acceptance. It's basically size acceptance, and I really, like, I really feel a part of that.
67. I: Do you feel that your life has meaning at present?
68. N: Yes I do. I think that the greatest purpose that any of us have, and I'm going to steal from Mother Teresa, she says is "to love and be love." And my other kind of life philosophy is [...] what we do and how we act has a lot of meaning, especially me that kindness is the answer. [Reference to something personal] and I stole that from the Dalai Lama that those are the things that have meaning. What we do has meaning in who we care for and how we do it has meaning.
69. I: What specifically makes your life meaningful to you?
70. N: Um...Love.
71. I: If you could change one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
72. N: Like if I could go back in time and change something or is it something right now?
73. I: W—It's up to you (laughing).
74. N: Okay (laughing)
75. I: (laughing)
76. N: Um, (laughing) I um, I got really sick a few years ago. I had kidney stones. I've had ten and I'm only thirty, so I've had about one a year since I was twenty, and they have been really horrible and painful and I've been hospitalized lots of times. But the last time I had an attack I didn't have health insurance and I was in a lot of pain and I went to the emergency room and they sent me home and they gave me pain medications, and then I knew something was wrong when two days later I went back to the hospital and they told me that I had a kidney infection and that it was so bad that if I left I would die within the next twelve hours. Um, so that, you know, danger of death, but that, that fear of dying and the fact that I didn't have health insurance, so it ended up costing me my entire life savings. I was applying for graduate school, actually I had been accepted at that point, and I wasn't able to go because it cost over \$50,000...So that's what I would change.
77. I: Are there any beliefs, values, or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
78. N: Um, yes, my commitment to feminism I think is really important. I think the education of women and girls is something that's really important to me. Um, and my commitment to my brother, you know that he is important to me and my friends are important to me. But I prioritize them and their happiness.
79. I: When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
80. N: Um...I meditate sometimes and that makes me feel, um, really spiritual. I feel really, um, at peace and really calm and not afraid.
81. I: What is your image or model of a mature faith, of a mature response to the questions of existential meaning?
82. N: Um. Wow that's kind of hard. Honestly it's hard for me right now to see religious answers to existential questions as being valid. That does seem immature to me. I feel like, um, you know, when we grow up and when we embrace logic that we are more likely to become at the very least agnostic. Um, so to me that does actually seem like the right answer because I believe science is real. That I come from a family of scientists, and I feel like that is the most kind of mature thing that you can do. You can be religious but I feel like you need to acknowledge that religion doesn't have all the answers. So to me being agnostic or atheist almost does make more sense.
83. I: If you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it, and can you give me an example?
84. N: Um, sure. Um, I—this seems kind of minor, but at the time it was really

- important. I was dating someone and I had to decide whether or not I would continue on with that relationship, um, actually, we were more than dating, we were engaged, and, but something didn't seem right and my own intuition is really important to me. Like I think in my heart, you know, that I knew what was good for me already. But I needed the support of my friends and my brother to tell me, you know, how they felt, and whether or not I had gone totally off the deep end. You know, kind of that reality check.
85. I: If you have a very difficult problem to solve, to whom or what would you look for guidance?
86. N: Um, I would probably look to, um, to research and to academia.
87. I: Do you think that actions can be right or wrong?
88. N: Yes.
89. I: What makes an action right in your opinion?
90. N: Um, if it doesn't hurt anyone, especially someone innocent.
91. I: What makes action wrong?
92. N: Um, that it comes out of ignorance or out of a desire to hurt someone.
93. I: Are there certain types of actions that are always right under any circumstances?
94. N: No.
95. I: Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?
96. N: No.
97. I: Do you think that human life has a purpose?
98. N: Yes.
99. I: What is it?
100. N: Um, to do the best we can with what we're given. To love as much as we can.—Actually I want to go back and change one of my answers.
101. I: Okay.
102. N: That there isn't anything everyone should agree on. I think there is one thing that everyone should agree on, I think it's that every person, um, deserves to be seen as a person and deserves the same rights as everyone else.
103. I: Is there a plan for our lives? Are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
104. N: No.
105. I: What does death mean to you?
106. N: Um...I'm not really sure. I don't think we go anywhere when we died, um, but I'm hopeful that we might. One of my aunts is a professional psychic and she thinks that our spirits linger and I know that part of me wants to believe that because it's comforting.
107. I: Mhm.
108. N: But in my heart I don't—I don't really know.
109. I: What happens to us when we die then?
110. N: Um, we probably just die. We probably—our consciousness stops and maybe we reenter some sort of human—they say about going towards the light but maybe there's some sort of bliss beyond this but [if it is?] we don't exist anymore.
111. I: Do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual, or faithful person?
112. N: Um, I think I see myself as somewhat spiritual, but not religious, and not faithful.
113. I: Are there any religious, spiritual or other ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you or have been important to you?
114. N: Um in the past when I was growing up, going to church was extremely important to me, being the member of the church was, um, but now—No. There are no rituals or anything like that that are important—I really love religious rituals. I think they're amazing and great to take part in, but they don't mean anything to me spiritually.
115. I: Do you pray, meditate, or perform any other spiritual discipline?
116. N: I meditate.
117. I: And what is "sin" to your understanding?

118. N: Um. Ignorance and suffering.
119. I: How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
120. N: Um, I know it sounds kind of Buddhist, but I do think that evil comes out of ignorance.
121. I: If people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?
122. N: ...(sighing)I think fundamentally there are going to be like major differences between religion and that some of them are irreconcilable, but the only way that—that people can live in peace—people with radically different religions can live in peace together is that it's responsible to the leaders of that church's spiritual leaders of that religion or church or organization to teach peace and love.
123. I: Well, all right, [Sarah]. We've made it through.
124. N: Okay.
125. I: I really appreciate it. I know some of the stuff can be difficult to talk about, but I truly appreciate your willingness to open up.
126. N: No, that's okay. I really enjoyed this. Thanks.
127. I: Oh yay. Well listen, if you have any other questions or comments, or if you hang up and you think of something else you'd like to add, feel free to e-mail me, and if you're interested in following up on the study, definitely send me an e-mail. It's going to take us a little while to, you know, get finished with the interviews, and certainly it'll take a while to get all of the-uh—
128. N: Oh yeah. All that data processed. I have a Bachelor's in psychology and did some research myself, so.
129. I: Yay, good so you understand. So this is actually a study that we're working with a University in Germany, so it's pretty big.
130. N: Yeah.
131. I: But feel free to e-mail me, I'll be happy to keep you in the loop.
132. N: Absolutely, and I would love to know your findings and it'd be great.
133. I: Yay. And I just really appreciate your time and I totally appreciate your willingness to open up because I know that's tough to do with a stranger, so.
134. N: Yeah. No. I appreciate it. And anything, you know, to help a study along. Yeah, it was great talking to you.
135. I: Well it was great talking to you too.

B.2 Faith Development Interview with Madison I.

1. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
2. I: Right now we have participant [X] and it is [date]. Okay I know I sent you beforehand a life tapestry review and I don't know if that chart or anything was helpful for you or not and as we said before it was not required.
3. N: Yeah it was interesting, I didn't fill it out though, I did look at it.
4. I: Okay, that's good. Well just to go from that, reflecting on your life thus far, can you identify its major chapters?
5. N: Probably every move that I've had because my family moves around a lot and so every move has pretty much been a chapter. And then spiritually it'd probably every different church that we've gone to which had been a lot, and we see different perspectives at every church even if it's like the same denomination. And that's probably a subchapter I guess.
6. I: Okay so you mentioned these different churches, about how long would you think that each chapter would be in your book?
7. N: Well for the churches, I've been a member of one church for about three years and then I've been to one church for just a day now, but you take something from every place that you've been, even if it's just one day, whether it's good or bad. (Laughing).
8. I: Okay well if your life were a book, what would you name the different chapters; I know you mentioned different churches;

- would you have a different name for these?
9. N: I don't, what I'll name them, I guess each experience I got out of there, that'd be really detailed probably and not general I suppose, I don't know what I'll name them(laughing).
 10. I: Okay are there some marker events that stand out as especially important in each of these chapters?
 11. N: When I was seven, I was baptized, so that probably stands out. And also at one particular church we were going through, some of the leadership turned out to be not as... as holy, I guess, as they thought that they were. I don't know they just were hypocrites to say the least, I guess. That was a big shift, I guess, for my faith, I mean that kind of changed my perspective a little bit to not... well it was quite good because they help like put my perspective back towards God and not rather than putting my stock in people as much. People can kind of get lost in that. So ...
 12. I: Okay.
 13. N: That's probably the two extremes I suppose.
 14. I: Okay, would you have any... an event in between the tow extremes?
 15. N: Well I went to a Catholic Church for the first time, and that was very interesting, it was actually a good experience because you hear everything ... well I mean at least I did, like second hand from family or something what their opinion is the Catholic Church because my family from my dad's side is like Church of Pentecost and my mom's side is like Baptist and so you hear both sides of what they say Catholic Church is like. But to actually go and see for yourself was a good marker as well, I enjoyed it actually.
 16. I: Mhm. So were you involved in this groups that was different from your family or?
 17. N: Well I really have only been to one, at one time it was actually over spring break so I haven't like pursued it any further but it was interesting yeah. I...
 18. I: Mhm.
 19. N: I actually enjoyed it a lot. So...
 20. I: Okay, are there past relationships that have been important to you in your development as a person?
 21. N: Definitely my grandparents and my parents primarily because I was home-schooled for a really long time, so I was really close with my parents. More so now than actually I was when I was a kid and stuff.
 22. I: Mhm.
 23. N: But mostly family because I was homeschooled, that's pretty much who you spend all your time with anyways, but ...
 24. I: Mhm. So did your parents do the homeschooling or was it your grandpar-ents also?
 25. N: It was my parents.
 26. I: Mhm.
 27. N: And I'd spend a lot of time with my grandparent, I'd go over the weekend and stuff like and both sets of grandparents are very different, so I was kind of getting a different angle, I guess, a person helping you develop, I guess a broader spectrum, I suppose. Plus one of my grandmothers she is really quiet but she's very loving in like gifts and stuff like that but she never will... like she'll hardly ever say how she feels besides an 'I love you.' When you're leaving to go or whatever and then the other grandparents would always say stuff but not as much in the gift part. Not that that's important, it's just, you learn that each grandparent, a person has their own, has their own gift language or love language. I suppose you could call that so...
 28. I: Mhm.
 29. N: And that helped me learn to appreciate both principles and how to talk and communicated with people because my boy-friend, he's a gift person and a word person, and I guess if I hadn't learned that

- way of dealing with him from my grandparents, it would have been probably a little tougher to make my boyfriend feel like I care about him.
30. I: Okay, you've mentioned parents and grandparents, do you have- are you an only child?
31. N: I have one sister.
32. I: You have a sister.
33. N: We're really close, except I moved here in [month], so we're not as close as we used to be while we grew up together all the time everyday. She's like my best friend.
34. I: Mhm, so are you close in age?
35. N: Yeah, she is two year and two months younger than me.
36. I: Alright, do you recall any changes in the relationships that have really a significant impact...
37. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
38. I: Do you recall any changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or your way of thinking about things?
39. N: Me and my mom went through I guess a rough time when I was pre-teen.
40. I: Mhm.
41. N: We didn't get along at all and I actually became closer to my dad and he travels a lot, so I kind of held that against him and didn't him get that close to me. And so that kind of shifted things a little bit and then as I mature a little bit, me and my mom got closer again, but I also had that relationship with my dad that I didn't have before and me and him are a lot closer now than we were in the years past because he would be gone for like months at a time. And then when he came home he seemed more like my mom's husband as opposed to like my dad.
42. I: Mhm.
43. N: And that was ... it could be rough but things are a lot better now than they were, but that was probably a big deal when I was a kid.
44. I: You mentioned earlier that you're closer to your parents now than you had been in the past. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?
45. N: It was probably because like the advice that they give me I actually listen to now.
46. I: (Laughing).
47. N: Because they're right half of the time and they're good people and they've helped me learn how to deal with the struggles and stuff of college and like always doing your best and stuff and like you hear that from your own, you're just like you kind of just push it to the side until you hear it from another person and that makes you realize that your parents were right. And so I guess me coming to that level of understanding kind of has brought us closer like I can talk to them more now.
48. I: Mhm.
49. N: As opposed to when I was a kid like "I don't really want to talk to you" or your mom and your dad, like it's a different type of relationship when you're younger and then when you get older at least for me like right now we're just ... I don't know like on the same level and respect for each other. If my mom told me a few weeks ago if she went on a vacation with anybody else besides my dad, it would be me and that meant lot.
50. I: Oh yes, I imagine it would mhm. So are they in this area, do you see them on a regular basis?
51. N: They live in [State A in the East of the USA] right now and then last semester we all lived in one house and then my sister went to a different high school because she didn't like the one she was at, and my mom, they moved to the cabin that we have in [State A] and they're living there. And my dad travels but we just sold our house outside [City B], so he lives there now. So I don't see them as much, but that was like really tough to have our family not together because we've always been

- together except for when my dad travels since I was like a kid because I was homeschooled for the majority of my childhood and so to have that change has been difficult, I guess, to get used to that.
52. I: Mhm, yeah, I can... change can be difficult.
53. N: Yeah it's changed the relationships I guess because it's more like on the phone as opposed to in person spending time together, so it's like now you have to like make time to stay close. And that's probably why me and my sister aren't as close because she is busy with sports and all the stuff that's in high school.
54. I: Okay yeah. How has your world view changed across your life's chapters?
55. N: Probably from each move and each person from each place has probably shaped my perspective of things as very like open, not as narrow-minded or- not necessarily like narrow-minded but just like putting everything in a box, like just meeting different people from different places has expanded that I suppose. Like when I was in high school I've worked a bunch with Hispanic kids because I can speak a little bit of Spanish and it was interesting to hear what they had to say, like you think that they- well not you in general but just people in general, just kind of have this like glass wall between different cultures I suppose, but we're all really the same I mean. It was interesting to learn that like first hand and as well as going to the Catholic Church for the first time because most of the Hispanics were Catholic. So it was interesting to see like what they ... is their religion or whatever you're going to call it their beliefs and like living in the city and then living in the country, in the country you meet a lot of different people than you meet in the city.
56. I: Right.
57. N: Like in the country, in the place we just moved from outside [City B] is a really small town, it was really hard to get involved with any group at all and that was really like I guess mind-opening to see how some people can just have everything in a box and if you're not part of their life or you haven't lived there your whole life or something how they can just kind of shun you, but not in a mean way, like they'll be nice to you if they see you around but they're never going to ask you to do something besides just seeing you at the regular places. And that being there also brought our family closer because we weren't a part of any group or church per se, we were just kind of like foreigners but we weren't really ... it was weird just living in a small town like that.
58. I: Mhm.
59. N: Living [City C], I've actually lived here before, I live here now and we lived over in [Community D] but we always came to like [City C] so and this was actually my favorite place to live because the people here are really friendly and inviting as opposed to the people in the [City B] area and it's just 200 miles difference.
60. I: Mhm.
61. N: And then I don't know just different people, different walks of life, like all seem to affect you in one way or another, they add a different side to whether you know it or not.
62. I: So it sounds like you've been around culture, different cities and people from different walks of life, is that pretty much what you're saying?
63. N: Yeah we had a foreign exchange student stay with us for eight months and that was also eye opening I guess (laughing). So that was an experience, good and bad because she was an only child and her parents were divorced but they're both... they had money so she was kind of spoiled I suppose, but her family never did any confrontation or any sort of that so her coming to live with us and doing what she wanted but never being willing to talk about thing was rough especially when

- she barely speaks English. So that was growing time for our family to learn to have patience (laughing), that sort of thing.
64. I: Right (laughing) right. Okay when you saw your world view changing as you've just described across your life chapters, how could say this affected your image of God or of the Divine?
65. N: Well I believe that God is more than we can ever imagine or even comprehend and so for some person just put him in a box like ... there's different religions but they all somehow acknowledge the divine. And I think that not all of them are wrong per se because God is such a big complex being or person I suppose that he has different sides to him that maybe one religion has understood more than another. Like Buddhist and whatever has wanted to come to peace with yourself I suppose, and maybe even with God. And then Christian has come to understand witnessing to another person and testimonies and that sort of thing and baptism but they all tie back to that one overall God I suppose. But just depends on what your belief is, but I know that there is right and there is wrong and every religion does acknowledge that as well but they all has their different interpretations of that. And I don't know... we're all the same and we're all looking for the same thing and so we should ... I think we should all stop fighting and just acknowledge that.
66. I: Mhm okay. Has your image of God... I know you... you've used the phrase several times of putting something in a box and ... and that you think maybe people put images of God in a box. It sounds like your images of God have been affected as you were talking about the changes. What does your image if God mean you now?
67. N: To not let yourself get in the way of knowing him because there are time you can... or me for instance can get in the way of knowing him I suppose and not giving him credit for enough stuff because I'm blessed to have a great family, I'm blessed to go a school, get a- be able to get an education, to live in America and if you don't realize that and you act like the world is against you half the time, when it's not I think in that I could lose myself a little bit and I have actually. When bad stuff happens, it's not his fault, that's just life and you have to learn to depend on him even more and just... a person, an individual getting in the way of knowing God is sometimes the most harmful thing or becoming disillusioned.
68. I: Okay, can you say a little bit more about that how you feel a person gets in the way?
69. N: Well that one instance I was talking about at the church where several of the church members were the... I forget what it's called now but they were like youth pastor and stuff like that, turn out to be sort of hypocrites, you can either let get in the way of your opinion of God or your opinion of people and for me I was like well, people are going to be people, we're all imperfect but God is and I tried to make a line between the two and not saying, well, God is wrong and evil, and they have prepared [...] that's not true. And my sister, of course, she's a little bit younger but she took that really, really hard and it took her away from God I guess if you want to say or her relationship with her maturity as a person and it affected her a lot more than it did me. And I'm not saying that's wrong because it affected a lot of people but to let just one person or a group of people get in the way of what you believe and how your relationship is with God I think can be harmful if ... I mean it's okay to be like mad at God, everybody in the bible had been mad at God a time or two but you have to overcome that because if we just let God go for one thing we did or we think he did wrong, what if we think about like of all the things that we do wrong, what if

- God let us go; I mean this world would be even in more chaos than it is now.
70. I: Mhm.
71. N: And I think we have to look at it from that perspective as well as like his perspective because we sin and do stuff wrong everyday, every week, all the time, but God still loves us, so if there is one thing that we blame on him and it's just one thing, what about all the things that we do? So...
72. I: Okay have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning and if you have what are they?
73. N: Sometimes when I do read the bible, I'm not really sure where I should read at for a certain time that I'm going through in my life like whether it's dealing with people being hypocrites or whether with feeling far away from God and not feeling close to Him, whether I feel guilty about something I've done or I just need encouragement. Sometimes I don't know as a person like where exactly to turn to read a verse that I haven't read before to get something new out of it.
74. I: Mhm.
75. N: So like sometimes before I even open the bible I'll say, "Please show me where you want me to read" and then whenever I do open it up to that first page and find that exact verse that I needed to hear, that's when I feel like there is something more and that's when I feel joy because it's like, it's not circumstantial I suppose, it's more than that I think.
76. I: Mhm. How has this- you mentioned kind of I guess the joy that you felt with your scripture reading, have you had moments when it's also changed your sense of life's meaning?
77. N: I wouldn't say it's changed it in that 180 or 360, but every little moment like that, whether it be with scripture reading or talking with the person and hearing what they have to say about something serious like that, it might not change it all the way around but it does help adjust it or you see something in a different way or you feel closer to God in a sense, I mean for me nothing has really turned all the way around, but it has turned it a little bit (laughing).
78. I: Mhm.
79. N: And each little turn I guess could turn it in a 360, I don't know. But everything is constantly moving and changing because that's life, but there is always the foundation that doesn't change. And I think there is always right and wrong besides good and evil and then there is always people. People will be people (laughing).
80. I: (laughing) Okay. Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life?
81. N: When I was in high school I got mono in the middle of playing basketball and volleyball and it was a really severe case because we didn't know I had mono till halfway through this season in basketball. And so long weekends we thought I was just tired from playing two sports at the same time but... we went to the doctor, I had mono and my spleen was enlarged and all that stuff. So I went from doing everything I wanted to do to doing nothing at all, that was a 360 (laughing). I mean, I was depressed because I couldn't go anywhere without like relapsing or sleeping 12 hours and plus when you have mono, you don't have an appetite, so I lost like 20 pounds and more.
82. I: My goodness.
83. N: And it was just, you couldn't go anywhere, you couldn't think, I couldn't hardly do any school, it was just a really bad time for me, I don't know if that's really a crisis as some of these, let alone dying but it did. Like I wasn't in control of anything anymore and I'm used to being in control of everything just about and so to go from having your own everything is going right to not being able to do

- anything at all whatsoever and not even feel like you're getting any better, because it took me like over a year to get back to where I was...I had to go on medication to help the serotonin level in my head and I was depressed.
84. I: Mhm.
85. N: I totally cried all the time just because I didn't feel like I was getting any better which I wasn't for a while and I couldn't do anything, I couldn't remember anything because I don't know...mono just does that. And it was really tough, that was probably the toughest thing that I have had to work to get over.
86. I: Mhm, how old were you when this happened?
87. N: I was 16 or... yeah I was 16 and I got better and started running again and stuff like that and then I started working that next summer, 40 hours plus a week. And one day I was at work and the world just started spinning and I almost blacked out and I had another relapse and I had to go through kind of again, it wasn't as bad but I still couldn't do things as much, I had to stop working again and work myself like through that and it's really a mental thing as much as it is a physical thing, to be able to not do anything and then have to push yourself little by little, it's not big steps, it would, little bit by little bit until you would get to a certain level like where you can go out, sit with your family. And then a little bit more where you can go to a park, it's little things like that, you just had to have worked yourself through, like yoga for me helped build strength I guess, not like I was super strong but I mean endurance I guess where you can do more, so if it wasn't for yoga then I had to go back on medication and take some sleeping pills so that I could try and reorganize my sleep because I would sleep like all through the day and I'd be awake seven at night. And so I had to go through that like twice.
88. I: That sounds like a tough time for you.
89. N: Yeah my mom didn't know if I could graduate but I did finally, I finally came around towards the end of my senior year but it was rough, and that's probably the only thing that I could think of.
90. I: So back when we were thinking about your life being in chapters a little bit...
91. N: But that would probably a chapter, I didn't really think of that.
92. I: Yeah I was going to ask which chapter that might be in.
93. N: Oh gosh, that probably is the chapter of when we lived in [Town E] which was outside [City B], so that would be in that chapter, just along that chapter, that was the longest time I'd ever lived in any one place and we were there for six years. That's the longest I've ever lived anywhere, I lived in... I was born in [City F] and I lived there for two years and then we moved to [Town F], [State H] and I was there for two and then [State A] for five, here, [City C], for three and a half and then six years outside [City B] and then now I live here as of [month].
94. I: Okay, you have had several moves there.
95. N: Yeah, it's all in the South though, I mean I don't know [...] anything about people further north, but they're American so it's probably so much the same.
96. I: Okay so that was in the [Town E] chapter as you said, okay.
97. N: Yes.
98. I: Have you experienced times when you felt profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning?
99. N: Definitely around the time when I had mono because I had no meaning, I felt like I didn't have any meaning because I couldn't do anything at all except watch TV, I watched TV probably more than I should have. But that was all that I could do, so definitely during that period, I couldn't even go to church, I didn't even feel like reading anything spiritual, I

- didn't feel like doing anything. So definitely during that time it was like thinking back to it, it just feels like this hole because first off I can't remember [...] anything because I slept half the time, but second of all, that can also be taken a little bit more symbolically as well but definitely that time. And then also that time when we lived in [Town E] and didn't really feel like a group or a part of anything or didn't really have any friends to hang out with, that was probably a little discouraging, not as much as that time when I had mono, that was probably discouraging as well. And then not feeling close to God whatsoever and that was during the time I wasn't going to church because we couldn't find a church and anyone to talk to about stuff like that anyway and so at that time I was like well what is there and even when we did go to church so, it just wasn't anything, like I didn't- I would leave church not feeling any closer to God, I would just actually feel worse because some other churches can put God in a box like I said and also it can be disillusioning to themselves and put too much in people and they don't let, I guess, God move in the service. And they take more trying to interpret out of the bible as opposed to just reading the bible sometimes and just taking it for what it is. They're trying to water it down and so sometimes leaving churches where it's just a bunch of water, you don't feel... I would feel even further away from God. So times I suppose where I felt really far away from God, which was actually a lot more than I thought of, was when we lived in [Town E] and when I had mono, probably the two times that life just didn't feel like anything.
100. I: Mhm, so help me get this straight a little bit, you were in [Town E] for six years, but it was one of those years while you were there that you had mono, is that correct?
101. N: Yes.
102. I: Was that kind of the middle of the time you were there, or?
103. N: Yeah it was around the middle.
104. I: So you...
105. N: Yeah we moved there, I had just turned 12 or 13, I can't really remember which one and then I worked all that next summer at this little soda [...] /drug store, one of those old things I don't know what they are or not.
106. I: Mhm
107. N: I worked there pretty much all the time because I was homeschooled at the time, I didn't know anybody and we'd just moved there, so work was like my life for me, so also when I had mono, I couldn't work at all and that was like taking away my life.
108. I: Mhm.
109. N: Like I didn't feel like I had a life and that was far the deepest, darkest time.
110. I: Okay alright, so that was just a little bit of the review of your life and some things there and I understand now kind of your chapters and how many years you worked several places and I'm going to check this recorder one more time, looks like it's still going, so that's good. Okay we're going to talk just a little bit now about your relationships and I know we mentioned it a little bit at the beginning of this too. But focusing now on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship with them?
111. N: Well I don't see them as often so we're not as close but we do talk a lot, we do get along, they're happy with where I'm at, there's not unspoken, there's no grudges and it's good. It's where I want it to be, I'm satisfied with those relationships.
112. I: Okay and we talked a little bit about this again earlier, have there been changes in your perceptions of your parents over the years and if so what caused the change?
113. N: Well one day, before when we were living in [Town E], we were all going through

like a rough time, that was when we had the girl from [European country] staying with us, but she wasn't there that day. And we were all stressed out, we were all... it was just a bad time in that day and my dad had come back from being gone for a super long time and I will never talk to him like on the phone like I wouldn't hear from him at all and now when he's gone we talk, but anyways, that one day, dad came back and we were all upset and so he's like, well I'm going to go to [State A] because it's just an hour and a half away from where we lived and he was going to go there to go to the church that he's gone to since he was a kid. And when we don't see him for so long and then he leaves it would hurt my mom and I think they went through a point where they almost got a divorce or things were like super rough. And we could see that and it affected me and my sister so it was just a really bad emotional time and so we came in and said that and my mom just like went off because my mom is the kind of person who's super quiet and she's - this is a bad word - submissive, but that's a really bad word, but you know what I'm saying, she's not like type a personality and so she went off and me and my sister were like taking her side because we felt the same that she did or we thought she did just because we spent all of our time with her and not my dad. And so finally instead of just storming off into different rooms as usual we sat down around the table for once and actually had a discussion because we do confront each other but we never - before that we hardly ever solved something and that was like a big difference and confronting someone and actually coming to a conclusion and on the table we pretty much just put everything on the table; dad said how he felt like we didn't even want him to be home, he felt distant from us and like he teared up and my dad like never cries. And then my

mom was just over there, just all worked and couldn't even say anything (laughing) and me and my sister were saying how we felt but I don't even remember exactly what was said, but at the end of it, from that point on like we could talk to each other, we were closer and we knew how each person felt about the current situations that were going on. And from that major point, things have been going up but before that my relationship with my dad was not the best you know what I mean.

114. I: Mhm.

115. N: There was just no connection, like it was just a big gap but we were still nice like hi, [...] you a gift and how's school; but there is nothing, I would never talk to him about anything else besides just general topics that you'd talk with, to a stranger.

116. I: Mhm.

117. N: But from that point, the relationship with my mom, my dad and all of us as a whole; as a family got a lot better but over time, but that was the major point.

118. I: Okay. Are there any other current relationships that are important to you?

119. N: Yes, my boyfriend's, we've been dating for two and a half years now and he's in the military, so he's gone half the time like my dad. I guess probably I have that habit (laughing) and he's served in [area I] for a year and that was when we first started dating, I met him... he asked me to be his girlfriend and then he went away for nine months. So our relationship was all on the phone, like we had no memories with each other to keep our relationship with, but that was also during the time I had mono and I had nobody to talk to and nothing to do, so he would call me from [...] all hours of day and night whenever he had a chance and he was also going through a hard time in [area I] with, dealing with the emotional part of being away and also the terrorist harassment because they'd throw their crap at you

- like literally and then also say things to you just to get inside your head. And so that was rough for him, so it was like we both needed each other at a different level. And so that probably was why we lasted so long through that was because we both needed each other and like got us really close emotionally. And then finally after nine months and he came home for his one week leave, my parents met him.
120. I: Okay (laughing).
121. N: But they did not tell him, my parents were like, why are you doing this, you're crazy, but of course sometimes when your parents say that you kind of go the other way just because they said don't, and you will. But it worked for the good actually and they met him and they liked him and since then he's become kind of like their own son because he talks to them almost like he talks to me about it. And so that relationship is really important and we still talk everyday and he lives in [City J], [State K] right now and so it's still kind of be him being far away.
122. I: Mhm.
123. N: But not as far. I mean he was also in [European country] for six months and so our relationship is based on, I suppose, emotions and that's not sometimes a good thing to base your relationship off of, your feelings, but at that level and that situation, it brought us a lot closer as opposed to us being together in person. Because when you're in person with somebody you're just interested in doing the activity more than you're in actually talking to the person. Because when you're together in person it's okay to not say something for like 10 minutes.
124. I: Mhm.
125. N: But when you're on the phone and you don't say something for 10 seconds, it's a really big difference, so we were always talking and so it brought us a lot closer I think and as if we were in person like our relationship went a lot further in a shorter period of time. So we're really close and he's like my best friend and even though I moved away from my family and my family has moved away from me, nothing has changed with our relationship, so I'm still really close to him and it's just like another day like after I moved away but I didn't have my family and he was somebody I could talk to about that without having to adjust things like with my family.
126. I: How did you meet him?
127. N: It was actually a wrong number and so...
128. I: (Laughing)
129. N: And that's not something I like to write about, it needs to be romantic but this is so romantic (laughing). There was a wrong number and then we just started talking and I live in [State H] and he was only after he got out of [AID] school in [State L] and he drove eight hours and that that was after Katrina something, when gas was like \$4.50. So that was actually romantic, but yeah we met and we hang out that weekend and then he went back home and then went to [Area I]. So he spends so much money on phone cards (laughing).
130. I: That's quite a story there, it really it is.
131. N: Yeah, it's not a normal dating relationship, he gets out in December and he's going to come up here and go to school, so I might actually get to have a normal relationship for once instead of, I think it would be better to do that and like date regularly for a time before we get married instead of just jumping to that point where we spend 24/7 together. I mean whenever he does home on leave it is 24/7, but I think there needs to be like an adjustment before it's never seeing him and then seeing him all the time.
132. I: Mhm.
133. N: But that relationship is up there with my family.

134. I: Okay you mentioned your parents and then now your boyfriend, I know you've mentioned your sister earlier and you said you had been close, but maybe not as much right now?
135. N: Yeah, she moved to that other high school and she's busy and my sister is one for people, she needs friends and people like that's where she gets her satisfaction from and for me it's not like that I'd rather have a few close people like my family, that's all that I need. But she needs to go and do stuff and have [...] to do and all those sort of things so it's like that and then on top of all the school work and sports that she does and trying to hang out with all those friends all the time every second that she can get because that's what she likes, that's what makes her happy. Then it's like... and if I'm not there, well, then too bad, but that's just [Charlotte]. and that's why like she always gets hurt, I guess more than me because she puts too much stock in people and I try and tell her that all the time and she's had a best friend that stabbed her in the back and she just had another one and a couple of guys and I'm just like, people are going to be people, especially in high school, you can't just like... but she just stubborn (laughing), she doesn't listen to me and it is because I'm her sister. But she talks to my boyfriend sometimes and she listens to him, so it's good because he says the same thing I do, except he says it as a guy. So it's way more straightforward but yeah I don't know she... we're different people but we get along really well when we're together.
136. I: Mhm okay, is there anybody else that you would say that's really important to you at this point in your life that is in a relationship?
137. N: At this point no.
138. I: Mhm.
139. N: My grandparents, they're very sweet and support of me in college and we've always been ... I never lived where they've lived, so they've always been the long distance grandma I guess, never the one that lives like down the road so they all send me stuff. But now that I'm in college and I'm living by myself like one my grandmothers, she'll send me cards all the time with like \$20 in then, she'll talk to me on the phone sometimes, she actually called me last night. And she never used to call me at all and this is the one that doesn't know how to express her feelings so that relationship is better than it has been in the past, too because I can talk to her better now that I'm a little bit older than when I was a kid but ... and then Monday she sent me two giant cookies that says 'I love [Madison]' and then the other one says 'Faith, hope and love' and so they're sweet and they're influential and encouraging, but I wouldn't say that they're like one of the major relationships but I don't know what I'd do without them.
140. I: Mhm okay, alright. We'll switch gears just a little bit, what groups or institutions or causes do you identify with?
141. N: Well since my major is chemical engineering and most of that field is guys, I'm kind of a feminist...
142. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
143. I: So I had asked you what groups, institutions or causes do you identify with and you said a little bit chemical engineering before we were interrupted.
144. N: Yeah and it's a field that's predominantly guys and it's kind of like you against the world as a female so I'm kind of a feminist just because I think... not that women need to have more rights but I just wish they wouldn't be so generalized, but a lot of women today reason for us to be generalized around like my age and stuff.
145. I: When you say generalized what do you mean?
146. N: Generalized like stupid and just want the guys' attention and aren't independent that

- much and I don't know at least the media portrays women like that but the media has always portrayed women kind of just stereotypical, especially like when I was in sociology class they talked about this a lot. That especially like women that were in the 60s and stuff like that commercials and stuff, they'd always be the housewife and now it's kind of away from that a lot which is great for other career women and I want to be a housewife myself but I also want to have the opportunity to have a career and stuff. And so that's a good medium but the media presents the women as just a sex image and I think that's, I mean the way that women do portray themselves nowadays, that's kind of true but it's not general and I don't really like that. And so like whenever I go into engineering classes at the beginning of the semester that's how you're looked at and you're looked at, my hair is dyed blonde so they're looking at like why are you in this class and for a little while before it's like you have to earn respect. And I know you have to do that in everything but like it just seems like you're thrown to the dogs almost and a lot of guys, like I've had to learn how to deal with different types of guys; the guys that will respect which is great and the guys will hit on you and the guys that treat you like crap. Just because that's who that guy is and so it's helped me become more assertive in dealing with people which is nice because as I've kind of always been a little shy about that but ... so I guess I'm a little bit of a feminist. And then causes, I'm not really sure I mean I just do school all the time (laughing).
147. I: Mhm.
148. N: It's all that I do, I mean I'm not really right now a part of any group because I'm focused on school but then probably when I get out of school I'm sure there'll be stuff like I can get into [...] better.
149. I: So do you consider feminism a group, a cause or an institution?
150. N: I'd say a cause.
151. I: Mhm.
152. N: Honestly because it's not like a set group like there is a group of feminists over here and I don't think it's an institute so yeah I'd say cause and ...yeah.
153. I: Okay.
154. N: I'm just a student right now, so I don't know, whenever I was a young girl I was homeschooled and stuff so all I would like work and do school and then when I did go to high which was my senior year in high school, I was of course in that same time, so I was already excluded, so I just, kind of the outsider and that's why I hang out with a lot of the Hispanics and other foreign exchange kids because I was in their same situation which was so weird but that's how it was. So I've always kind of like ... well when I was in high school before that I always kind of felt like an outsider, first because I was home schooled and you just hang out with home schoolers you didn't get with groups like that whenever I was homeschooled and it's really hard for me even then to relate with homeschoolers just because it's such an extreme section of homeschoolers. You have the geniuses that don't know how to socialize or you have the ones that aren't in school because they've done something wrong socially and so they have to and they have no other choice but to be home-schooled and there's hardly any in-between.
155. I: Mhm.
156. N: And so even as a homeschooler I didn't even feel like one, I don't know, I just always never really felt like a part of any specific group so... until now, and then here in college and especially at [City C] State, it's a community college, so you deal with a wide range of people at a community college, so it's not as bad. And when I was at senior school, I didn't hardly ever go to the high school because I dual enrolled and so I went to [University M] and that was a private university.

157. I: Mhm.
158. N: And so... but then again I wasn't really a student there, I was a dual enrolled student so I was still in the outside and I don't live in the dorms. And then last semester I was at different community college but of course it was in that same area, so I was still on the outside. So here I'm just now feeling I'm getting back involved which is a good feeling, like I don't feel as lonely I suppose. But I don't know how to... I don't think I'm part of anything (laughing).
159. I: Okay, I was asking why are they important to you and you've mentioned a little bit why feminism was important to you.
160. N: Yeah, just because you have to stand up for yours- or I have to stand up for myself like everyday all the time but now that it's towards the end of the semester and I've kind of found my place in the classes and it's not as bad as the beginning. Like we would, projects at the beginning of some of classes and I would say something and nobody would- in that group at least nobody would listen and then at the end I would turn up to be right because what they said didn't work.
161. I: Mhm.
162. N: So after having to go through all that, finally they will listen and stuff but now I'm in a good group but then again it's at the end of the semester and I've kind of found my place in class but the next semester we kind of have to do it all over again but that's probably why it's important to me, it's, I've learned to have to deal with that and I don't like doing it. (Laughing).
163. I: (Laughing)
164. N: I prefer not to, like I'm the only girl in my design class and that's the one that was rough at the beginning because I walk in and it's like you're hitting a brick wall because they all look at you first because you're a girl and second of all they're like what are you doing in the class; so like you walk in and it hits you like that and you just have to find the seat.
165. I: Mhm.
166. N: And I was so nervous on the first day I didn't expect it really to be like that so from that point on that's probably why I guess I kind of [...] myself as a feminist I wouldn't have really noticed to call it that.
167. I: Okay, alright. We're going to move on then and talk a little bit about your present values and commitments, do you feel that your life has meaning at present and what makes your life meaningful to you?
168. N: Yes I feel like it has a meaning because I feel like I'm working towards something which is my degree, right, and then I also feel like it has a meaning because I'm at a good point with my family and it's not just a monotonous thing. I get a package from my grandmother that makes my day, it feels like life has meaning, it's not like, "Hi, how are you" - "Great, I did school." - "Okay talk to you later." It's not like that and it does feel like it's not just growing [...] like if... well it is but it's not just like, I don't know where it's going, I know where it's going, I have goals to get there and it gives me meaning.
169. I: Mhm.
170. N: I suppose it gives me something to work for. And why...
171. I: What makes your life meaningful?
172. N: I guess like overall what makes it meaningful?
173. I: Mhm, just in your own feelings, when do you feel that life is meaningful, I mean what types of relationships or happenings or feelings give you meaning?
174. N: Well probably when I'm with people that I care about which is my family and /or my boyfriend because I feel like that's where I need to be, that's with the people I get along with, those are the people that I love and in that I find comfort and meaning I suppose.
175. I: Mhm.

176. N: But when I'm not with them, which is the majority of the time, I feel like kind of lost in a sea of school work because that's all that it is, I go to school, I come home and eat lunch, I go back to school and then I come home and do more school.
177. I: Mhm.
178. N: Until... then I watch TV and [...] my mind so, I'm not thinking for a minute and then I just go sleep and do it over again. So whenever they come on the weekends like that's great, I feel like oh yeah I'm living again you know what I'm saying; so and I don't really like to... I don't party or anything like that just because that's my personal preference and just with today everything like that is just a little bit too sketchy and I don't put myself in situations where something could happen. And alcohol is bad and it makes me fat (laughing).
179. I: (Laughing) mhm.
180. N: So family and my boyfriend and people I care about, spending time with them, makes life feel more- it makes life more enjoyable and just being with people just because you have to be with those people, like in a classroom, you know what I mean ... yes you're working towards a goal and that is really fulfilling when I do well on a homework or I do well on a test that is so fulfilling for me.
181. I: Mhm.
182. N: And so is my family but I, like, I need both, and right now I'm just getting most of the school work fulfillment feeling (laughing) of success I guess you can call it that little step, all those steps and that's encouraging and that does make life feel meaningful but you need more than just that I think because life is more than just knowledge.
183. I: Okay, if you could change one thing about yourself or your life what would you most want to change?
184. N: Well I don't know... let's see, one thing about that I would want to change; probably the fact that I can be a little controlling and kind of OCD, like everything has to be a certain order and that's good to a point but sometimes it goes a little bit too far and I like stress over it, but it used to be really, really bad, about that before I got mono like I kind of used to be a control freak like to a degree where you're like 'oh my God she's a control freak,' it's not just my opinion like it would be other people's... (Laughing) then when I got mono that did bring it back significantly. It's because I wasn't in control of my life and nobody really is but there is a point where you can say okay today I'm going to do this and this and this and [...] but now it's not as bad but it's still sometimes to the degree I catch myself stressing out over something that I shouldn't, like oh my God she has [...] and like stress out to an unhealthy point where I wish that I didn't do that as much because it's not healthy. And there is no need to get in that place and mom and stuff says there's no need to get worked up over something like that you just need to do your best. So [because] of me it would just be more of a moderate level of control I suppose.
185. I: Okay alright, are there any beliefs, values or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
186. N: I believe that it is important at least for me and for other people to mature yourself spiritually because you can never stop growing in that, it's like you never stop learning but because all I do is school work, I don't devote that much time to that, like I feel like I should to meet that desire that everybody has and that is important to me, I guess that would go back to the thing that I would want to change, like that I could do more of that and know maybe a little bit more people that's interested in that as well, it could be more accountability as opposed to just by myself because there's only so much that

- you can take from that. But sometimes I think it is good to like step back from being involved in everything in church and step back and think and like try and reflect on just your relationship with God as opposed to your relationship with the church and the activities. I think there needs to be like a healthy balance between that and I've been in the balance where it's just the activities and no God and now I feel like it's just me and God but it needs... that relationship is not as close as it should be.
187. I: Mhm.
188. N: And that's where church can help or people that believe the same as you can help but I need to like find that balance because that is important and I haven't really found that yet just because of circumstances and I guess I'm not trying as hard, I suppose, I mean there is nobody to put the blame on but yourself and the circumstances, so it is important to me, it's just.... I just haven't done it, I suppose, that would be one thing I would change too (laughing).
189. I: (Laughing) you don't have to go back and make a list, anything that you think of you want to say we'd love to hear that so, okay. Those were beliefs, values and commitments that seemed important to you right now, when or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
190. N: With the universe?
191. I: Mhm.
192. N: Like does that mean people, the divine and nature like all in one?
193. I: Yeah tha- the universe the big picture, however you think of the universe being?
194. N: And what was the question?
195. I: Most in- when or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
196. N: Probably when I feel like I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing and I'm helping other people in the same way, whenever I tutored the Hispanics I felt like I was really helping them and I was helping me like to get past myself. And in that I felt that, feeling that everything that I was doing I was supposed to do or at least something that... and then also whenever I worked all the time I got to know the people I worked with and the regulars really, really well like their birthdays and their growing kids and all that sort of thing. So it was like an extended family and family is important to me and so like being close to them and recognising when they are not doing well and talking to them and them noticing that you care. It was all like a balance and so that was really important and then when I had like mono I didn't have that and I was like [...] But we are working together with people like, I worked with two old ladies who sometimes took advantage of me because I was young and I would do whatever they told me because this was just my first job. So I pretty much did everything that they told me and it got to the point where I was running myself rampade and that is also why I realized. But anyway and by learning to be able to talk to them in a way that they could hear you out and both of you take something from that like come to an understanding and then working with the people that you work with and the customers which was like a family. Just like it didn't have to be that way but to make it that way felt good, whatever the question is asking.
197. I: Communing in harmony with the universe.
198. N: Yeah, that is [not harming us]. And then Christmas, it was harmonous not all the time, not all Christmasses, but when you get to that point where nobody is working, nobody is thinking about school, you are just together as people. Just thinking about what you can do to make the other person happy, that is also the other- the third thing for me.

199. I: Okay. So people seem very important to you.
200. N: Yeah, they are, but I try not to worship people and my sister kind of goes there a little too much, I think, to the point where she gets herself hurt and that is not healthy so.
201. I: Mhm. Okay. What is your image or model of mature faith and a mature response to questions of existential meaning?
202. N: Who is my model, or what is my model?
203. I: What is your image or model with mature faith? Or of a mature response to the questions of existential meanings? The questions, 'Why are we here'?
204. N: I think Job in the bible is a really good model just because he went through everything that all of us could ever go through all at one time and it tells us about it in detail what he thought and what his friends thought and what God thought and I think that is a good model at least. Anyway to no matter what you are feeling, like you can go back to that book in the bible and kind of find a moderate explanation. I suppose and then also the book of Ecclesiastes talk about life a lot as a whole and how it is meaningless, like how people can raise certain things to such a level that is not important anymore and now God can just- or nature can just take that and just throw it all away. The Casinos down there in Mississippi and stuff like all it takes is just one thing like that and it is all gone so then what is there in life? And so I think you can find the answers, maybe not the answers but helps you come to an understanding in Job and in Ecclesiastes so like would imagine- Like for me, whenever I do not understand something like that like- And I will talk to my boyfriend or something but if I wanted to get something a little bit more deeper I suppose. I go there, that is just me, just because it has worked in the past and I am going to keep doing it till it stops working so...
205. I: Okay, when you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it?
206. N: Well first of I talk to my parents after I think it through, two times, maybe more. It really depends on this decision but usually I try and make sure that I am making the right decision before I do it.
207. I: Mhm.
208. N: Now when I came today with my boyfriend that was, like I said purely like emotions.
209. I: Mhm
210. N: But most of the the time I try and base it of off logic and people's opinions who I care about, but I do not let it like override what I think, I need to do, but yeah. What was the question?
211. I: When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it?
212. N: Yeah that is pretty much how I do it?
213. I: Could you give me an example of a decision you had to make?
214. N: Let's see. Well, as a student, my decisions might not be that big of a deal as the other people but whether or not to live on campus or off campus is a big decision for me as a student just because it is either you commute but you have your own space or you live on campus, don't commute but you share space with like a 1000 people. Like for me that is a big decision so that's actually the one that I am kind of trying to make right now. So yeah, I weigh out the decision like the pros and the cons logically and then I explain it to somebody else like my mom or my boyfriend or something like that, or even classmates. I am close with some of my classmates but not as close or have the ties set with me and my boyfriend, me and family, so of course I am going to like go to them as my main decision, I guess, but I will talk to others just because it gets like a fresh

- perspective but I am not just going out to some random person and like, “what do you think I should do?” but I will think about it logically, the pros and the cons, and then I will talk to my family or my mom and my dad or boyfriend or somebody in my class, whoever seems the most relevant to and then decide from there. Like if I am going to decide like which teacher I am going to take this class for, I am not going to ask my mom, like I am going to ask somebody I trust at the school or somebody who has taken a lot of the classes. So I guess that is how I base my decisions but right now my decisions are academic decisions [...] I give in the answer but that is really what I do with everything, whether it is trying to find a place to work. I am not working right now though but I have worked a lot of places before so that is pretty much how I make most of my decisions except to date my boyfriend. Which is probably good because I probably wouldn't have dated him if I had thought about it logically because this is long distance but now like looking back, like I do not regret it at all because he helped me become a less of a control freak and that everything is okay because he is not a control freak at all. He is like go with the flow so like between me and him we kind of find a balance for both of us personally, that has nothing to do with the question but (laughing).
215. I: It is, about your decision making so. If you have a very difficult problem that you are trying to solve to whom or what would you look for guidance?
216. N: A difficult problem. Can I use the answer from my last question?
217. I: Sure.
218. N: I mean it is pretty much I think the same thing for me, like for somebody else this [...] but like I don't know, I don't really, do not have that many difficult problems. Sorry.
219. I: I think it could be good if you do not have difficult problems.
220. N: Ask me in like five years and it will be really different.
221. I: You have mentioned this a little bit before but maybe you can explain a little bit more what you think about this, in this question. Do you think that actions can be right or wrong and if so what makes an action right in your opinion?
222. N: I think the consequence of the action whether it would be right or wrong because there is consequences to everything that you do. If you do something right, there is going to be a consequence and not like it's a bad consequence. Like most people, when you say consequence they think of a bad thing but it also can mean a good consequence and a bad consequence. Like my action, like let's say, I do not know like any example of life that you have to do with like, I can't think of anything. Like there is a good or, there is a good and/or- There is a good or a bad consequence to everything I think and to know whether or not the action that you did was right. I mean you have to look at that, for like instance dating my boyfriend, at first there wasn't any like good consequence that came out of that for my parents at first because for them they had no idea why I was dating him long distance. They hadn't met him, I hardly knew him. I mean that was, at that time that was a bad consequence for me and my parents' relationship but then I was also going through a bad time with mono and everything, but in the end the action of choosing to date him has been very beneficial for me and my family and him. I mean it just depends on what consequence comes out of the action I think.
223. I: So just help me understand so I have this clear, so do you think an action can be right or wrong?
224. N: Yes I do.

225. I: Okay and so what, then you said for something to be right was the consequence?
226. N: I think so.
227. I: What about what makes an action wrong, is it kind of what you were saying right then or do you want to say more about that or?
228. N: What can make an action wrong is we choose to do everything like nothing is particularly involuntary. I chose to come here whether or not that will be a good or bad consequence of my answers is up for reasoning but we choose to do everything but not everything has a good benefactor I guess to what you do. So I think that an action can be wrong but in the end like that one verse says, 'Everything works out to good for those who love God.' God is going to get his way; God is going to do what he is going to do in somebody's life whether it is someone who murders someone, goes to jail and then finds God and comes out and can talk to and minister to people, that I can never. I mean that was a bad consequence because he killed someone but God can take something wrong and make it what he wants it, and make something better out of it because that's just what God does. So yes there is right and there is wrong but God is in control and he is the one that laid the right or the wrong; the evil and the good. That he can take anything evil and make it good. Just like Satan was an Angel before he fell from Heaven, I mean he was good and then he got in the way of himself and God and now he is evil so, but anything that Satan does to try and work against God, God cannot always take it and turn the person or the situation into what he wants and to his will.
229. I: Okay, are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances?
230. N: I don't know. I do not think that I am in the place to say that just because if it is anybody else but me I am not going to know the answer to that in a non-biased way or in a- I do not think I am in a place to give that answer or to determine or judge that. I just do not think that I am.
231. I: Okay. Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?
232. N: Yes. I think murder is wrong and I know over in the Middle East they do honor killings, you know, the women and they think that is right but it's wrong and any person who has a conscious knows that even those people, like inside. Maybe not someone who's grown up and is now like 50 and has always done that but as a person at least who is my age or something like that before the conscious is [being dead]; they know whether they want to admit it or not or acknowledge it or not and that thing I do not know if you have seen that show, that sister wives show.
233. I: I have heard about it on TV
234. N: Yeah they sit around on this couch after their day or something and, for the show and they talk about how they feel and how they justify that is right and they want this but then there is always...Like when it is just, they are just talking to that one girl or any other one of the wives by herself, she always says how she is jealous or something but then she tries to like, tries to justify that feeling like it is just me being selfish or something like that and they know. I mean they know that that isn't right for that per- Like her individual self, they know that that is not fair but they have like disillusioned themselves to think that it is okay but they still have that feeling. So yes I believe that there are things that are right and they are wrong and we have conscious, conciousses we do have that. Everybody does and it is whether we choose to kill it or somebody kills it for us or we will grow up where, that is just that one way of thinking and we don't but we all have a concious, we all know right from wrong and like the Indians, like they had no education at all but they did

- acknowledge that there is something bigger and something better than who they were, who they are and everybody has that same thing it is just whether or not we choose to listen to it or not.
235. I: Okay, we are moving on to kind of a last section here, where we are going to really look at religion and world view and do you think that human life has a purpose?
236. N: Yes.
237. I: And if so what do you think that is?
238. N: I think human life as a whole, not as, human life as an individual are two different, because each one of us is put on the world for something specific that we are going to do that nobody else can do because nobody has our DNA, has the certain attributes or whatever that we have, so there is only one thing that we can- I mean we can, we do a lot of things but there is only one thing that is like specific for us that nobody else can do, I suppose or leave a mark on the earth or however you want to put that. And then humanity as a whole does have a purpose, I mean, we are all here for something, so if we are all here for something individually, we are all here for something communally. So I do not think it's to make war on each other and bomb each other just because the old prices are high or something like that. I mean that's, I am not even going to get in that... As a whole, as humanity as a whole we are all people, we all have the same conscious, we all want the same thing. It doesn't matter if you are Japanese or Hispanic, we are all the same thing, we are the same people, we all want the same thing, so I do not believe it is right to hurt each other. And people do not like it when people hurt each other, I mean from a third person view, we do not like it when Hitler was doing what he did to the Jews. The Jews didn't like and half the Germans didn't even like it. It is just, people just loose themselves, whether it be in power or money or greed or just crazy ideas. I mean we just boil it down to good or bad. If everybody would just do a little bit more good, this world would be so much better like the people would just think for themselves because half the time people do not even think anymore, they just take what they hear and that's right and that is what that person said so that is good enough for me. I think if people thought for themselves and not become so robotic, I believe that in itself will make this world a little bit better, but the purpose for humanity as a whole. I am not God but I do believe it is not killing each other and causing strife and pushing over and stepping over everybody to get what they want, I do not believe that's right? And people who are stepped on they do not believe it is right, it is just the people that just loose themselves and whatever that might be, I do not know that just, that's not the purpose for humanity, that is all I am trying to say.
239. I: You seem like you- you feel strongly what is not the purpose.
240. N: Yeah.
241. I: But it's-
242. N: I do not want to like say something and like leave a bunch of it like I don't know if we all just did what is right, I mean, that in itself is good, I guess. I mean, I do not want to just blurt out an answer and I don't know what the purpose is for humanity, I'm just another person in the world but it's not I think what it is today. I do not think this what God or the Divine wanted; I don't think so because if it is- If this is what the Divine wanted, we would all be happy but we are not; we all wanted something more or something else and it is because either we haven't filled that void that is there naturally because we are human beings and we need the divine. It is either that because we have filled or yeah that is why.
243. I: Is there a plan for our lives or are we affected by power or powers beyond our control.

244. N: Yes I think, what was the first part of that question?
245. I: Is there a plan for our lives.
246. N: I am sorry.
247. I: I know and these are, sometimes have a lot of words on them.
248. N: Is there for our plan lives, yes but I don't know what it is, only God knows what the plan is for everybody's life and I believe to a certain extent we do have power over that just because we can choose right or wrong, but here is always something, the Divine or God or whatever, God is in control of the big picture. He is in control of what happens, like me taking that survey and being here today. It wasn't just random, I mean that is something. Me, being back here in [City C] and trying to get a feel for life again and not feel like I am on the outskirts, that is something and I could be back- I could still be in [Town E] and not being happy but I believe to a certain extent we do have a choice. Like I could have chosen to stay there but I wanted at least something a little better than where I was at. So I chose to come here but I had the opportunity to come here, so I think there is both of those things play a part in our decisions.
249. I: Okay. Here is kind of the big one, what does death mean to you?
250. N: Well I try not to think about death (laughing) but it is real. I mean people die everyday, means death is real, what does death mean, it means obviously that we are not in the earth anymore. Where does that person soul go? I do not know but there- I believe that there is more to life than just right now; like just this life, otherwise there would be no need for right or wrong for good or evil. We wouldn't have a law at all, there would be no law, there wouldn't be any rules, there wouldn't be any boundaries. There wouldn't be any love or any wanting for love I think because we have all these ground rules that seem to be universal you know. The law, if you do this, you won't go to jail, if you do this you will have juvenile detention, but if you do this, you will get the Nobel Peace prize. There is a reward or a consequence for everything and death, it comes to everybody but because we have the choice of good and evil and right or wrong here on this earth, there has got to be something like that in the after life, however you want to call that. Otherwise like I said there wouldn't be any rules here on this earth and it will be all for nothing, so I think that it's all for something but we do not know until it happens, so you do the best you can.
251. I: Okay. This is a little bit along the same lines, it's just if you want to say more about it, what happens to us when we die?
252. N: Every religion, whether it would be the Indians or the Muslims or the Japanese or the Christians, there is an after life [...] as a religion and even Atheists have to acknowledge there is a right or a wrong because even if there is an Atheist teaching a class, he is going to promote no cheating, that is a right and then there is a wrong so what was the question? What is death?
253. I: What happens to us when we die?
254. N: I think that like every religion does have an opinion of what happens to us after we die, we either go to the good place or we go to the bad place. I mean it is just general of every religion, so that that many people over such a long period of time since the beginning of the world have that same opinion that there is going to be some, there is right or wrong inside. There is going to be a place, two places to go when we die, that's got to be important, that has got to be something significant, so I think there is something like that. What I don't know because I am just a human but I do know that there is something afterwards but to do the best here on this world that you can and not leave anything or any stone unturned or whatever or any

- experience pushed aside, I think would be a waste because you ought to get the most out of life but there is also the underlying factor that there is good and there is wrong but we have the choice to decide that for ourselves so they can either be good or they can be bad.
255. I: Okay do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual or faithful person?
256. N: Well I do not really, I have to say faithful just because I am a very loyal person just to school and to family and to work, I mean, everything I do I try and do as best as I can and try not hurt people or anything like... I just try and make every- I try and do the best that I can for other, the [...] people or anything and I think that's loyal which I also I think is a synonym to faithful but if that is asking my beliefs, like if I wanted to categorize my beliefs.
257. I: Do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual or faithful person?
258. N: Spiritual, I do not know if I would use that word just because that word is so strong and when I think spiritual I think of a pastor who knows the whole scripture inside and out and can apply to like everything, like that is what I think spiritual is because it is so strong of a word I guess to describe somebody. And then religious, I just kind of shun away from that word because that just sounds like nothing but tradition and that is all that it is. You probably heard of the thing now that Christians say it is a relationship, not a religion, probably heard that a thousands times, so like hearing that, that kind of I guess has changed how I see things so like that word doesn't really associate with I think like how I believe or what my thoughts are a part of me. So I guess I would have to say faithful.
259. I: Is there another word you would use other than those three?
260. N: Not that I can think of besides logical, but yeah faithful and I guess logical is what I would use probably.
261. I: Logical would be important for our future engineer. (laughing)
262. N: Yeah I hope so. (laughing)
263. I: Okay are there any spiritual or other ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you or have been important to you?
264. N: Have been important to me would definitely be baptism, just because it's super symbolic and I think this world of everybody meaning to see or feel something to understand it, it helps to have tradition and symbols like that in a religious setting or in a church or in a cathedral or a mosque or whatever, so I do think that some tradition like that is important, like baptism for me that was important. Not necessarily because I came out of the water feeling different, it was just something that you look back on and you can see it and you can feel it. And then whenever I went to the Catholic church, I went on Ash Wednesday and it was Ash Wednesday service and I had never been to Ash Wednesday Catholic Service before and they put the ash on my forehead and that was really symbolic and it was like I do not know... I don't know, it was like a feeling that I never like had before, after they did that just because I have been raised like the other side of that religion and so it was really interesting to have that happen and so I believe that that is important.
265. I: When you said you went to the Ash Wednesday Service, you said you had never felt like that before, what did you feel?
266. N: I do not know, actually I just felt really like reverent and humble and humble because like we are from ashes, we are going to go back to ashes, it just kind of helps reshape your perspective on things, like helps you re-evaluate yourself a little bit in life and God; everything, so it was good. It was important, I think is important. And symbols of course is the cross; you see that everywhere. I think the

- meaning behind it gets lost a lot. I mean, it's just, "look, oh it is a cross." Someone died here, oh there is a cross. I think that meaning has lost its significance or importance actually, so that is sad but like I said in this generation or in this time period where the- I do not know like my generation's time period it helps with everything going on, you can get on the internet and you can find anything you want and you can see pictures and you can understand it. I think in the religious and the spiritual world for this time period is really important to be able to understand it in a tangible instead of untangible because when it is completely untangible for this time period and especially my generation it is almost like unimportant, it is like, it just goes in one ear and out the other but to like go to service like Ash Wednesday Service or to say baptism, like it helps, like you grasp that meaning and importance of that especially, for like me and people like my age and stuff and I think that is really really important to be able to mature spiritually or to reshape I guess and rejuvenate that.
267. I: Okay. So for you symbols make your faith tangible?
268. N: Mhm yeah, but you don't want to get lost in that, just getting lost in... We go to church, we stand up, we sit down, we open the bible, we close it, we get a hymn, hymn [...] we open it, we close it, like that is not what I am talking about. Like that can also be the other end of the spectrum and I think there is not that many like churches that I have been to that [concurrently] in the middle because this kind of goes back to like at a University or College you have the auditory learners and then you also have whatever the other people are called but it also can be applied like spiritually; like you need both. Like for me I am like the person who writes it down.
269. I: [...] probably.
270. N: And but, like at their Ash Wednesday Service it helped me in a different way come to the same point as I would have just [...] whatever it's called. So yeah I think- I think it would be good like have colleges try and meet both people, both learners. I think it would be really good for churches and mosques or whatever to try and do both.
271. I: Sounds like you are almost talking about spiritual learning styles or something?
272. N: Yes I am, I don't know, it would have helped out like if you think about the people that are auditory learners are going to go to church where it is mostly like that and the people that need the tangible more are going to go to church, that is more traditional I guess, I never really thought about it like that.
273. I: Do you pray, meditate or perform any other spiritual discipline?
274. N: Yes I pray; I pray only not nearly as much as I should because that is how you talk to God; if you are not praying, you are not talking to God. Yeah I do; I mean I have grown praying but for a long time I was praying because it was time to pray. I was not praying because I wanted or needed to pray. Of course like if I was sad or angry or whatever; something was going wrong I mean yeah there- But you know, it took to me a while to come to the point where I would pray in both situations like in all situations. So in meditations, no sometimes I do like Yoga and then I get to the end like it's just, like I couldn't [...] I do not know if that is the same thing but yeah praying is important just because that is how I have been brought up and that is how you talk to God, at least that is what I think.
275. I: How do you go about that when you do pray?
276. N: Well it helps me to pray out loud, but half the time I don't, I just pray in my head and then I realize I am not even praying anymore, like I am thinking about something else in my mind or talking to myself

- about something else in my head and so I will try and pray out loud and whenever I do pray out loud, which hasn't been in a really long time, that is actually better for me because I do not lose my train of thought which I do all the time. And I used to, whenever I was closer to God than I am now in my opinion, I used to pray like on my knees and out loud and that was probably the best type I guess for me because first of it's symbolic and you can't forget about praying first of because you are praying out loud and you are on your knees, like that is what you are there to do and it is also I guess symbolic because it is like, "here I am, God. I am giving you this time." This is like for you, instead of just when you have been trying to pray in my head and then just like coming out thinking about a chemical equation like I did last night. So for me that is how I would want to pray but it's not how I always pray.
277. I: Is there any other spiritual discipline that you practice?
278. N: I read the bible, I used to read, when I didn't have so much school I used to read some spiritual books. I have read one by C.S Lewis, I forgot the name of it though but that was really cool. But the one that was actually, probably the most impactful was by Mark Twain, it was called *The Stranger* and that one told it in the devil's perspective and he was talking to this little kids. So you kind of get the innocence of the kids opinion in the story and that was a really different approach and that was probably the most impactful piece of spiritual; I do not know if you would call it spiritual literature that I have ever read but that one was really good. But other than that, spiritual rituals, I mean I do not think there is anything else than that and then of course when you go to church, sometimes they do communion; I do not know if that is a ritual; is that a ritual? It's a tradition.
279. I: Whatever, spiritual discipline.
280. N: Well, then I do communion.
281. I: Mhm, okay.
282. N: We do it on Ash Wednesday.
283. I: Okay.
284. N: So that was the first time I had been to communion and it had real wine and it seemed like all these little kids; I mean do not think that it is a bad thing, I am just like wow!
285. I: It is just different for you.
286. N: It was, yeah but it was like it wasn't a big deal because sometimes at the Baptist churches and they do communion and then even when they talk about like wine and it's like way over here and it's like shining in that like in the Bible God said, 'Drink wine,' like he said, drink wine, so I just think that this goes back to when people put God in a box. Jesus came to earth and like crushed the box because all the spiritual leaders thought they had it and God was like no, you are all wrong. There was like no box; like yeah. So I just think people like try and control it like I can tend to do and that is where you lose yourself and you can lose God. So I think when I do feel closest to God is when I think I have surrendered to him and that minute that he is in control, he always is, but it is me like coming to that revelation or whatever where I feel like I can see more of God's hand in my life because it is always there, it is just, you do not see it; you do not pay attention. It is like learning Spanish like if you do not know the language and you do not pay attention to it. You are not going to know what they are talking about so like you have to come to that level and it's, all it is is just a mindset pretty much.
287. I: So what helps you be able to give over control to God or are there specific things that you can pinpoint?
288. N: It is usually an event you know like mono and not something to that extreme, but it is usually an event where I'm like,

- okay I am not in control. You know what I mean, if I was in a fight with somebody or some thing like that it is usually an event and now that I mean it is just the same when you pray, when you are going through a bad time, sadly it is just an event but it should be, that's why I respect like. I do not know if that is the right word to use but the Muslims' prayer thing you know, how they pray or something, sometimes like three times a day like I think that is good, I really do and I think we should do that as Christians.
289. I: Why do you think that is good, what appeals about it, appeals to you?
290. N: Just because like that we stay at a constant level whereas Christians, Islam are about 200 years ago but Christians nowadays it is like, well, they get to a good point, at least for me sometimes and then you get to a really low point where you do not even think about God, like you forget how to spell God and then you come back up and then you will stay a little constant and I do not know, it is just such a roller coaster. At least like for them from the outside, I am not, I am not evident to a mosque or whatever they are called but at least from the outside, at least they stay at that constant level now, I do not know how their experiences are, whatever, when they pray like that if they feel close to God or if it's just because it is time to do it but at least they do it; that has got to count for something I guess. I do not know if they pray like more at the end of the day like if we pray at least three times a day like we do, like try to do before meals; I mean that is something but...
291. I: Okay. You mentioned that, that you read the Bible and you had read some spiritual books along the way that have been meaningful to you; how did you come to, I guess how do you come to decide when you are going to read a bible, or that when you were going to read a spiritual book?
292. N: I used to have a set time like in the morning, like when I was home schooled that was just actually part of it, that was part of our homeschool or whatever, there was a set time to do that; there is a set time to go to church, pray before you go to bed. That is how I have grown up doing that but now that I am like on my own and stuff like now I just kind of do it before bed but for me it's honestly only because I have got everything else done and I have a little bit of time left for that, it's not how it should be but when is it ever. And whenever I do go to church a lot, I went to a lot of retreats; I went a lot of conferences; I went to a lot of revivals. I mean have seen like a lot of stuff like I have been in Methodist churches; I have been to Church of God; I have been to Pentecostal; I have been to Baptist. I mean and they are also different, I mean not like different beliefs but how they worship or whatever, is all so different and I have had lots of different speakers. I mean I have been to different concerts just kind of seen the whole show, I guess you could call it like that, it has got to be you to get there. It can't be, I mean that other stuff I suppose helps, but for me personally I tend to get lost in it too fast too soon before I get anywhere beneficial. So like I said before, it helps to get to a more even level between the two but that is really hard for me.
293. I: Okay I have got a few here at the end, what is sin to your understanding?
294. N: Well, as I have been taught sin is missing the mark and then trying to say that, like a dog is trained to bark but from experience, sin is, is when you regret what you have done but that is only when you even regret like if you even realize it. Like white lies, I do not even think about that half the time if it is that sin or not I do not know. Like for a long time in the bible murder is just sin and Jesus came and said hating is sin just as much as murder is; it

- turned the black into shades of grey for me but yeah there is right and wrong. But it is a lot like saying is, is sex before marriage sin, stuff like that and then there is also the certain circumstances for each different person, it's just for me like I don't want to... I do not know, it is so hard to categorize that except for feeling guilty after something, you know, if I steal something, well, duh, you know what I am saying but if I like found a pencil you know it is like how far are you going to go into categorizing sin because sin is such a big word but I have just been told it's missing the mark but for me it is whenever I regret what I have done like, if ever I cheat which is what I will do because I feel bad if I do it, once I get a good grade because then it doesn't even feel like it was my grade you know but I do not know.
295. I: Sounds like you feel a little bit of difference between what you were taught and what you think now?
296. N: I think everybody [...] or maybe not but some way or another. My mom went through the same thing, she was brought up way-way more strict than me. Her mom still goes to the same church and I don't think that is a bad thing but it is just one side of God and then my mom met my Dad; Dad is just [pentecostal] or whatever it is called; the left side and there is the right and so whenever we lived here and he would go to [State A] sometimes to that church but nearly as often because it was a little bit further and so it was hard for both of them to meet in the middle to find the balance and it was rough for our family at that time. And it just kind of like shifted my perspective of God because if he was, if God was God it shouldn't matter like you know what I am trying say. Like you just kind of, there are arguments over the same thing, just kind of got into my skin because of that is why I think that way today and that is why I think but- I do not remember the question...
297. I: It was, what is sin to your understanding?
298. N: To my understanding it is like I said but there is probably more to it than that and if you [...] my understanding is.
299. I: Okay. Well how do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
300. N: Like how it got here or like why or when?
301. I: Any or all of those, however you think about it really.
302. N: Okay well, where we lived in [Town E], there is town next to it that our address was, it was called [Town N]; you have heard of it?
303. I: I am from East [State H] so...
304. N: Really, you know where [Town E] is?
305. I: Mhm.
306. N: I like [Town E]. Do you know where [name of store] is? [Name of store] on xy street before the [certain bridge]; that is where I worked?
307. I: Okay I do not know where that is but...
308. N: Okay [Town N], I guess if you know that like just driving through there you can feel like this oppression feeling and we went to church there for like a while and even in the church it was just the weirdest thing, like I do not know if you would call it evil; I do not know what you would call it, evil, but it wasn't right but it was just this weird akward thing, presence that you could shake of until you like got out of there, I guess that is why I say [Town E] and not [Town N], even though our address is [Town N] but we went there because of that. I mean I do not know why it is, I do not know but it was just there it is not; it is part of the untangibleness that sometimes you just wish it was a little tangible so you could actually explain it or make sense of it but I am not saying like that is evil but it is something that you can feel, I guess supernaturally or whatever you want to call it. You can't not acknowledge it, not being from there; not being from there, I do not know but not

- being from there and coming there from [City C], it was like where are we so...
309. I: It sounds like it's something you felt they have a hard time describing?
310. N: Yeah and it really was, we tried to explain it to our friends here when we first moved up there and they do not know what we were talking about but I have known several people that came from here to go to [University M] which is in [City O] but it is not that far, it is like the same area who left like the week that they got there because it, but they can't explain it either to their family, like they do not know why, they do not know why they left like because they can't explain it but I understand because I lived there. I know several people that go here that were going to go there, I mean they just can't do that, I know a lot of people. There is something you can't not acknowledge I guess and I know what that has to do with the question.
311. I: How do you explain the presence of evil in the world?
312. N: Well obviously I cannot explain, but I do not know if you would call it evil but there is evil in the world, I mean people can feel it, I mean if I went to where they make the women wear all black and stuff, to the Middle East, that has got to be worse than, ten times worse than how I felt in [Town N]; that has got to be rough over there. Me being a woman and going over there, feeling how they feel and in the presence of the whole area and then seeing maybe like a bunch of guns for Armageddon. How they hail those things over there, I mean, that is not good, that is obviously evil, so I do not know how I would explain the presence of evil but it is here, just like the good is here; like the good for example could be a bunch of people volunteering with autistic kids that is not evil; you do not feel evil leaving there; those kids do not feel evil leaving there, therefore it is not evil so it, it has got to be good or somewhere near it. So it is here but I do not know how to explain it anymore than giving examples.
313. I: If people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?
314. N: Well that is obviously something the world has been working with since the beginning of time and people have killed each other over it since the beginning of time it is just because they do not know how to talk about it like the Christians or whatever that went on their crusades. I do not even know if they tried to talk about it, they just went over there and killed people. I mean if we all sat down like this and talked about it, simple questions, all of everybody's answers are going to be like near the same; there is good and there is evil. I mean even if they try to explain it away, they just contradict themselves. (laughter) I mean people are just crazy, what was the question.
315. I: If people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?
316. N: So they are already talking about, so they are disagreeing, is that what the question is?
317. I: Yeah if people already disagree, how can their conflicts be resolved?
318. N: I guess, I do not know if they are already disagreeing then.
319. I: If they disagree about issues about world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?
320. N: I don't know; I've never tried to like resolve a religious conflict, I mean people I hang [...] is in, it's a bible [belt] it's a bible [belt] everyone who did it anywhere else enough to have like a conflict or to have to even be a piece of again conflict personally, so I do not want to just like answer that question and not know what the heck I am talking about.
321. I: Well if you have any ideas, whatever you want to say on it just...

322. N: Well I know like with me talking with my friends just about basic stuff, it can become really awkward either because they do not feel the same way I do, they never thought the same way that I am trying to talk about or they do not care or they have something completely different. Now I have been in classrooms where people have gone at it; I don't even know why I didn't even think of that before, so I guess that would be kind of [...] as a different world view but I have been in classes where people have gone at it. Actually yeah, one of my teachers was talking about whether the death penalty was wrong and someone said something about our tax paying money, like going to feed all these criminals who are sitting in jail and we should all, just kill them all or something like that. Then I said, 'Well the first murder in the world, God didn't kill Cain because he killed Abel.' So I mean, I do not know if that is like a conflict and stuff but I do not know how you deal with it. I mean people are going to think what they are going to think but otherwise you can say what you believe and not regret, not saying it at least, I mean it is the least you can do. But there has been some instances where people who claim to be Christians and believe in Jesus and that are so holy have just gone out on the deep end and ended up affecting, like harming what they are saying and what they are trying to say. I think people can take witnessing or whatever you want to call it like way too far and I have seen that happen so many times and it is just so sad. Like sometimes, like I get to the point where I do not even know if I should say anything just because I would rather sometimes not say anything at all than like harm that person's ability or possibility of knowing God at a deeper level. I do not want to take them back like any little bit at all. So if me not saying anything keeps them at that point then I mean that's good enough for me sometimes but then there is times where maybe I should say something. It usually can also be like a conflict in yourself because, just because I have seen people that are Christians and just like jump of the deep end and like just go way too far and then they are, because they have done that to me and like my sister and you know it is just like... When do you know where to stop or where to start?
323. I: How do you personally come to a decision, when you should say something and when you shouldn't and you are in your own thoughts?
324. N: Well I haven't been in a situation like that in a while just because I haven't gone to church in a while and most of the time I do not say anything. In class the other day, one of the guys next to me was asking another guy about his church or something like that and saying how he didn't get along with the people at his church and he didn't know if that was like wrong or something, like you should love everyone in the church and they were talking about something like that and like I was listening and stuff but I didn't know whether to say, well I have been to 1000 churches and I have been to the point where you are and it is not wrong to leave if it's harming you spiritually. I mean it is not healthy but I did not know like should I say that or should I not but I did but I do not know if he heard me or he just sounded [...] only because I do not go to churchy. Like I am not a spiritual leader as that guy was that, or was considered that he was talking to so they forced like my opinion or whatever isn't as valid; it kind of be like just too grey but I do not know if he heard or understood what I was trying to say or not but I mean at least I said but what good it did I do not know. It is just hard for me to know whether or not to say something and help or not say anything and then be at the same point. Just because I have been in that situation where too much can be too much so I guess that answers the question somehow.

325. I: Yeah that is fine; I know we have talked about a lot of things. We have talked about a lot of things, is there anything else that you would like to say that is related to this before we end our time together?
326. N: Well I just wish that there is more stuff like what you all you are doing; at least to talk to different students, maybe to just help them understand their life tapestry or to sometimes talking about stuff like this can help a person understand where they are and what they believe but nobody asks us those questions like nobody does that so I think that's, and then of course nobody thinks about that or as deep as those questions are especially as students and so when it comes time to be an adult and not be in college anymore; you do not know where you are and I think something like that where you can talk to a person like this and all they do is listen and not argue back at you would be really beneficial for a lot of students who at least they could learn like where they are, no matter what religion or beliefs or how they have been raised but to just talk to somebody, to just explain it to yourself really because it is all you are like doing could be really beneficial for a lot of people who are uncertain, so that when they do walk out of the room or they graduate they know where they are and that can be really helpful. So I am really glad to be a part of this, I am glad that you all are doing this.
327. I: Well I am really glad you decided to participate because you seemed to have some things that you wanted to say and we do really appreciate that and I hope it has been helpful for you.
328. N: Yes it has and I know it will be helpful for other students as well, so I think something like this would be important to a lot of people, even if they do not even know it; I know that it would from a student's perspective.
329. I: Mhm okay, great.
330. N: Thank you.

B.3 Faith Development Interview with Ella H.

1. I: And everything that we do on here will stay anonymous even though it's voice right now, what will happen is after the interview, this information will go through somebody who will code the information anonymously, then all the [IF] files will be destroyed so you don't have to worry about like your voice being in any kind of identifier whenever we publish everything.
2. N: Yeah I'm not too worried (laughing)
3. I: (Laughing) it is just you know to let you know because some people do worry about [identity], and you can be as open as you want to and nothing will come back [...] to you at all in regards to how you respond. Did you have a chance to look over the questions at all?
4. N: Yes I did.
5. I: Okay, was there anything that you had questions for me about before we started?
6. N: Uhm, well there is some pretty broad questions in here, but I'll do the best I can.
7. I: Okay, well you can give me as much details where you feel you really want to elaborate and actually the more detail you'd like to give the better, because it helps us to understand better... and if there is something that you don't really feel that you have a lot of detail, that's okay too, but you know as much as you would like to give us little... as you would like to get the help us understand your point of view and where you are coming from, that really is what helps us. So if you want kind of start with... kind of reflecting on your life, are there any chapters that you would identify if you were... like say if you were writing a book, how would you identify the different chapters of your life?
8. N: Aah, this one is really hard, because when I think about my life, I think of it just kind of continuous, but if I were going to write a book, then I would have to break it into chapters. I think it would have to be based on the educational experiences I have had. So

there will be like primary school, high school, middle school somewhere in there, those will be the forgotten chapters. And then we will move into my bachelor's experience, then the work I did for my masters degree and then the last, well I guess there will be an epilogue, but the last major chapter would be the work on my PhD, and then the final in the epilogue which is been less than a year now of me working out in the real world, I put quotations around the real world because I'm still working in education so...?

9. I: Aah, were there any markers or events that stood out as especially important during those chapters or are there now?
10. N: Graduation (laughing) graduation is a big one; while in most of them I also had moving, so transitioning from one place to another place.
11. I: But aah... was there any particular reason that that stood up for you?
12. N: Well I guess whenever you move to a new location, not only was I starting a new part of my life with a different type of degree, a different type of education but also learning in different culture, having new surroundings, and so it may have pretty drastic impact on the way my life was lived, my daily routine and habits.
13. I: Are there past relationships that have been important to your development as a person?
14. N: Are there ever? Mhm... well of course everybody have their relationship with their parents which is really important, I also had a relationship... my ex-husband and I had been friends throughout high school and then we started dating at the end of high school and then got married um right about my sophomore year of college, and we were married for three and a half years and that relationship was really important to me and it kind of changed and evolved, but it was there with me, my divorce happened right before I finished my masters' degree. And so there was another transition that happened around the same point of me going and finishing my master degree and starting my PhD work of not having that relationship anymore. And then about half way through working on my PhD I met my current husband and he has been a huge impact on who I am now, and how I was able to make it through some difficult times.
15. I: Like I know that we are kind of moving along the series of questions and I think number three, and you were calling changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life, or way of thinking about things. Would you... what about kind of relate to that or?
16. N: Yeah my divorce definitely impacted my life significantly in the way I thought about things, and then meeting my current husband that really changed my life as well, um... whereas my first husband, he just kind of suddenly came in to my life, we were friends and then it just kind of slowly changed from there, with my current husband once we met we really did have this kind of link and it was a much more sudden change going from not having a significant person in my life to having a very significant person in my life. The birth of my daughter I guess would also be a change in relationship but that had a pretty significant impact. She was born... when I was in sophomore in college and she has played a major role in my, um, life and my determination to continue my education and my ability to get past some of the struggles that I have had, she's been pretty big, pretty huge (laughing).
17. I: I can relate to that (laughing) uh, how has your world to you changed across your life's chapters?
18. N: Aah, well I guess I still see myself as pretty young and I guess the biggest change is with each life chapter, I become less naïve about the way the world works and the way people deal with relationships, um, I see myself now as having a much better grasp on how people understand one another, and are involved in relationships, and I've definitely, has impacted the way I view others and try to

- help others, because I have this better understanding what can change your feelings for other people, what different circumstances are significant situations, what kind of impact that has long term, and so I guess I've just experienced more, we just changed the way I view kind of how people deal with relationships I guess.
19. I: How has this affected your image of God or the Divine, what does it mean to you now?
20. N: I think that I have a much... deeper understanding of God, um... Because when I was younger in school I have this very idealistic, you know, you wait until your parents come and then everything is perfect and you live happily ever after, and I just... I thought the best of people, and I still like to think the best of people but I understand that things don't always work like that, it's more complicated than that, and I think that this has given me a better understanding of how God have used people and their inability to relate to one another and his [seeking] for a relationship with us even though humans as a whole I think have a very difficult time with relationships. And so it has given me a better understanding, I think of where he is in the whole picture of trying to create a world where humans can get along with each other, and can also have a relationship with Him, and I have a much deeper respect for his patience with humans and our inability to deal in certain relationships.
21. I: Have you ever had a moment of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life [...]?
22. N: I don't know (laughing). I'm a pretty happy person in general and so I don't know if I can say that there has been moment of intense joy, um but that's a hard concept for me to kind of distinguish. Yeah I have been happy but I can be happy any day, I just... looking around at me and all the blessings I have it makes me feel immense joy and happiness. You know today I cleaned up my house, I sat down and I was immensely happy, now does the clean house make (laughing) me happy?
23. I: (laughing).
24. N: Is that a breakthrough, a breakthrough experience? I don't think so. (Laughing)
25. I: (Laughing).
26. N: But I just...this question is really hard for me um, I guess in a sense I constantly have these joyful happy experiences that reaffirm my beliefs that God is working in my daily life and that he wants me to be happy and he has blessed me so incredibly that there is very little I can do to ignore it. It's just everywhere.
27. I: Are there any in particular that stand out to you?
- (Pause)
28. N: I don't...You know the times where people would say, oh, this is what really stands out like the birth of my child, or graduation, finishing my PhD, I was happy but at the same time those events are more stressful and worries [...] to me [then] the everyday. And so I wouldn't say that those experiences held this kind of change in a life meaning because they are just so overwhelming to me. So it's...I can't really put my finger on any time where I have had such intense joy that it's changed my understanding...I don't know, my answer is not very good but that's what it is.
29. I: No, that's okay, you're just... if that's what it is, there is nothing wrong with saying like you know; I don't know. If something... if you think of something later though you can always go back and [...] now when I think about it and you [...] any time something suddenly jumps into your head. I mean, it's a lot to think about.
30. N: The joy of transcription, you can cut and paste (laughing).
31. I: It's true, on the other side have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life?

32. N: Definitely, when I was in high school my parents started going through a divorce. This was definitely a difficult time for me because our beliefs are that divorce is wrong and my parents had been together for 20 years at that point and there were a lot of things that were never right in my parents' relationship but as a child I couldn't really see those, I was kind of blind to that. So it was really difficult because not only did I have to deal with the fact that my parents weren't going to be together anymore, but I also had to deal with the fact that my father wasn't willing to work through the issues that were causing the problems. And they weren't just problems with my mother; there were also problems in the way that he dealt with myself and my sister. And so that...I would say that that point, that transition from before my parents divorced to after my parents divorced, was a key time for me to understand who I was because I couldn't be anymore a child of these people. I had to pull in together what my identity was and who I was going to be after this. A lot of people I think don't face this transition until they move out of the house and become independent, but in this process, since I was going to stay with my mother and I was going to support her because my father was not treating any of us correctly, I had to learn who I was right then and there and how I was going to deal with the situation. And so that crisis definitely affected me very deeply um and helped me...it did help me to grow stronger and who I was and what I believed, because I didn't have anybody to really depend on at that point. Another time of crisis I guess in my life was I unintentionally got pregnant. I didn't expect to but I did and it also challenged my beliefs because I didn't believe that you were supposed to get pregnant before you were married and this made me face who I was going to be and how I was going to deal with life in addition to the fact that now I would be responsible

for a new child. My ex-husband and I decided that at the time, that the best solution would be for us to get married so that our child would have two parents and we made it work for a long time and it was... our relationship was definitely not the worst thing in the world, we got along vast majority of the time and we did care about each other deeply. Which leads to the next point of crisis, he decided after we had been married about three and half years and my daughter was about three that he didn't want to be married anymore and at that point he started displaying many symptoms of an individual with bipolar disorder and a manic phase and so not only did I have to deal with the rejection of him not wanting to be married to me anymore but I also had to deal with this person who was my best friend and who had helped me get through my parents' divorce and who had helped transition to college, him changing into a person that I didn't even recognize. He behaved in ways that were, that were just so foreign to me. I would have never imagined he could have been who he became. And so that was probably...Even though my parents' divorce was a difficult time, my own divorce was more traumatic to me because it was so like I just did not see it coming. I had no clue that it was about to happen. And then the rejection I felt as well as seeing my best friend completely change just broke me apart. And to be perfectly honest, the next six months after he decided that we wouldn't be married anymore, I don't really remember much of that time. It was just so difficult. I would say that that kind of would be a time when I felt kind of this profound disillusionment about life and I had real difficulty hanging on to the meaning that I did have in my life. Of course I had my daughter and she was completely dependent on me. And so that... even though I felt...I am sure I was deeply depressed during those time. I had meaning because I had her. She needed me. There

was nobody else who could have filled my spot in her life. And I think that's the one thing that kind of brought me out of where I was in this deep, deep depression, was because she needed me. And I really did depend on my faith in God during those time. And I spent a lot of time in prayer and I spent a lot of time reading the bible and I think that also helped me to get through to help to see the meaning in my life even though I felt so desperate and so alone during the situation. So I think that's pretty much it.

33. I: I'm so sorry that you had to go through all that. [...] I know that's a lot for someone to have to deal with. Focusing on your present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them?
34. N: Well, I don't have a relationship with my father and haven't since I was in high school. Basically he took the stance that if I was going to continue to support and love my mother that I could not love him anymore. Um so at that point he basically ended his relationship with me and his entire side of the family also ended their relationship with me. So at that point after the divorce I basically lost half of my family because they couldn't let me have a relationship with my mother. I either had to pick them or her, there was no other choice. Now, my mother didn't feel this way but at the same time my father and his family were stalking us and were threatening us and so it was a pretty easy decision to go with my mom. She was always patient and loving and I know she would have supported me even if I had wanted to continue a relationship with my father, but it just wasn't possible, because of the stand that he took and so I don't have a relationship with my father. It was actually only about three or four months ago when my grandmother, my father's mother, called me and we talked for the first time in over 10 years. And I was skeptical but they had all changed and didn't really care about what

my mother was doing or getting even or anything like that, but after talking to her only a few times, I got the impression that she definitely had some ulterior motives and she wasn't trying to restart a relationship when we just said that, she could have a relationship with me, and at that point, I just had to basically say I can't do this, it's too difficult. [...] Basically forgive my father for everything, even though he would never ask for forgiveness and just be part of the family again, which I couldn't do. There's no way that I could trust them to be a part of my life again, if I wasn't completely sure that they really understood what they had done to me and understood that they couldn't do that in the future. They couldn't control me and they convinced me to give them information about my mother, information about other things. They —they were trying to manipulate me and...it's sad but I think that the only way that they understand how to relate to other people is in the fact that, you get what you need out of other people. Um so I don't have a relationship with my father. My relationship with my mother has been mostly good over the years, um. My mother has fought with lots of self esteem issues and sometimes-sometimes I kind of feel like I'm almost the mother to her, trying to help her get through things. At one point she had injured her knee and she had done it while she was at work and so she couldn't work anymore because it was the day care work, so she was picking up children and moving them around and with her knee injured so badly, she couldn't do that. She tried to go through workers [...], they basically denied her claims and said she didn't actually have an injured knee. So at that point she had no job, she had no way to fix her knee and no potential other income. So she had to move in with me, while I was in graduate school, and during that time, basically I was the head of the household. It was my house she was living in and she helped me in involvements so now but...I guess I kind of

- switched positions with her to where I feel like I needed to help her instead of feeling like she's my mom, she needs to help me. So it's... right now our relationship is somewhat strained because, she's in a relationship with a man who I'm not completely sure has the best intentions toward her but kind of once again, the parent child war reversal, I'm trying to warn her and help her but she doesn't want see any of this.
35. I: Mmh.
36. N: So that's kind of caused a strain on our relationship, but I'm hopeful that things would change in the future and that she and I will be able to have a strong relationship again.
37. I: Um...I know that we are especially kind of continue on to the change and perception, so I think you definitely covered that um, on what's really has caused them so, are there any other relationships or current relationships that are important to you as you are going through all this?
38. N: My husband is a huge, a huge rock of support for me. He definitely helps me to get through all my daily challenges [needs]. Just in last [summer], picked up, we had been in [Stae A in the south of the USA]. We picked up and moved to [City B in the north of the USA] because I had a job offer up here and neither one of us had ever lived this far north and he was willing to go with me and it's just, it's been so nice to have him here to, um, be supporting of me, and he's helped take care of so many other things that I couldn't do, starting a full time job, which is a pretty intense full time job, for some reason I got talked into teaching five classes a semester.
39. I: Oh wow. (Laughing).
40. N: (Laughing) which is a lot and these are all 1000, 2000 level classes, so I've got a lot of students and he's been able to help with taking care of our daughter who is technically his step daughter. He has been really helpful around the house, he cooks, he does dishes every once in a while and he's just, he's been really supportive of me and I'm not sure I could have expected that from any other man, to be willing to take up and move, because we were in [State A] and that's where his family lives but he was willing to pick up and move with me to [City B] where neither one of us has any relatives and we just had to start all over. He had to start finding a new job up here and he had to switch his license, his license was [...] and so you were tied to the state. Well he made this choice that he would come here and start the process to get a new license...and then, um and that was really difficult for him and that just makes our relationship even more meaningful and strong that he was willing to do that. Um and my daughter is a huge part of our lives, um. She's our only child, we've talked about others in the future but it just doesn't seem like the right time right now, because we are not really settled um, we are not sure that we are going to stay here in [City B] for another two more years or so. So it's one of those, what would we be bringing a child into.
41. I: Mmh.
42. N: So, well...that's a really important relationship and, we are going to tie eight and nine together. And [since] my church family has been a huge important relationship that I have. There are so many members of the congregation there who have been so kind and generous to us and they have helped us so much with this transition. Leaving our family behind in [State A] and um moving here. they didn't even know us hardly but when came in with the moving truck, there were 20 of them willing to help us unload our moving truck and help us clean up the house that we were moving into.
43. I: Wow. (Laughing).
44. N: Yes, It's huge. They have, there's never been a time where we have asked for anything from them that they have not been willing to step up and help with. Um they are so-so positive and it's made this move so much nicer, uh, and we've had church

- family, wonderful church families wherever we've gone and that's one thing I've basically learned through this time is that, if you can find a church, a church family then you've got family no matter where you go, there will be people there who are, if they are members of the church, they will help you and they will be your new family. So it's, that's been something that even though the phases have changed, those relationships that I've built have been really strong and really helpful to me across the last...my entire life, we'll just put it like that (laughing).
45. I: Mmh.
46. N: So that, and when I say church, I mean the Church of Christ. That's name on the building of the church that I go to and they-they are your family. I even went one year to [City C in Canada] for a conference and I couldn't get a plane flight out until Monday because it had to be cheap, and the church in [City C] was willing to pick me up from the conference hotel on Saturday, um yes Saturday night and then drive me around [City C] all day on Sunday and then drive me to the airport on Monday, just because they knew I was a member.
47. I: Wow, that's wonderful.
48. N: So (laughing) yeah it's been, without that stability in my life I'm not sure, I don't think my life would have gone as well as it has, I don't think I would be at the point I am now, with a PhD, having my daughter, happily married, if it had not been for the church and my involvement with them over the years.
49. I: But are there any other groups or institutions or causes that you've been involved with that stand out as much as the church or...?
50. N: Definitely not as much as the church but as a student which, I'm not a student anymore which is still kind of weird, I am still kind of used to that transition, I've always found like-minded individuals a bit with the different universities I have been with, people who I can rely on and trust to help me, usually not as much as my church family but they've been there for me and it definitely helps.
51. I: So you've kind of mentioned before that with all this going on you've had a really good support group and do you face a lot of challenges, do you currently feel that your life has meaning?
52. N: Definitely. Um, I, I'm at the point now where my degree, all the hard work is starting to pay off and I have a job which even though is stressful and I feel overworked a lot of this time and is so rewarding to be able to work with students and help them understand psychology which, you know psychology but at the same time I'm helping them understand how people work, how people deal with the world, I'm trying to help them understand how to make their lives better, how to make other people's lives better around them and so I feel that my life has a really strong meaning right now and I'm just, I'm so grateful that I have this opportunity to give back with all of the things I have learned over the years. So that part has meaning, definitely my daughter, helping her grow up. She thinks she is on the cusp of being a teenager which is just hard to deal with. She just turned on, I'm like I've got four more years.
53. I: (laughing) Like slow down.
54. N: I can figure out a way to stop her at 12. Hey there, I think I would but she's always given my life meaning since she was born. Sometimes I bring her to school with me and my students always say 'oh she's so well behaved, oh she's so smart, oh she's so funny', I'm like, 'yeah she is. She is an incredible human being' and I feel so grateful that I've had a chance to help her become who she is and my goal is to continue to help her become who she is, and so my goal is to continue to help her become who she is, not to make her be who I want her to be but instead let her find herself because that's something that, I don't know,

that I had a lot of good guys in my history who helped me to understand who I was and that was a hard thing to figure out when you got so many different people around you. Um there is not anybody on my father's side of the family who has a college degree. There are a very, most of my mother's brothers have a bachelor's degree but very few have gone beyond that and so for me to get a PhD being a woman, coming from this lower, lower middle class family, I don't think anybody really thought coming except for me and so you know letting [Demi] find out who she is and what she can do in the world is such a powerful thought. It helps me when I'm working with her because being a parent is frustrating no matter who you talk to and knowing that all of this work and teaching her and discipline and encouraging her to do the right things is going to help her to find her way hopefully easier than I did.

55. I: That is something that all parents really hope for.
56. N: No I don't know about what they hope for but their child define who they are.
57. I: (laughing) Good one anyway.
58. N: Yeah. All parents want their children to find who the parent is or want to intervene.
59. I: I think it's a little anecdote that my husband and I were stating that we want our son to be more than we are. We always hope that he is smarter than the two of us and that's a great goal I think as a parent.
60. N: Yeah. But then you have to worry about regression to the [means].
61. I: That's true.
62. N: That's what you do.
63. I: (laughing) So if you could change one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
64. N: Well I think where a lot of my difficulties come right now is that I have ... I'm still concerned about what other people think. Sometimes that keeps me from seeing the reality of the situation, so for instance I get student evaluations back and I get [...]
- that say she is great, she's knowledgeable, she's friendly, she helps us and then I get one that says something bad, some have curse words in them and that had just ruined my entire day like I can't stop dwelling on why that one person didn't like me so much, that they had to put that and I completely ignore you know the 50, 70 however many they were that I was great and they loved the class and it's kind of the same way in my life. I can't get past the fact that I am so blessed to have a home and a family, I come home and I see all the mess and think about how other people would judge me and think about I'm a sloppy person or messy when in turn they really just don't understand my life and my priorities. So sometimes I think that I bog myself down in worrying about what other people think I should be and that aspect, how positive I am about the beautiful, wonderful things in my life. So I think if I could change one thing it would be that I would take less account what other people think and just be satisfied with who I am and whatever I get done and whatever time I have I clearly have my priorities and cleaning just isn't one of them. (Laughing). And so I would be a lot happier. If I can get past the fact that I worry about what my mother-in-law thinks of me if my house is not flawless.
65. I: (Laughing). Okay, for what it's worth I think you know you've had a lot to deal with, you've done amazing just looking, and looking at where you are...
66. N: You don't even know me. (Laughing).
67. I: I'm just hearing the things that you share with me, I think that's amazing and you've done so much and it's... I mean in awe, so. I think that's great.
68. N: Oh thank you, I appreciate that.
69. I: I don't think you have anything to worry about. I don't know if I should say that but...
70. N: You don't know my mother-in-law. (Laughing).

71. I: Mhm, are there any beliefs or other commitments that seem important to your life right now?
72. N: Oh well, I've had a lot of beliefs, values and commitments and I've just been constant, family and God are the two highest. I have a commitment to doing what I can to help others, to help other people learn about God, if I have the opportunity to teach them um, in our household service to the Lord comes first above anything else, any type of entertainment, any other type of obligations and that's the way it was when I was a child and that's the way it is now. That's been a constant, after God comes family and taking care of our family and making sure that our family is healthy and that we have home and we have clothes and we have food, making sure all of our basics are met as well as just having time to connect and love each other and work together. Um I'm clearly also very committed to teaching and helping my students and that's something that's very important to me. There are many times in the last um, since [summer] when I started teaching that, there were days I really did not want to get out of bed. I didn't want to go to work because I was tired but it seemed like giving to them was so much more important. I made a commitment to teach them and so it didn't matter how tired I was. I needed to fulfill my commitment to them. And so service to others is a really big commitment in my life. Um just in general. In fact my husband came home today and he had bought me a present, it was a [...] card and he told me I had to be completely selfish with it because he was getting sick of seeing me get things and give them to other people.
73. I: (laughing)
74. N: So it's (laughing) funny but true.
75. I: (laughing) I know I think it's sweet. (Laughing)
76. N: It was very sweet, he also managed to buy me some flowers which I greatly appreciated, just the sentiment of-
77. I: I apologize if I get a little quiet or if you hear me sniffing, I got a little bit of a cold from my niece, I'm feeling a little bit fuzzy headed, so I apologize if I get really quiet for a minute, I'll just try not to sneeze (laughing).
78. N: That's okay, that's okay, I understand, I cannot touch a cold right now (laughing) so sneeze all you want.
79. I: Oh, I was really hoping not to, but and she is so tiny, I was watching her for my sister-in-law and she had a runny nose and they said oh we think it's a little bit of allergies and then my nephew got sick too, so like no, it's cold but thank you for caring (laughing). So you kind of touched on it a little bit where you talked about your church family, where do you find yourself most in communion with or at harmony with the universe? I don't know if that kind of relates back to what you were saying before.
80. N: The universe is a funny question, because when I walk around the world and the people in it, it's very hard for me to really feel in touch with those people, because to be practically honest a lot of them I see have been so lost and surrounded by materialism and wanting things that they can't have and they seem really sad. So for me the [...] my church family helps me to feel like I'm in communion with god, bring out nature kind of away from people, away from materialism, has always made me feel really like I was in harmony with the universe and with god. But I just- I don't know that I'm necessarily in harmony with the universe and the way it's going as much as I'm in harmony with god and his creation and its kind of rawest form of nature away from people and with other people who have a similar desire to serve Him. I think that gets me the closest to being in harmony with Him.
81. I: So what would your image or model be of a mature faith or of a mature response to questions of existential meaning?

82. N: It's just clear [...] but these questions were written for people of all obviously very diverse backgrounds and I think that makes it harder to make it more specific. I guess in my mind a person of mature faith has a lot of knowledge about god, but also a deep faith that god exists and that god is there to bless us and to give us an eternal home. And so a person of mature faith does not fear death, doesn't fear bad things when they come our way. But has kind of this peacefulness about them and this hope and [positiveness?]. A person of mature faith is optimistic because it doesn't matter what happens to you, it doesn't matter how bad the economy gets or how much gas prices are, their focus is on heaven and being there with god. And so a person who is very mature in faith isn't focused on now and focused on the future and I think that to me that's... Mature faith can only come from a deep knowledge of the bible, a deep knowledge of what god has focus for us and the step that you really, you can't buy, you can't teach somebody to have faith, you just kind of develop it for long term and I think the dealing with problems and crisis helps people of mature faith to develop that faith even more deeply.
83. I: Mhm, so when you have an important decision to make, how do you try to go about making it?
84. N: Well for our decision, when we were trying to decide whether to stay in [State A] or to move, the first thing we had to deal with was, okay, this is a potential decision, we have to decide. And we decided whether it was an option or not because obviously I picked which jobs I wanted to apply for and we talked a lot about it, and said, okay, we feel like we can go to these different places, we decide we did not want to go to [State D], we decided we did not want to go to [City E], or [City F]. So we picked the places that were out, that we just did not feel like we would be comfortable living, and then we said, okay, we understand

these applications, we've got applications out there, and we are going to pray and wherever I get an offer that is where god wants us. So we prayed about it, with the understanding that once we were willing to go, god will take us where we needed to be. So I probably worried way more about it than I should have, but I did have faith that, if god wanted us to stay in [State A], then we will be staying and if he meant for us to go somewhere, then we would be going somewhere. And we just feel like god really did lead us here to [City B] because the family that we found here has needed us in many different ways since we've been here and I think we've been a source of encouragement to so many people here and the students at [...] state I think really appreciate me. My coworkers, the other faculty members also seem to appreciate me a lot and so it helps with understanding god's paths, same way when I had gone back on dating market again, for a while I forgot to talk to god about it, I was hoping to kind of find somebody on my own, but I figured out that is not going to work. So I started praying for that man and there were other people, my church family who started praying for me to find a Christian man who would love me and want to marry me and it wasn't but a few two or three months after that, that I met my current husband at church. He walked in the door, and so I always pray about when I have an important decision to make, but I also try to talk to the people who are important around me and also try to get an idea of what is important to them and what they think is going to work well.

85. I: Um, moving in a little bit of a different direction, when it comes to the actions of people, do you think that actions can be right or wrong?
86. N: Yes, definitely, I think that the bible clearly lines out definite behaviors that are wrong and behaviors that are right. I think that there are other behaviors that are not as

- clear and in that sense kind of- you partly have to go by a person's attentions, whether it isn't clear, whether it is right or wrong. As well as looking at the potential outcomes. So a person could desire to be helpful to another person, but if their help is actually going to hurt that person, then I believe that that behavior isn't that wrong. I can give an example of my class, you talked about awkward conditioning and say, okay, if a child is in a grocery store and they are screaming because they want a candy bar and their mom takes them up and gives them the candy bar, well that child has now been conditioned to scream to get a candy bar. They have received a positive reinforce for that behavior. But mom also received a negative reinforcement. She got to hear screaming anymore by giving the candy bar. And so even though the intention there for the mom was clearly, I'm going to calm down this child and make her stop screaming, that action would be wrong because she is reinforcing a bad behavior on her child. So in that sense the outcome of a behavior also affects whether it's the right or wrong thing to do. Now sometimes you can't know the outcome until you do something but those are four things that we know are outside of things like lying and stealing and [stealing] obviously (laughing), I just can't imagine people going around, okay we will use this fine, (laughing) I don't- I can't imagine that world. (Laughing) But there are- there are lots of things, adultery is wrong. There are a lots of things that, you know I have challenges within in my everyday life that are not right either but that's one of the kind of parts of being a human is you are always tempted to do things that are not necessarily right. So even though I do believe that actions can be right or wrong, I think sometimes it's hard to always do the right things and never do the wrong things.
87. I: Would you mind elaborating a little bit on what makes an action right or wrong in your opinion, as far as how you would define right and wrong, like if you had to give me definition?
88. N: A right action is one that is approved by god and helpful to man, helpful to your fellow man- your neighbor, a wrong action is one that is condemned by god and one that is hurtful to your fellow neighbor or yourself.
89. I: So are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances?
90. N: I think that there are some, I think giving assistance to people who need it is always right, now what type of assistance, it does depend on the circumstances. I think when you're talking about children for instance, children who don't have parents to take care of them, children who are kind of out on their own, giving them food, water, shelter, security is always right, regardless of any other questions. I think that telling other people that god loves them and that god wants their obedience is always right.
91. I: And you touched on a little bit on also the way that this question was raised but are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?
92. N: Well this is one of those [...] I think there are definitely some things out there that people, regardless of where they come from, generally agree on right and wrong. I don't think that this is complete though in terms of what god wants us to do or not to, for instance in general across societies people don't kill others. Killing others is generally not okay and so yeah, intentional killing of somebody else is something that I think everybody should agree on. I wish everyone would agree on the bible as a principle for living and use that to guide their lives but I know that that is not a realistic wish. And so I guess sometimes I settle and just wish people would be kind to one another and that would be the moral opinion of the day, of being kind and treating others as you would want to be

- treated. If that moral opinion could be widespread universal, I think the world would be a much better place.
93. I: So trying to just kind of indicate your religious view in your worldview, do you think that human life has a purpose?
94. N: Definitely. I think that human life, our purpose here is to honor and worship god and to help others to understand who god is and what his purpose is for us. So I believe that his purpose for us is to live in a way to obey his commandments, obey Jesus, to follow his plan of salvation so that we can be in heaven with him one day. I think that that is god's goal, is- and that's why he set forth our plan, that's why humans have free will to follow this plan to be in heaven one day. And so our purpose is to go to heaven and take as many people with us as we can.
95. I: I think that kind of- I know as we are following the line of the questions a little bit, it asks what death means to you. Is- do you feel that that's what you are covering or is there something else you want- you would say that you were going to answer, to alter what death means to you?
96. N: I believe that death is merely a transition, it's taking us from our temporary [pained?] lives into eternal life and for us there is a decision to make during our current lives of whether we want to have an eternal good life or an eternal not so good life. So for me, to be honest, death isn't that scary because I'm pretty sure that it would be something very painful but death doesn't end anything for me, it just starts something that's [...] you don't have to pay bills [with it], you don't have to deal with suffering in heaven and so the idea of that is so incredible that nothing in this world has come even stand a close second to that.
97. I: Do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual or faithful person?
98. N: You know I really just don't like those terms (laughing) because when you say religion to me, if you are asking somebody if they are religious you're asking, do you go to church a lot? Do you do everything that your church says to do, are you religious? Okay, I'm religious, I go to church, we have worship [...] on Sunday and bible class on Wednesday, we are there for every service in the church halls, I guess I'm religious. When you ask if you are spiritual, to me- to me spiritual kind of almost indicates this kind of internal feeling whereas for me spirituality and religion go hand in hand, you can't be spiritual without religion, without god, without the commandments, without the bible you can't be spiritual, so in a sense using this kind of inward feeling of spirituality or being in touch with your inner spirit, I don't know if I see that definition of how I might use it for other people. But I do believe that I have a soul and I do believe that my soul is important and that I can be, I don't if necessarily in touch with it is a good thing but I can do things that are good for my soul I guess. It's hard- That word its very confusing in the way that actually like lots of people use it. And then faithful, I would say that I'm very faithful, I have a lot of faith in god. But I also have a lot of faith in people and in their ability to do good. Now, as I kind of mentioned in the beginning, as time has passed I guess some of my belief and how faithful people are has kind of faded, so understand that a lot of people are never going to be as faithful as they should be. But I guess I still do believe that people can be faithful to one another and faithful to god, it's just- it's a hard- it's a hard thing to accomplish.
99. I: Right. Are there any religious, spiritual or other ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you or have been important to you?
100. N: This isn't one of those other ...(laughing) like okay, so you mean religious symbols, religious rituals spiritual- (laughing), I would love to see such a [...] but (laughing) we'll go with what I think. I believe that worship is very important; I believe that

worship has been outlined by god, he intends for people to do during worship. As a Christian every week I partake in the Lord's Supper which a remembrance of Christ's death and his suffering and his sacrifice for us. So that is something that's very important to me, I do that every week because I believe that it's been commanded by god. Other things that are really important to me, singing with other Christians, offering praise to god, prayer, reading the Word, in our family every night we read some chapters of the bible, we're trying to get through the whole bible in a year and we just started 1st Samuel, so I think we're doing pretty good. Um, and we pray every night together, um, and so those are some events, activities that are really important to us. I guess kind of fitting with the symbol part is I believe that baptism is a really important symbol but a lot of people don't recognize and this symbol is there as a way of becoming a Christian and you're not saved until after you're baptized as evidence, that's given in the bible that people were not saved till after baptism and that is the way to become a Christian, to become part of Christ is to partake in his death. So baptism has immersion, as you go down you're being buried with Christ and when you come up you're a new person in Christ and you become part of the body, part of, um, the church family at that point. And so that's a really important symbol for me even though for me personally it only happened once, but every time I see someone else choose to be baptized and undergo that symbol, it reminds me of how that was put into place to be a symbol to represent our willingness to join and to become subservient to Christ and to god...

101. I: And you have been, um sorry, continue, go ahead.
102. N: I think that covers that question.
103. I: You have mentioned prayer as part of some of this when you were talking on the last ... it was before the last two questions.

Are there any other spiritual disciplines such as meditation that you perform?

104. N: Well that's another one of those- when you use the term meditation, usually we think of people sitting cross-legged and going ommm, but in the Christian belief system you are supposed to meditate on the word and in that sense you're just supposed to think about the word, think about the intentions, think about how the word, how different scriptures affect your own life and I'm going to say that I definitely do spend time frequently thinking about how the scripture can impact me and impact others and what, why god gave us different scriptures, different telling of the past to help us understand the present. So I in a sense I meditate but I don't sit on the floor and go...
105. I: (laughing) What is sin to your understanding?
106. N: Well in the bible it says that sin is transgressing god's law and so any behavior that god has said, "This is evil, this is against me," that would be a sin. Another way of understanding sin is that sin is a separation from god, since god is holy and righteous. If you have sinned, you can't be with god, they are like polar opposites ends of a magnet. They can't be close together, sin and god. And so if an individual has sinned it's very difficult for them to be close to god and that's why we have Christ's death and his resurrection because he paid a price for me, so that when god looks at me he doesn't see my sins but he sees Christ who is pure and holy and without sin. And so that is in effect the only way I can get close to god. To be in heaven is that I have Christ standing in front of me representing me and so sin in addition to transgressing god's law is also separation from god.
107. I: Well how would you explain the presence of evil in the world?
108. N: Evil is a result of man's freewill and also the chaos that came into the world with the first sin. So we read about the first sin in Genesis, how Adam and Eve did the only

thing really god told them not to do which was eat off a specific tree and once they gained that vision of understanding why it was wrong, they knew that they had in fact sinned and that sin basically set the world onto the path of chaos and destruction. So when there is evil in the world, either the direct result of a person's freewill for them to do what was wrong, or it is the- just a kind of side effect of this kind of chaos present in the world. Um, so I would never ever say that the hurricanes that hit New Orleans were god sending punishment, no. The hurricanes, the bad weather is the side effect of the chaotic nature of our world presently. The fact that death exists in our world is a side effect of the sin that is present in the world, that doesn't mean everybody dies of a homicide, but cancer and all these other things are just the side effects of freewill and the decision to sin among people. Um so I believe that in the end, our world will be destroyed whether it is by some chaotic nature or a direct god destroying it in the end, it's the same. So I think that evil is in our world to kind of show how sin works and it doesn't always have to be direct but there are always consequences of sin.

109. I: When people agree- disagree about issues of world view or religion such as like any of the ones that we've talked about this evening, how could such conflicts be resolved?
110. N: For me the answer to this...I think that the only way for all of these...conflicts to actually be resolved would be for people to of their own accord accept god, accept the bible as his word, and take it at face value. Too many times people think in my opinion that they can pick and choose whichever way they want to go. But I think that there is substantial evidence that the god of the bible is the only true god, that he has a plan for people. But people will believe what they want to believe and so I don't think that it is possible to completely resolve
- disagreements about religions and so on and so forth because I think people in general want to do what they want to do and the fact that god calls us to obey him makes a lot of people very uncomfortable, they- even people who call themselves Christians a lot of times don't take the bible at face value, they want to put in their own interpretations, their own desires about what they want the bible to say and then the interpreted manner and I think that's very dangerous because I don't think that god will accept them if they do not accept his word and obey it as it is. So I think the question isn't- but it's when people disagree about issues of world view because we know that they do and I just not think that such complex can actually be resolved beyond the individual person wanting to seek god and seek what god truly wants of him. I think when you examine other world religions, you can see inconsistencies, you can see points where they just don't jar, they don't make sense. And so I think god has given us the path that makes sense and that can be supported but if an individual is not willing to accept that, then there's not anything you can do to resolve different issues about religion or world view.
111. I: We've covered a lot of information tonight, was there anything that you wanted to elaborate on, anything that we've talked about that has struck you later in the conversation or any questions that you might have for me?
112. N: Well, I don't think I have any questions for you about our interview, I did notice, just for you and me to note, you might not want to transcribe this later. A couple of ungrammatically- (laughing) I'm so sorry.
113. I: (Laughing) Please- please tell me that they- that I did not accidentally send you the draft? (laughing)
114. N: Very possibly. (Laughing) I noticed 'divine' was misspelled there was also-
115. I: I sent you the draft? I'm so sorry (laughing).

116. N: No, it's okay, it's okay. As long as you [...] these things I understand [...] process. You always go through lots of drafts, anything before it gets into people and sometimes it gets confusing with which one was the most recent.
117. I: Well, I'm doing these interviews from my own home and I have several copies of it as I've been helping in the process of building it, so I probably grabbed the one from an older email and not realized it so unfortunately I feel very bad that I've probably sent the draft to a few people (laughing) and I was actually looking at and noticing the grammatical errors on the copy that I have printed out going, 'please tell me,' silently to myself through the interview that 'Please tell me that I didn't send this to anybody' because there were a lot of them (laughing) I apologize.
118. N: Yeah, yeah, that's okay. You know. I- Like I said, I understand, and I can understand what the questions were so it didn't interfere with the interview, I don't think at all. (Laughing) just want to say it to you there.
119. I: Yes, thank you and I will double check and make sure that if I have sent it that I resend the correct (laughing)
120. N: I am not a grammar Nazi. My husband can be very mean sometimes. You know, he got on my Facebook and was talking to somebody once and after like two or three of things with him going back and forth the person asked if they were speaking to me because he doesn't capitalize and I think he doesn't use punctuation and they had noticed this.
121. I: (laughing) Just somebody caught on to it.
122. N: They knew it wasn't him because (laughing) he wasn't speaking [...]
123. I: (laughing) Oh my goodness.
124. N: One other question that I have, when I got the email asking me to participate in this interview, it said that I had some like unique or unusual responses to the survey. I would love to know how you're [...] (laughing)
125. I: (laughing) They- I actually- if you would like the entire system set up, I can have it sent to you. I did not design the algorithm, but when they set it up they were looking for certain markers, for people as they would in the way that they identified themselves and some of the answers of the questions and if it struck them- and if it struck certain chords it was entered into the algorithm and then we pick people based on that. So if you're interested in knowing, I can have that sent to you but (laughing).
126. N: I don't think so. I don't need the whole algorithm.
127. I: I don't- I don't know your individual responses I- if we don't know what a particular individual does, it just generally looks at each person's responses in general and says okay participant number such hit all these markers and we want to look at some more information. So (chuckle) I honestly- I don't know what you put in your responses but it must have been interesting (laughing). And talking to you on the interview, it's been very interesting. I really enjoyed speaking with you and thank you for taking the time to meet with me tonight.
128. N: I enjoyed speaking to you and I just- I hope that my answers will help your research. You know I recently participated in a research because I am friends with [name] who used to go to [UNT in Chattanooga?], it's [Chattanooga?]. She used to go there and I think she knows the other guy who's running the research and said, 'Hey, help my friend out by doing this.' So I'm like, 'Okay, I know how hard it is to get research participants, so I will go do this.' (laughing)
129. I: Well that's very helpful, thank you very much and actually I'm really appreciative of the level of detail that you were able to give me. It was very good to get so much that we can work with, so yes, thank you and (laughing) I know you said that I barely know you but it seems like from what you told me you've been through a lot and it

was good to...it's good to see that you've come so far. It gives me hope (laughing) so...

130. N: I'm glad, I'm glad. And you know, are you on Facebook? If you are, we can be on Facebook and [...] and talk about kids and grad school [...]
131. I: Okay (laughing) I am on Facebook, I can send you my ID if you are interested. I'm going to go ahead and hit stop on the recorder but before I do, just so they know that they are tracking what I'm doing. I'm putting your- I put your participant ID in here which is [xy] and the little Skype comments and the link that's posted up there that's the follow-up that they want to do with the interview, that we are using to kind of tie everything together. If you could fill that out for me I'd really appreciate it.
132. N: So, is this going to my email box or is it in Skype?
133. I: I sent this to the Skype chat and if you'd like I can send a copy of that to your email as well.
134. N: I don't use Skype.
135. I: So that you can follow up on it later because you seem busy (laughing).
136. N: Is it here? No...
137. I: Mhm. You were speaking to me earlier when you told me that...
138. N: Yeah, before I could [...] (laughing)
139. I: You might have to click on conversations and then click on my name...
140. N: Okay, conversations and then her name.
141. I: And it should pop up, you should see it on the center window. Okay, I'm going to go ahead and click stop since- on the recorder just so the transcribers aren't going crazy sorti- sorting through all this. Okay.

B.4 Faith Development Interview with Ernestine E.

1. N: Hallo.
2. I: Hey, this is Paul, it's [...] project.
3. N: Yes. Hi Paul, we sort of got mixed up on the number, didn't we?
4. I: Yeah, I am sorry about that.
5. N: That is alright.
6. I: Alright, are you ready to do this today or would you like to reschedule, just in case?
7. N: No I will do it. If you have time we will just do it. I will face to face but since we are...
8. I: Sorry about all that.
9. N: I understand that.
10. I: Alright.
11. N: And I did get the information and I have read it.
12. I: Okay good, so you have seen the consent form and you consent to the interview?
13. N: I do.
14. I: Alright, this is Paul interviewing on [date] with participant number [xy] and it is [time]. Alright, I'm going to ask you a few questions. Reflecting on your life, thus identify its major chapters.
15. N: I didn't understand Paul.
16. I: Oh I am sorry. Reflecting on your life, thus identify its major chapters.
17. N: Growing up on a farm and then I went away to [Name A] School and then working and then a family, then children, then grandchildren, but later in life I went back to school and worked on degrees till I worked on my PhD.
18. I: If your life were a book, how would you name the different chapters?
19. N: Fun, because I enjoyed all of it.

20. I: What marker events stand out as especially important?
21. N: In my personal life?
22. I: Yes ma'am. Or in general, I mean it could be either
23. N: Okay, well I know this ten year old [...] she had both ways so I haven't been [her]. You know I have jotted down some things in both areas for you. So anyway I would go with the first one sort of like my tapestry was my growing up was...And I guess when I was real young, I just thought it was awful that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and I just knew the President had to work hard to do something about this. But that was when, my goodness, I can remember as a young child it really bothered me. And then, as I grew older, I remember at 16 we were farmers and I was working in the field and I had an experience that I felt was extraordinary. I felt like I was being talked by a spirit except, right now I am not sure but I go on to [say] and I realized later that this was God speaking to me. That was when I was 16 and then of course I felt my wedding was a happy time and a marker in my life and then later, when my son was married, that was also a fun time. And then I lost granddaughter at 15 and that was a tragic time in my life and then later on my daughter was diagnosed with bipolar and that was a real trying hard times for us to get a grip on and understand why all these things were happening.
24. I: Are there past relationships that have been important to your development as a person?
25. N: Well, yes, people in my life have been important, people like my grandfather on my mother's side of the family was always real instrumental in encouraging all of us to do as best we can; as best we could. You realizing we grew up [poor] an on a farm. And then I have made friends along the way that have meant a lot to my life. One of those friends, if you need a name...
26. I: No it's okay, it doesn't necessarily have to be name, but whatever you are comfortable doing.
27. N: Well, I don't really mind. Dr [Emma Gerard] was real instrumental in my life. I worked on a project with her and enjoyed so much and that encouraged me to go back to school [...] and work on further degrees and then I enjoyed that. And I ended up really, really just being excited that I had the opportunity to do this after I had my family already pretty good size by then and so I really enjoyed in doing these new things in my life. I am really a bit adventuresome and so I love to experiment with new things.
28. I: Okay, do you recall any changes in relationships that have lead to significant impact on your life?
29. N: I am trying to think. I don't get... I have an answer to that because I can't think of what I would like to say there.
30. I: Okay. Any changes in relationship that have a significant impact on your way of thinking about things?
31. N: I do not know that they do. I just feel like I have grown over the years in my thinking and maybe I am...I can probably because I am old. I consider myself a realistic thinker if that means anything; that is a big word.
32. I: Okay, how has your world view changed across your life's chapters?
33. N: Well I have worked early in, from [State B] Chemical Company and that was a fun time. I was young and it was fun and I enjoyed that phase and I guess those changes there caused me to want to know more because when then Dr. [Gerard] said, 'Hey, I want you to come and head this project for me.' She was working on her dissertation at the time at [University C] and we had a grant that just had lots of money and so we just had lots of fun doing the things she wanted to experiment with. And in the mean time I was able to grow and so I have to say that I enjoyed making the changes that I have made in my life. And I have also

- been able to invest and do things I wanted to do on my own that I might not be able to do in my earlier younger life.
34. I: How has this affected your image of God or of the divine?
35. N: The divine is divine and I think God is the ruler of the whole universe and it has not changed, I have grown stronger in my faith towards God.
36. I: What does it mean to you now, but I think you might have answered that?
37. N: Well I just feel closer all the time. Again Paul, I guess it is because I am getting old and you know, we know... I am just reading Katie Couric's last book 'The best advice I ever had.' All these people saying what happened in their life. It is so interesting, if you haven't done it, you would enjoy picking this up and reading it. But I have just finished that and I sort of have to agree with some of the people in there. I do not [grieve death] but I know that it is not that far away for me because I believe God takes care of his own.
38. I: Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed your sense of life's meaning?
39. N: Yes I have. I have times either like I said that particular day when I was 16, I was just working very hard in the [...] field that day and I just felt that wonderful sensation that I needed to listen. And from then on of course I have just been, that enticed me to want to know more and so that was a good feeling and then on occasions I have been in positions where I just had this wonderful uplifting spirit and I went with the flow; I enjoyed the feeling and enjoyed the moment. So I have had those in my life, yes.
40. I: What about any experiences that have changed your sense of life's meaning?
41. N: I don't know, I was pretty faith based in my upbringing and you know, my family always carried us and went with us to church and I felt it was an important part of my life from my very small child. And then I would just say it has just grown stronger over the years.
42. I: Right. Could you go into, like what type of experiences affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning? Or what experiences specifically, yeah?
43. N: Well, like to be in a church service and a particular song turn you on, so. To me they just made me want to know more and listen more because I still think it is my [call] as a Christian that's trying to live the life that God wants me to live. I think I don't listen because the things sometimes I would pray and wish for are not always what God thinks is best for me and I think the things that have changed for me is to do some listening, is listening and realizing that what I thought I needed and really needed were two entirely different things, but understanding that was sort of life changing to me and that I knew I needed to do the...are different things other than what I thought I needed to do.
44. I: I am going to ask this anyway, how have these experiences done so but...?
45. N: No I am not sure how, I am not sure what you asked me?
46. I: How have these experiences affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning, but I think you may have answered that a little bit but if you want to go...?
47. N: I thought I did a little bit. That just made me feel stronger and want to do more to... Well I feel better doing what I feel I am supposed to be doing, then if I try to do something on my own. So that makes my life change, to want to do what I feel I was supposed to do. You know, most of the time I feel like there are things I am supposed to do. Sometimes I am lazy and don't want to do them. And I mean that spiritually too, Paul, that it is sometimes more to it than you are willing to put out, to do what you really know is the best thing for you to do.
48. I: Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life?

49. N: Yes I have. It was very hard and very trying when we lost our granddaughter (serious) and of course the way that I interpreted that and the way my son and his wife; the mother and father of their child was so entirely different. I really had a real hard time with us being on different pages so to speak. I never felt like God left us but I felt like I just lost all my family rather than just one.
50. I: Have you experienced times when you felt profound disillusionment?
51. N: No, not really.
52. I: What about that life had no meaning?
53. N: I didn't get, I honestly don't hear real well. I didn't get you quite...
54. I: Have you experienced times when you felt like life had no meaning?
55. N: No, I have been real down-hearted, but no, I never have felt like...I guess I never ever felt like I was depressed and thought I needed help with that. I am the kind of [...] if I thought I need it and somebody tell me enough times I did, I probably speak it but I have never felt that.
56. I: Okay, now we are going to move on to relationships.
57. N: Okay.
58. I: Focusing now on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them?
59. N: My parents and my relationship to them. You know, my parents are deceased.
60. I: I know and we have to...
61. N: Okay, I can still tell you. We had a wonderful loving family. I was the oldest of six and of course I thought I was supposed to take care of the rest of them but we worked together and we played together and when I say played, my parents thought you were supposed to play games, card games, board games. Every kind of game and we didn't just play them, we play them together and this was to me just ideal love in the way it was supposed to be. But we also knew we had to work hard and as we worked; we worked together and worked hard and as I said grew up, as I said, in the church knowing that was where we were supposed to be. And there were just great parents to me. My mother was sort of the stronger [hand]; did you know we used that on the dominant parent, so my mother was the one that didn't spare the rod because if we needed it we got it and still felt like we were loved.
62. I: Over the years, have there been any changes in your perception of your parents?
63. N: No, I feel [that I give them the vote], that they just were wonderful parents that created a wonderful life for all of us.
64. I: Are there any other current relationships that are important to you?
65. N: Growing up or right now?
66. I: Whichever you are more comfortable with or you can do both.
67. N: Okay, I mentioned my grandfather was such a wonderful man that always encouraged us. His words were just, 'do your best at whatever you do,' and he we was good role model in my life and then of course I went to a small school and every teacher that I could remember, whether I could remember their names or not. They were to just me wonderful role models and again always told us how to be kind to your fellow students and kind to everyone and then later in my life, of course, my husband is just a wonderful husband and I love our relationship.
68. I: What groups, institutions or courses do you identify with?
69. N: I feed the hungry in my area and I work on the, [...] I am at the board at [...] University and I am an avid bridge player and of course I love to help with the bridge tournament. I help the HR with children in schools supply because I am a retired school teacher. And I also work with the adults in the HR department in the Christmas and other times they are need; in special need.
70. I: Why are they important to you?
71. N: They are important to me because all of these groups that I have mentioned do such wonderful things by helping others, whether

- it is providing a scholarship at college or whether it is providing school supplies for the boys and girls. Or some adult that has no family to meet their needs. I appreciate being able to help do that and whether, there is always hunger in the community even though I live in a small community. In [...] supply depending on how much hunger there is around so I like to help with that.
72. I: (coughing) Sorry I had to clear my throat.
73. N: It's okay, it sounds like I need to [...] my old boy.
74. I: We are moving on to present values and commitments, do you feel that your life has meaning at present?
75. N: I do.
76. I: And what makes your life meaningful to you?
77. N: I guess, Paul, by now being able to go, being able to walk. I am really, I am proud of the things, just the little things, being able to walk and to see it and even to talk because some people my age are in such bad shape. Bless their souls, they just can't get around or do anything and so I am proud of the little things that I am able to do.
78. I: If you could change one thing about yourself or your life what would you want to change most?
79. N: I want the [world to be very satisfied] and be real slim and maybe I can even be more active. I walk every morning; I love walking but I might, could even walk more miles and feel better and be able to do more things.
80. I: Are there any beliefs, values or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
81. N: Yes, I believe in these areas of [...] and that he will take care of me has lots of meaning to me. Again I would like to say that he doesn't do that on my terms. He knows what I need where I do not always know and I wonder why I get the situations that I do but I leave it in his hands.
82. I: May I ask why, as an addendum to the question or an add in?
83. N: Why I leave it in his hands?
84. I: Yeah, we could ...
85. N: Because I do think he is the Supreme Being and I believe he is in control of it all and like I said, even though all these things happen, the Tsunamis, the floods and the horrible tornados that we have had even right in [County D], you just can't believe. You can go to ... About a mile from where I live you can go and just see the earth just almost flat where there has been houses. I mean it is just sad devastation but I still know there is a loving God, that he will take care of those people and that I know they need help and I do help them and I am proud that I can help but I do know that if they would call on him that he will help them.
86. I: I asked you about, are there any beliefs [focused] commitments? Correct?
87. N: You did.
88. I: Okay, wanted to be sure. When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe? Or we can just ask when do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
89. N: Paul, I believe I really find that nature has a wonderful meaning to me just to be out and I feel closely connected anytime that I want, just be quiet and take the time to listen, I feel in close communion also.
90. I: Are there any specific places where you find yourself in communion or harmony with the universe?
91. N: Yes I like to come round on my son to [...] early in the morning and just sipping my coffee. I feel close to him and of course I can see the beauty of nature outside.
92. I: What is your image of mature faith?
93. N: Now, I do not believe you would ever reach that, I think you always striving for mature faith. I think that, at least that is the way I feel. I think you are always striving to be more; I am always striving to be more and to even be more of a good listener

- doing more things and just always striving to be a little bit better.
94. I: What is your image or model of a mature response to questions of existential meaning?
95. N: I didn't get, what kind of meaning, Paul?
96. I: Existential?
97. N: Okay, I guess the first model would be... good model to me is Billy Graham. I like his thoughts and his ideas and again to me I am just always...I hope I'm always...If I fail many times but I hope to always be trying to be, do a little bit better. Being a little bit kinder or just doing things a little bit better than I did.
98. I: When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it?
99. N: I will make it prayerfully and sometimes I can make them pretty quickly but sometimes it takes me a little bit longer because I feel like I...I feel a need to think about it a little bit more.
100. I: Can you give me an example?
101. N: Yes. If I meet, if I have met people that I wanted to like, I [pave] this experience of my work when I work [...]. I was feeling so inspired and so spiritual on this Monday morning I went into work and so I proceeded to tell one of the fellows that I worked with that I was concerned about, anyway and you sure do not want to make somebody angry at your work. I do not mean that but I, so I said to him; told him about what a wonderful experience I had that I said it was something said in church that just made me feel so good inside that I wanted share that feeling, that I believed it was God talking to me. And so he said, 'Well you know what, my little boy wanted to go to Sunday school today and I told him just to go back to bed that he didn't need to.' So I looked at him and I said, 'You do not want to hear my story, do you?' and he said, 'No.' And I felt I had back off because I was in the wrong atmosphere to go on and talk to him but he didn't want to hear my story. So yeah that was an experience to me that I felt impelled to say something to him but in the end I felt like I was in the wrong place to continue.
102. I: If you have a very difficult problem to solve to whom or what would you look for guidance?
103. N: I have a sister that is just wonderful, a [...] and a wonderful Christian person, so I often take my problems to her to discuss and at least get her view of what I should do, I might not do it but I like to hear what she has to say.
104. I: Do you think that actions can be right or wrong?
105. N: I do because I do not think I am supposed to do something that might offend you if I am in your presence because I should be a better person than hoping to offend or turn you off, so yes I think my actions can be right or wrong.
106. I: What makes an action right in your opinion?
107. N: Well, for all of us present in that particular situation, whether if I am going to have a beer and I would have a beer but if it is going to offend you in your presence, I would not have a beer. Now some people would say to you that makes [two-face] but to me it makes respecting your rights because I have discussed things like that with friends and they think you shouldn't do it if you do it hasn't... Well I only do it because I want to respect your rights.
108. I: What makes an action wrong?
109. N: The same [...] to me makes it wrong if you do not like it or it's wrong. Maybe it is not wrong but yeah, I would, I guess that makes it wrong. If you do something to offend someone there.
110. I: Are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances?
111. N: Maybe, their form of yes, no and all of the above. I almost think it is always right to follow your gut feeling, Paul, but that might not be true.

112. I: Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?
113. N: Well, I would wish they would but I would know they wouldn't. But they are, of course, I have standards but to see, know what the people might not agree with my standards.
114. I: What are those standards?
115. N: I do not think you should kill someone, you know, extreme things and of course really I do not think you are supposed to wear clothes that your body parts show really extreme.
116. I: Okay. Do you think that human life has a purpose?
117. N: I do think human rights have a purpose but I would like to say I think they take it to the extreme.
118. I: I mean human life?
119. N: Human life. You didn't say rights, you said life?
120. I: Yeah, sorry.
121. N: I am sorry. Yes I do think human life has a purpose.
122. I: Can you tell me what you believe it is?
123. N: Yes, I believe we have put [...], I think God hopes we will all choose to be his followers but I know that does not happen and I really think we are all put here for that purpose so...
124. I: Is there a plan for our lives?
125. N: There is a plan for our lives. Sometimes we have a hard time figuring it out and we take several paths and that is maybe not all bad but we then finally are the one that I think, we think we are supposed to be on.
126. I: Are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
127. N: Yes, we are. Well I do not know if it is beyond our control.
128. I: Could you explain?
129. N: I do think God is the power but I do not think it is beyond my control what he can do for me. I think he can do anything for me if only I will allow him to or accept his power in doing it, but I do not think it's beyond my control. I think I have the ultimate control; I make the choices.
130. I: Okay, what does death mean to you?
131. N: Death means eternal life; that, that is just a step towards eternity, eternal life with God.
132. I: What happens to us when we die?
133. N: Well the bible says, 'If we are in the grave, we will be called up when he returns to claim his own.' I just think we decay as a, but we will have a new body; we will have a new life and I think it is immaterial really what happens to our old body.
134. I: Do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual or faithful person?
135. N: I consider myself a religious and spiritual person.
136. I: May I ask for you to go into further detail, like just why you believe you hold yourself as religious and spiritual?
137. N: To me they sort of go hand in hand because I do feel close when I am in prayer and when I take the time and listen and communicating with God. I am not one that says that he speaks to me aloud or anything, but in my head I can hear, but no, I do not hear a voice but I think he talks to me and lets me know in some way, in a feeling, a warm feeling or good feeling. I do not know how to describe that but I think that is a spiritual feeling part I can't describe and, but I do think he lets us know in that kind of way. Did I answer that at all?
138. I: Yes. It is again about what you believe and how you want to answer. How you answer it.
139. N: Right. Okay, that is what I thought.
140. I: Are there any religious or spiritual symbols or rituals that are important to you?
141. N: Not really. We do different little things in my religion but it is nothing that anybody that is in that religion wouldn't do, but no, I don't particularly have important things that I think are important. However, I like to see the cross and fish on people's [...] because I know they are Christians. So I guess I like

- to see them whether they, and I do not deny them but I am not one that has to have them.
142. I: What about in the past?
143. N: Have I needed to have symbols?
144. I: Yeah, any religious or spiritual symbols that are important to you or have been important to you?
145. N: I guess when I was growing up in [...] I felt though, when we went up on the mountain at sunrise to see the sun come up and have a service up there that that was such an uplifting spiritual experience, even as a young person. I appreciated that and [historic] sunrise services. I just think because they are outside and you see the sun come up and it just, I do not know; I am in awe.
146. I: You still there?
147. N: I am still here.
148. I: I just want to make sure I did not lose you. Do you pray, meditate or perform any other spiritual discipline?
149. N: I pray daily more than once. I pray when I feel a need to and I do not think you are supposed to pray all the time when you feel a need, I think you are just supposed to be in communication with God anyway but that is another thing. Walking, I walk early in the morning and that is some wonderful time to, everything outside is sort of quiet. And so I get to see the sun come up and I don't know if that gives me a good warm feeling. Then I see this one girl, sometimes she comes home to see me. Like this morning she said, 'Well I might be missing you.' She said, '[Martin] and I are going on a mission trip to [Country E in South America].' I said, 'Oh wonderful,' and she said 'But remember us in your prayers because we are going way up in the hills of [Country E].' And I said, 'Oh, wonderful,' so see, things like that make me feel good and feel... I don't know, I like that.
150. I: What is sin to your understanding?
151. N: Pardon?
152. I: What is sin to your understanding?
153. N: I still didn't get a word.
154. I: To your understanding, what is sin?
155. N: What is sin?
156. I: Yes.
157. N: That's acts you do against God. Like, to me blaspheming God is a sin and to kill and the Ten Commandments we should keep them to me and so breaking those would all be a sin.
158. I: May ask you, why others would be a sin just to be sure, I am getting the addendum to the question?
159. N: Why, again I am sorry I am acting like I can't hear at all.
160. I: It's okay. Why do you believe those are sinful?
161. N: Why do you believe to kill and to commit adultery and to blaspheme, why I believe they are sin?
162. I: (giggling) Yes.
163. N: Okay, I believe they are sin because they, well one thing to me they are against mankind, to do those things, okay, and they are also against God's will.
164. I: How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
165. N: I do not know how to explain it, but it sure is full of evil. I think we have just allowed ourselves as a people just to accept anything almost and it's supposedly alright to, what do we call that? [...] to them. That is a pretty good word to use when you know [who it is] and so I do not really have a way to explaining it. Biblically I think we might be living in the last days. I am not ready to predict [...] October 21st like that one fellow said it would, but I do not know. I can't explain it.
166. I: Okay. If people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?
167. N: Oh man. That is a big question because I solve this with kindness but that won't do it because whether it was, maybe kind of to me but to someone else it might not be kindness and when you get that level of trying to solve that kind of great-great situation. So I don't, again I do not have an

- answer but I think talking about it could help, but I do not know how long you would have to talk for it to help.
168. I: Alright, well I mean that concludes the interview portion. There is one final thing to do but that can be done over the computer or on the net and I will send you the address for it and all of the information via email. Is that alright?
169. N: You want to do what by email?
170. I: There is one last part to the project; the qualitative portion.
171. N: Okay.
172. I: And that will be done online and I will send you all the info via email.
173. N: Okay.
174. I: I just want to thank you very very much for participating and I have enjoyed our...
175. N: Well thank you, it has been fun. I sure was looking forward to seeing you.
176. I: Sorry.
177. N: I understand it fully but I have enjoyed it. I hope I haven't said anything you couldn't understand.
178. I: No, I am sorry that I did, but no, you were fine.
179. N: Alright, thanks again then, Paul.
180. I: Thank you very much.
181. N: Bye.
182. I: Bye.

B.5 Faith Development Interview with Hans R.

1. I: Wenn Sie über Ihr Leben nachdenken, können Sie es in unterschiedliche Abschnitte einteilen?
2. N: Ich würde sagen, wenn ich zurückgehe, vielleicht meine Kindheit... Ich bin in einem kleinen Dorf in [Region A in Westdeutschland] aufgewachsen und mein Vater war da, damals hieß es Volksschullehrer mit zwei Volksschulklassen, ich war in einer der Klassen von 1 - 4 und natürlich kannte ich nur, was in dem Dorf geschah. Da gab

es natürlich den Schuster, den Schmied, viele Bauern, den Pfarrer, von dem ich überhaupt nicht begeistert war. (Lachen) Wenn ich daran denke, dass ich dann später selber Priester geworden bin, aber das war für mich wirklich keine Einladung, muss ich sagen. Aber es war wahrscheinlich auch mehr meine Mutter und vor allem meine Großmutter auf dem Hof, wo meine Mutter herstammte. Die hatte auch den Namen [Hermine]. Das war wahrscheinlich ein richtiger Name für sie und wenn jemand auf den Hof kam, ging er oder sie nie weg, ohne etwas zubekommen zu haben. So, und damals kam ja auch noch der Postbote mit dem Fahrrad und der kam natürlich spät nach Hause, hatte, weil damals gab ja auch, der Lohn war ja sehr knapp und gering und dann sagte meine Großmutter auf Platt (unv.), geh mal in die Küche, da steht etwas für dich zum Essen. So war das immer jeden Tag. Und ich muss sagen, ja das kann man nur nachträglich reflektieren, was für einen Einfluss so eine Frau auf mich gehabt hat. Die ist auch dann, ja wie es damals so war, mit Anfang 70 Jahren so gestorben, 195X, ich erinnere mich noch genau, am Ostertag selber. Das war natürlich auch irgend so ein spiritueller Zentralpunkt und ich wundere mich, dass ich das nie vergessen habe. Es waren aber auch die pastoralen Besucher, es kamen ja von [größte Stadt B in Region A] immer Kapuziner bei uns ins Dorf, alle vier Wochen zum sogenannten (unv.) Predigen um den Gottesdienst zu feiern. Und ich hatte das Gefühl, das war persönlich, es war nicht so, wenn ich den auf der Straße oder auf dem Weg traf, es war irgendein, ja man kann es nur vom Bauch her sagen, da war eine emotionale Beziehung, weil der Kapuzinerpater Interesse zeigte. Interesse zeigte, muss ich sagen. Die liefen natürlich damals noch mit der langen braunen Kutte herum, mit der großen Tonsur im Winter, sogar ohne Strümpfe nur mit Sandalen. (Lachen) Es waren ausgefallene Gesellen damals, ne,

und weil das auch ausgefallen war, ja war das für mich interessant, weil im Dorf war es herrlichst ausgefallen und deshalb hatte ich auch immer Interesse gezeigt für andere Ländermissionen usw. Ich glaube, das war ein Teil und das andere Teil war vielleicht, ich habe schulisch dann gewechselt, so mit 17, 18 Jahren auf ein Gymnasium in [Süddeutschland], das [einer katholischen Ordensgemeinschaft D] gehörte und weil ich ja für Missionen immer Interesse zeigte, dann bin ich auch bei denen gelandet irgendwie. (Lachen) Irgendwie muss ich auch sagen, war es auch angenehm, wenn ich das mit anderen Orden vergleiche, weil bei [der Ordensgemeinschaft D] ist, ja damals vielleicht nicht, aber wenn man weiter nachdenkt, ist das Emotionale und das Gefühl, das Gefühl sage ich mal ist wichtig. Das Persönliche vor allem. Das habe ich damals nicht so sehr entdeckt, das habe ich erst als in [südost-asiatischer Inselstaat H] tätig war. Da habe ich das langsam entdeckt. Ich ging da nach [SO-asiat. Inselstaat H] 197X und dann

3. I: Wie alt waren Sie da?

4. N: Oh, da war ich vielleicht 31, 32, so was war ich dann (Räuspern) und fünf Jahre war ich weg und als ich dann wegfuhr, war mein Vater im Krankenhaus in [Kleinstadt C in Region A], schwer krank. Heutzutage will man sagen, dann bleibe ich noch ein bisschen zu Hause, aber für mich war das alles viel wichtiger, weg nach [Inselstaat H] und das andere trat für mich total in den Hintergrund ne. Und drei Monate später war mein Vater gestorben und ich erfuhr dann die Nachricht erst zwei, drei Wochen später. Das war irgendwie, Kommunikation war eben nicht so. Ich war dann fünf Jahre zuerst in Inselstaat H], das war damals so üblich und dann konnte man auch Heimaturlaub geben (Husten) und ich erinnere mich noch, ich war auf einer Missionsstation, die hatte etliche Dörfer drum herum, 40, 50, was weiß ich und bei dem letzten Gottesdienst versammelten sich die Leute

und da sagte der Vorsitzende des (unv.: Pfarrgemeinderates?) und ein Häuptling, der Pater geht heute, aber mit ihm geht nicht unser Glaube. Also, Sie merken, dass das für mich noch jetzt emotional ist. Weil, ich habe dann später dann auch reflektiert und ich habe mir gesagt, ich bin hingegangen um den Glauben zu verbreiten, aber ich habe da den Glauben gefunden. Und ich glaube, das waren wohl auch einige Exerzitien, die ich mitgemacht habe, die auch psychologisch sehr tief gingen und ich weiß nicht, ob Sie das kennen, es gibt eine Methode um seine Präferenzen herauszustellen, das nennt sich Myers-Briggs, vielleicht schauen sie mal im Internet nach, da können Sie es, das sind die Präferenzen, weil jeder hat seine eigenen Präferenzen. Das kann völlig rational sein, das kann auch tief im Bauch und Gefühl her sein. Das kann sehr strukturiert sein, das kann auch wie ein Künstler sehr lose sein und das kann introvertiert oder extravertiert, ich bin eigentlich sehr introvertiert, aber von meiner Arbeit meinen viele auch und der [Hans R.], der ist extravertiert. (Lachen) Das wusste ich, aber ich war dann immer erschlagen. Das andere ist F-Feeling vom Englischen, das war bei mir das Gefühl, sehr tief und ist auch für mich immer irgendwie wichtig gewesen, was Beziehungen, Menschen und Personen angeht. Wenn die Beziehung angeknickt ist, nicht unbedingt ernsthaft und dann bin ich auch total im Eimer. So muss ich sagen, dass dann auch, was Spiritualität und meine Beziehungen zu Gott und Menschen angeht, vom Gefühl, vom Bauch herkommt. In [Inselstaat H] spricht man hauptsächlich vom Bauch. Alles, wir sagen von Ärzten, da passiert ja gar nichts, das ist nur ein Symbol, aber wenn die ehrlich sind, ich fühle das hier im Bauch, im Bauch. Ich weiß noch genau, wenn ich eine Lateinarbeit schreiben musste, vorher oh, hat das da gekribbelt im Bauch. (Lachen) Also ist es im Bauch. So ist es auch in der sogenannten (unv.: Sprache?) von Inselstaat

H], man spricht von *Bell*, vom Englischen *belly*, Bauch, *bell easy*, mein Bauch ist leicht oder *bell heavy*, das heißt mein Bauch ist schwer, das heißt ich habe viele Sorgen, Kümmernisse, aber *bell easy* heißt, ich bin leicht, friedvoll, voller Frieden, Versöhnung, usw. So ist das alles vom Bauch her und da ist es, glaube ich, auch bei mir, vieles vom Bauch her. Und wenn ich reflektiere, auch wenn ich Gottesdienste vorbereite, denke ich, [Hans], wie denkst du im Bauch, oder fühlst du im Bauch? Weil das dann, habe ich gemerkt, die Leute vielleicht mehr anspricht, als ob ich da eine Theologie daherverzapfe. Ich glaube und ich bin seit 200X wieder in Deutschland, ich war teilweise Direktor eines sogenannten Institutes, das der Bischofskonferenz von [Inselstaat H] unterstand, das (unv. Husten) gemacht hat und Religionsbücher und Gesangbücher produzierte und publiziert hat. Dann war ich Generalsekretär von der Bischofskonferenz. Dann bin ich in Rom gelandet, da war ich auch Generalsekretär des [Ordensgemeinschaft D]. Das sind alles so Stufen, die ich durchgegangen bin, aber ich muss sagen ich habe viel Erfahrungen, die nicht jeder, der in die Mission nach [Inselstaat H] gegangen ist, gehabt hat. Ich habe gehört, was Bischöfe, was für Sorgen die haben in [Inselstaat H] und ich habe praktisch auch die Sorgen vom ganzen Pazifik her, das geht ja praktisch von Taiwan bis runter nach Neuseeland, nach Hawaii usw. In Rom habe ich dann auch mitbekommen, die Mission in Afrika, Brasilien und Lateinamerika, das ist eine Fülle von Erfahrungen, die teilweise positiv aufmunternd, auf der anderen Seite aber auch Sorgen erregend sind, muss ich sagen. Und vielleicht könnte ich zum Abschluss bringen: Ich stamme ja aus der (unv.) [Stadt B] und da bekomme ich per Email immer Nachrichten vom sogenannten Missionsreferat und da war vor einigen Monaten die Anfrage, weil ja die ganzen Neustrukturierungen von Vereinen überall

geschieht, in [Stadt B] anders als in [Stadt K], das Missionsreferat sich Gedanken gemacht hat, ja wie ist die Pastoralität und wo steht der Pfarrer, was ist seine Rolle oder der Rolle des Pastoralreferenten usw. und hat angefragt, wer möchte einen Artikel schreiben. Dann habe ich mich hingesetzt, die Rolle des Pfarrers von meiner Erfahrung und erst habe ich natürlich ein bisschen theologisch da abgehandelt, aber das wollten die gar nicht, die wollten meine persönlichen Erfahrungen, Empfindungen und Reflektionen haben. Ich glaube, das war so eine Zusammenfassung meiner ganzen Vergangenheit der letzten 30, 40 Jahren, muss ich sagen, auf ungefähr drei, vier Seiten. (Lächeln) Ja, mehr wollten die auch nicht, mehr wollten die nicht, mehr wollten die nicht. Ich glaube und das könnte ich vielleicht jetzt damit erst mal zum Abschluss bringen ja.

5. I: Danke.
6. N: Bitte.
7. I: Angenommen, Ihr Leben wäre ein Buch, welche Kapitel müsste es enthalten?
8. N: Ich habe leider nie ein Buch geschrieben, aber mir wurde schon mal gesagt [Hans], du solltest einen Roman schreiben. Ich war zwar nie gut in Deutsch, aber was die Noten angeht, aber ich bin gut in Beschreibungen und wenn ich es in einem Buch festhalten möchte, dann würde ich vielleicht Einzelerlebnisse herauskristallisieren lassen. Einzelerlebnis... sagen wir mal, all meine gesundheitlichen Probleme, die ich gehabt habe, teilweise aus der Zeit an, an die ich mich gar nicht mehr erinnern kann, mit drei Jahren, aber vielleicht aus dem Unterbewussten könnte ich darüber reflektieren, wie es war. Da wäre ich auch beinahe gestorben nach einer Diphtherieimpfung und ich habe auch noch Malaria gehabt, das war auch mit 41 Grad Fieber, das war auch so an der Grenze, so dass ein Mitbewohner meinte, ja der [Hans] schafft das nicht bis zum Morgen. Bei Verkehrsunfällen in [Inselstaat H] (unv.) oder im Fluss in der Nähe

- eines Meeres fast umgekommen und trotzdem sage ich, hier sitze ich heute ja. Wer will mir das erklären? Ich weiß nur, das ist der Fall, dass ich das erlebt habe und dass ich trotzdem hier sitze als positives Ende. Das wäre vielleicht ein Kapitel. Das andere Kapitel wäre vielleicht ein bisschen schwieriger. Ja, wie erlebe ich mich und meine eigene Spiritualität? Ich habe Herbst 199X einen dreimonatigen spirituellen Kursus in [Land in Nordeuropa] bei den Jesuiten mitgemacht und dreißigtägige Exerziten. Das fand ich ein bisschen heftig, aber es war, ja, wie so ein Auftauchen aus dem Dunklen des Wassers plötzlich, es erinnert mich an eine Reflektion, die ich hatte über Johannes der Täufer. Ich stehe da auf einem Stein und irgendwie werde ich da nach oben geschoben. Wenn sie unter Wasser sind und kein guter Schwimmer, dann ist eine richtige Angst und Ängstlichkeit, wie komme ich da hoch, wann bekomme ich Luft, (Luftholen) wann kann ich ausatmen, aufatmen? Das war vielleicht nach all den Jahren der Tätigkeit, ich brauchte irgendwie eine Zeit der Besinnung, der Ruhe und vielleicht, dass ich zu mir selbst finde. Das wäre vielleicht auch ein Kapitel vielleicht, das wäre aber sehr persönlich. (Lachen) Nicht unbedingt zur Veröffentlichung, ne, weil das kann ich nur, nur ich verstehen. Das kann nur ich verstehen, das kann kein anderer verstehen. Wenn ich ein anderes Kapitel, ja jetzt werde ich im [Herbst] 72, ich habe nie so richtig noch drüber nachgedacht, was ist wenn ich älter bin oder ne, ich weiß es und ich weiß, dass ich auch gesundheitliche Probleme im Augenblick habe und dass Ärzte, in bin in einer Uniklinik in [Stadt B] immer zur Behandlung, sich viel Sorge machen, muss ich sagen. Das wäre vielleicht auch, wie mich das betrifft, wenn andere sich um mich sorgen, das wäre vielleicht auch ein Kapitel ja. (.....)(unv. Husten)
9. I: Welche Ereignisse sind rückblickend besonders bedeutsam?
10. N: Ich habe die vielleicht schon erwähnt. Ich würde sagen, indirekt habe ich sie erwähnt, ich würde vielleicht sagen, es ist das Ergebnis und die Erfahrungen vielleicht, das Durchgehen von meinem Verständnis als Pastor in Deutschland und plötzlich bin ich in [Inselstaat H], wo ich nicht der Chef bin, sondern derjenige, der von Menschen abhängt. Im Englischen gebraucht man das Wort *interdependence*, voneinander abhängig sein und das ist, was die Menschen dort empfinden seit Jahrhunderten, Jahrtausenden. Sie sind voneinander abhängig und das macht die Beziehungen aus und da hat sich meine Rolle sehr stark verändert und die ist natürlich auch, im Englischen sagt man *painful*, ist schmerzhaft, schmerzhaft so ein Durchgang, ja ich weiß alles, ich kann alles, ich bin ja Europäer, ich bin und auf einmal, ja, man ist abhängig von Menschen und von Leuten, und nicht weil ich, weil ich sie brauche. Na ja, und weil sie auch mich brauchen, so ist das halt, so ein interdependence voneinander abhängen. Das möchte ich vielleicht sagen, das war ein richtiges Erlebnis, dass ich vielleicht, sagen wir mal nach 10 Jahren vielleicht, hat sich das entwickelt ja. Da war ich auch da in der zweiten Station, da habe ich angefangen mit (unv. small churches?) kleinkirchlichen Gemeinschaften (unv.), der kennt sich ja damit aus und die Reflektion über Basisgemeinden war ja, ich muss den Leuten auch das Recht geben, selbst was zu tun, um auch selbst Fehler machen zu dürfen, ohne dass ich da einschreite, aha, und das heißt, ich halte mich irgendwie auch zurück, ich bin zwar der Beobachter, aber lade vielleicht die Leute bei einem Kursus oder Exerziten ein zu reflektieren über das, was geschehen ist oder was sie gemacht haben, ohne dass ich sage, ich meine so und so und so. Ich glaube, das waren vielleicht die wichtigsten Dinge, die jetzt mir im Augenblick einfallen, ja.
11. I: Gibt es in Ihrer Vergangenheit Beziehungen, die Ihre persönliche Entwicklung entscheidend beeinflusst haben?

12. N: (Husten, Geräusch) Direkt fällt mir ein meine Schwester [Erika], die ist sieben Jahre jünger, die hat mich fünf Mal in [Inselstaat H] besucht. Ich glaube nicht, dass es ihr darum ging, die verschiedenen Ecken von [Inselstaat H], wo ich gewesen bin, auch zu entdecken, sondern dass es auch darum ging, wie geht es mir. Ich glaube, und das merke ich ja jetzt auch, weil ich ja öfter nach [Stadt B] fahre und dann bin ich auch bei ihr zu Hause und die kümmert sich wirklich tief um mich, muss ich sagen ja, muss ich wirklich sagen, das war sehr wichtig. Vielleicht auch meine Mutter, die mit fast 97 Jahren gestorben ist, eine Woche vor ihrem Tod, vor ihrem 97. Sie war am Schluss schwerhörig, aber sie hat auch viel durchgemacht. Das waren natürlich auch die Kriegsjahre damals, ne. Wo mein Vater im Krieg war, das habe ich alles gar nicht mitbekommen ne. Wie schwer das damals war und sie war eine sehr fromme Frau, muss ich sagen, sehr fromme Frau. Das hat der Pfarrer auch bei der Beerdigungsmesse gesagt. Der war ja da monatlich da um die Kommunion ihr zu bringen und hat auch erfahren, dass sie den Rosenkranz immer betet und er hat dann auch dann in den Rosenkranzgeheimnissen ihr Leben dann auch damit eingezeichnet. Zum Beispiel ja im Januar '7X, mein Vater schwer krank im Krankenhaus, ich gehe dann weg, ja das war für sie natürlich schmerzhaft, ja, und so verschiedene andere Sachen muss ich sagen ja. Ich muss auch sagen, dass einige in [Inselstaat H], einige Schwestern muss ich sagen, auch mir sehr geholfen haben, muss ich sagen ja. Auch in den dreißigtägigen Exerzitien in [Land in Nordeuropa], da war eine deutsche Dominikanerin, aber das lief alles auf Englisch, aber sehr verständnisvoll, muss ich sagen und da war das ja nicht wichtig, ob ich jetzt katholischer Priester bin oder nicht, es ging um mich, es ging um mich. Das muss ich sagen, dass das für mich auch wichtig gewesen ist ja.
13. I: Erinnern Sie sich an Veränderungen in Beziehungen, die einen entscheidenden Einfluss auf Ihr Leben oder Ihre Ansichten hatten?
14. N: (Husten) Ansichten haben sich im Laufe der Zeit sehr geändert. Ich weiß noch, was ich alles da unnötigerweise mitgeschleppt habe an Büchern, Skripten aus meiner Studentenzeit. (Lächeln) Nachträglich, was ich soll da überhaupt mit, ich muss ja hier in [Inselstaat H] etwas ganz Neues erfahren, da hilft mir kein Professor. Ich habe in [Stadt F in Süddeutschland] Theologie studiert, der hilft mir gar nicht. Als ich dann, wie schon erwähnt, mit den kleinen täglichen Gemeinschaften anfang, ja wie ist das Verständnis von Theologie in diesem Zusammenhang, es gab ja nichts. Ich musste mir das denn überlegen, wie verstehe ich da ein Sakrament? Wie verstehe ich Taufe? Oder wie verstehen die Leute die Taufe zum Beispiel ja. Das waren total neue Überlegungen, die ich machen musste ne. Das war natürlich gar nicht so leicht, weil, keiner gab mir einen Hinweis. Ja es gab wohl Artikel aus Afrika z. B., Tansania und Kenia, die auch kleine tägliche Gemeinschaften aufgestellt hatten, ne, aber. In [Inselstaat H] war es natürlich anders im Zusammenhang mit den natürlichen Gemeinschaften, Dorfgemeinschaften. Ich kann ja nicht sagen, dass da keine Gemeinschaft war. Da war eine Dorfgemeinschaft und da war es wichtig darauf aufzubauen ne, darauf aufzubauen und wir hatten damals auch dann bestimmte Themen entwickelt, aufgeschrieben, einen Kursus gemacht und dann Katechisten und andere, wir nannten sie (unv.). Freie tägliche Mitarbeiter von Dorf zu Dorf geschickt nehm, ja wir verstehen uns als christliche Dorfgemeinschaft, nicht als Dorfgemeinschaft, als christliche Dorfgemeinschaft, ne, und da muss ich sagen und das hat auch die Katechisten wirklich zusammengehalten ja. Auch die ganz Alten, die ja nur einen kleinen katholischen Katechismus kannten und

bestimmte Gebete und mehr war auch nicht, die gingen dann auch mit. Einer sagte, ich kann zwar nicht zu den Leuten sprechen, das bin ich ja gar nicht gewohnt, aber wenn ihr unterwegs seid, bete ich für euch den Rosenkranz. Und nachdem die etliche Dörfer besucht hatten, sagten die jungen Katechisten, Alter, du hast ja so oft schon gehört, möchtest du nicht auch mal den Leuten etwas sagen? Da hat sich was geändert, muss ich sagen ja. Dass die auch Respekt gegenüber den Alten zeigten, muss ich wirklich sagen ja. Das kann man ja nur vom Gefühl her sagen, wie der Alte vielleicht reagiert hat ne. Aber für ihn war es besser (unv.). Ich bin nicht einfach (unv.) in die Ecke gestellt, weil ich nicht mehr mitkomme mit dem neuen System usw., nein er war wichtig. Das, ja im Augenblick fällt mir da noch nichts weiter ein, vielleicht kommt das bei der nächsten Frage.

15. I: Wie hat sich Ihr Weltbild inkl. evtl. Ihr Bild von Gott oder einer höheren Macht in den unterschiedlichen Phasen Ihres Lebens verändert?
16. N: Wenn ich jetzt schnell nachdenke, dann fällt mir wieder der alte Pfarrer aus meinem Dorf ein. (Husten)Der gab ja auch Religionsunterricht und damals gab es ja noch in der Klasse eine erhöhte Stufe mit einem sogenannten Pult, das auch höher war und er saß ganz schön hinter dem Pult nech, so konnte er auch nicht angegriffen werden (Lachen)und er haute dann manchmal mit den Füßen an das Innere des Pultes, weil er ärgerlich oder wütend war nech, also der vermittelte wirklich das Bild von Gott. Hier wird das und das gesagt, ihr müsst nur gehorchen, fertig Schluss aus. So war das teilweise auch in meiner Studentenzeit im Orden, muss ich sagen. Das hat sich natürlich dann auch geändert in der Mission, wo ich dann alleine tätig war. Ich war ja nicht in einer Gemeinschaft. Die hatten wohl Beziehung monatlich, aber da hat sich glaube ich, wie ich schon erwähnt habe, in den Exerzitien hat sich viel geändert ja. Dass ich ein Bild von Gott hatte, der sich um mich kümmert. Vor allem, wenn man es theologisch da braucht, man sollte ja den Namen Jahwe heute nicht mehr gebrauchen, aus Respekt allein schon gegenüber den Juden, aber wenn man es übersetzt, ich bin derjenige, der für euch da ist. Also wenn ich das Gefühl habe, jemand ist für mich da, gerade dann, wenn ich ihn oder sie gebrauchen kann, ohne noch mal gefragt zu werden, dass jemand einfach, ich habe das Gefühl, ja ich sitze oder stehe oder gehe nicht alleine, das ist keine Kontrolle, aber es ist jemand da, ja und der fängt mich auf oder der ermutigt mich oder der gibt mir irgend Ratschläge. Ich kann den, wenn mir irgendwas einfällt aus dem Bauch heraus, ja vielleicht meine ich ja, ich habe gute Gedanken oder Ideen, aber vielleicht sage ich ja, vielleicht ist gerade dann der Augenblick, wo Gott mir sagen möchte, das und das wäre für dich vielleicht wichtig.
17. I: Was bedeutet Gott für Sie heute?
18. N: (Husten)Ja, ich versuche das in einem Bild vielleicht zu fassen, dass ich in einem Netzwerk nicht gefangen bin, sondern aufgehoben bin. So kann ich Gott nicht als Einzelperson unbedingt bezeichnen, weil vielleicht mehr als den dreifaltigen Gott, wo auch die Beziehungen äußerst wichtig sind. Ja und deshalb ist die Beziehung zu Gott in dem Sinne wichtig. Es ist nicht ausgesprochen unbedingt, wie sie aussieht oder was er oder sie sagt, sondern es ist das Gefühl und das Empfinden und das Bewusstsein im Kopf vielleicht, aber bei mir mehr im Bauch, dass jemand einfach da ist. Muss nicht irgendwie einen Kommentar abgeben, (Lächeln)das ist nicht wichtig, ist nur ja ich bin einfach da. Keine Kontrolle, aber wenn du nichts dagegen hast, gehen wir den Weg zusammen.
19. I: Wie erklären sich diese Veränderungen, die Sie erlebt haben? Also von dem anfänglichen Gottesbild zu dem späteren?
20. N: Ja, ich glaube, früher war das mehr so eine Kontrolle von oben, bis ich dann vielleicht mich selbst entdeckt habe, ja. Wie

ich schon am Anfang sagte, der Myers-Briggs, das ist der, INFJ, I intravertiert (sic), notion, das heißt (unv.), F feeling und J judging, strukturiert? Ich bin eine strukturierte Person in dem Sinne. Mein Zimmer sieht nicht immer danach aus, aber ich ziehe vor, dass ich strukturiert vorgehe. Aber das vom Bauch her, ist das wichtigste, ich glaube, dass ich zu mir selbst gefunden habe ja, das war damals wahrscheinlich nicht so. Und es war auch in der Kindheit so, so lange du hier deine Füße unter den Tisch stellst, tust du, was ich dir sage. So war das eben, ne. Ich weiß nicht, ob ich das erzählen sollte, irgendwie habe ich mal gesagt zu meinen Vater, ich zünde das Haus an! Was du willst das Haus anzünden? Ich wollte ja nur sagen, bitte hör mir doch mal zu. Aber das war ja nicht wichtig. Gehorsam, du tust, was ich dir sage, fertig Schluss aus. Und das ist natürlich, dauert alles seine Zeit, dass ich mich davon befreien konnte. Ja, ja. Ich kann nicht sagen wann, wie, wo, da müsste ich schon länger nachdenken.

21. I: Danke.
22. N: Bitte.
23. I: Gab es in Ihrem Leben Befreiungserlebnisse oder Durchbrüche, die den Sinn ihres Lebens gefestigt oder verändert haben?
24. N: Durchbrüche? Ich kann nicht sagen, das ist ein bestimmtes Ereignis gewesen. Wenn ein Ereignis da war, dann war das die Reflektion über das Ereignis, das im Laufe der Zeit geschehen ist. Wie z. B. wie ich erzählt habe, wo ich beinahe öfter in meinem Leben dem Tod nahegestanden bin, ne, und manchmal habe ich ja auch solche Fragen in der Uniklinik, wenn eine neue Behandlung angefangen wird, machten sie sich Sorgen über Tod usw. Das sind ja... Manchmal ist natürlich wenn meine Werte oder wenn ich schwach bin, wirklich runter gehen ne, dann natürlich bin ich auch schlecht drauf, auch emotional. Dann meine ich, oh, dauert nicht mehr allzu lange. Aber auf der anderen

Seite, ja wenn es besser wird, ja. Nun ist das alles wieder weiter entfernt, obwohl es ganz nah sein kann. Für einen Priester ist das ja auch, ja ich sollte das wissen, aber es ist ja eine existenzielle Angelegenheit für mich ja. Das möchte ich sagen, diese Erfahrung von ja, naher Tod, ja Erlebnissen, wie gesagt. Ein Mitbewohner meinte, bei der Malaria 198X, der überlebt das nicht mehr und der hat dann natürlich die ganze auf dem Sofa da geschlafen und wie kommt der dadurch. Trotzdem sitze ich hier. Das waren wohl vielleicht die sehr existenziellen Erfahrungen, muss ich sagen. Und ja dreißigster Exerziten ist auch, die schlau machen zwar, weil das waren nicht (unv. Natanische?) Exerziten, weil mal war ein Auf und Ab und manchmal aus Tiefen geht, ne und weil es auch dann psychisch mich dann sehr getroffen hat. Einmal muss ich wahrscheinlich so tief emotional gewesen sein, dass die Dominikanerin sich Sorgen machte, aber auf einmal ja da waren im November, Oktober oder November da war es noch kalt, aber da waren doch da Rosen, ich pflücke eine Rose ab und stelle sie auf mein Zimmer, sie kam immer auf mein Zimmer so in einer Beratung oder Begleitung. Aber da hat sich was geändert. Das sind kleine Sachen, Dinge, ja die kann ich jetzt nachträglich nicht so unbedingt erklären, aber das ist so Art Symbol, ja. Da bin ich durch etwas gegangen, was für mich schwer war, ja. Weil, ich muss ja auch etwas zurücklassen, loslassen und das Loslassen ist ja nicht immer leicht, loslassen.

25. I: Und ist das der Durchbruch, das Loslassen können?
26. N: Ich glaube ja, wenn Sie so fragen, ich glaube ja, ich glaube ja, ja. Ich kann nicht sagen, ich bin fähig oder in der Lage, ich kann von allem loslassen, das könnte ich nicht, nein. Das glaube ich nicht. Aber dass ich erfahren habe, ich kann loslassen und ich muss auch teilweise loslassen. Für mich, Beziehung, für mich wichtig sind, hatte ich

- zu Anfang gesagt. Nachdem ich fünf Jahre auf einer Missionsstation gewesen war, die Beziehung zu den Leuten war wichtig und auf einmal gehe ich weg und komme ganz woanders wieder hin. Ich verliere etwas, nech und das war auch auf der zweiten Station so. Als ich dann nach fünf Jahren auch da wegging, da hat mich ein alter Katechist eingeladen zu (unv. [Ortsname?]), ein kleiner Flecken war das, zwei, drei Häuser und er hatte dann eigens Texte und Melodie als Abschiedslied komponiert und zusammengestellt. Ja, das sind so, glaube ich, das sind so Erlebnisse, ja ich muss loslassen und es hat mich sehr betroffen, so dass ich das nach so vielen Jahren, als ich wegging, das war '8X, das ist viele Jahre her, aber das taucht immer wieder auf. Es ist auch Erfahrung und Erlebnisse, aber es war wichtig loszulassen, weil, ich muss dann auch weitergehen und ich mache neue Erfahrungen, habe ich festgestellt, neue Erfahrungen, wenn ich loslasse und ganz woanders anfangen. Das war auch so vom Bauch her. Ich hatte festgestellt, nach vielen Jahren immer das Gleiche, überall muss ich dann anfangen mit den kleinen täglichen Gemeinschaften, die Mitbrüder und Priester, die machen nicht so richtig mit. Ich musste irgendwas anderes und da unten sah ich plötzlich, ich hatte da Exerzitien für einheimische Krankenschwestern gegeben und da war eine Nachricht da, dass sie jemanden suchen im Hochland für [Inselstaat H], für das Institut für Lithografie und Katechetik, bums, der [Hans] meldet sich sofort vom Bauch her und meine Schwester [Erika] war paar Monate vorher dagewesen, ich hatte nie was davon erzählt, wusste ich ja auch gar nicht und sie sah auf einmal, gehst du ganz woanders hin? Wie kommst du denn dazu? Ja, das war Bauchentscheidung, das war dann auch richtig ja.
27. I: Haben Sie Krisenzeiten oder Zeiten des Leidens (Husten) und der Enttäuschung erlebt? Oder Zeiten, in denen Sie keinen Sinn in diesem Leben gesehen haben?
28. N: Ja, soweit möchte ich nicht gehen, dass ich keinen Sinn in meinem Leben gesehen habe. Enttäuschungen ja, aber das hängt dann oft mit Personen zusammen. Mit denen ich zusammengearbeitet habe und sei es nur der Gärtner oder der Koch, der dann plötzlich dann Marihuana in meinem Blumen Garten angepflanzt hatte und die sahen genauso aus wie andere Blumen, ne. Das war eine totale Enttäuschung für mich und weil ich ihm so vertraute, aber das fand ich ganz schlimm, ganz schlimm fand ich das. Oder wenn ein Mitbruder etwas von mir behauptet, was ich nie gesagt habe, das ist auch für mich eine Enttäuschung ja. So für mich sind das also, Beziehungen sind sehr wichtig und wenn die kaputt gemacht werden, vielleicht bin ich ja auch selber schuld, das weiß ich ja nicht, aber ich leide darunter, muss ich sagen ja. Persönlich ist das schwierig für mich, sehr schwierig. Bis ich mich da wieder hochgerappelt habe ja.
29. I: Und gab es Krisenzeiten in Ihrem Leben?
30. N: Wenn ich sagen würde, ich hatte keine Krisen, dann würden Sie mir auch nicht glauben (Lachen). Was meinen Beruf als katholischer Priester angeht, so habe ich das immer wieder empfunden, ich muss mich immer neu darum bewerben. Das war in dem Sinne ja, ich kann nicht sagen jetzt bin ich mal katholischer Priester geworden und jetzt bin ich happy und zufrieden forever and ever, amen. Nein, das war bei mir nie der Fall gewesen. Ich musste mich immer darum bemühen ja. Vor allem, wenn ich emotional kaputt war und dann brauchte ich emotionale Unterstützung, ja. Dass ich die emotionale Unterstützung nicht suche rein um meinetwillen, ja ohne die Person zu respektieren, da musste ich schon immer aufpassen ja.
31. I: Was ist damals mit Ihnen passiert, wenn Sie Krisenzeiten z. B. erlebt haben?
32. N: Ich erwähne das vielleicht mehrmals, aber emotional dauert es bei mir sehr lange, bis ich das alles verdaut habe, weil ich nicht immer verstehe, warum ist das so, muss das so sein, nein muss nicht so sein, kann aber

- so sein und ich habe mich oft selber da durchgeschlagen, außer wenn bei den dreißigtägigen Exerzitien z. B. ja.
33. I: Welchen Einfluss hatten solche Erfahrungen?
34. N: Ich bin mir jetzt nicht so ganz sicher, wie ich darauf reagieren oder antworten soll. Aber Krisen sind für mich glaube ich immer, ich möchte mit Führungsstrichen sagen wichtig gewesen, damit ich selber stärker oder gefestigter, gefestigter werde, muss ich sagen, nicht stärker, gefestigter werde. Das ist ein Prozess, der schmerzhaft ist, würde ich sagen, sein kann, ist, bei mir ist und der vielleicht Wochen, Monate, ich weiß nicht wie lange dauert, das ist unterschiedlich. Wie eine Krise, ich war ja vier Jahre Generalsekretär in meinem Orden und daraus wurde mein Vertrag nicht erneuert und dann hat der Rat darüber beraten, natürlich konnte ich nicht dabei sein um das Protokoll zu schreiben und dann kommt der Chef nachmittags in mein Büro, ja hier ist das Protokoll, ich denk, sagt der mir gar nicht, wie es da um mich steht? Ich habe wahrscheinlich und plötzlich mein erstauntes Gesicht oh, ich muss dir noch sagen, wie wir entschieden haben und dann hat er mich auf sein Zimmer genommen. Ich habe gar nicht mehr zugehört, gar nicht mehr zugehört. Das fand ich ganz schlimm, ganz schlimm. Anstatt zusagen oh [Hans], kannst du mal, bevor er überhaupt mit seinem fertigen Protokoll, Geschriebenem daherkommt ne, ich möchte mit dir sprechen usw. Und dass er was Positives erst sagt, aber ich glaube wirklich, persönlich ist es besser, dass du in eine andere Richtung gehst, vielleicht nach Deutschland wieder usw. Aber das war gar nicht der Fall. Da war ich total im Eimer und ich war froh, dass da im Hause ein italienischer Mitbruder war, dem ich das alles erzählen konnte ja. Da sehen Sie, ich brauche jemanden, dem ich vertrauen kann ne.
35. I: Wenn wir nun die Gegenwart betrachten, wie würden Sie Ihre Eltern beschreiben?
36. N: Oh, habe ich ja teilweise ein wenig schon. Mein Vater war einer von der alten Garde. Der hat es auch schwer gehabt, muss ich sagen. Er hatte ja nur die Volksschule besucht und dann hatte er weiter studiert. Es gab damals eine Lehrerakademie, wo man weiter studieren konnte um dann Volksschullehrer zu werden. Ja und als er fertig war, dann gab es natürlich keine Arbeit. Dann hat er im [Region S in Westdeutschland] vor Ort und dann auch Kohle geschauelt, bis er dann in dieses kleine Dorf da kam, ne. Aber er war von der Art, Disziplin ist richtig, Kontrolle, Kontrolle, sonst fällt alles auseinander. So war das eben damals. Das war bei meinem Vater, das war aber, muss ich sagen, nicht unbedingt bei den Gymnasiallehrern, wo ich war. Die stammten ja auch aus der Zeit, aber das waren, der Direktor von dem Gymnasium in [Kleinstadt C], der war sehr verständnisvoll, muss ich sagen, sehr verständnisvoll. Das war mein Vater. Kontrolle, Disziplin, Gehorsam und dann läuft alles von selber. So war sein Verständnis. Aber und heutzutage ja. Er konnte ja einfach nicht anders. Meine Schwester leidet manchmal immer noch darunter. Aber ich bin ja dann auch mit 17, 18 Jahren weg, ne. Dann habe ich das ja nicht mehr so erfahren. Und ja, meine Mutter hat auch darunter teilweise gelitten. Mein Vater kontrollierte auch das Geld ne, oder als er im Krieg war, erzählt meine Mutter, ja schrieb er, wie viel ist auf meinem Sparbuch? Nicht wie geht es euch? (Lächeln) Wie viel ist auf meinem Sparbuch? Ja, meine Mutter hat wohl darunter gelitten. Sie war wohl wie meine Großmutter, muss ich sagen. Die waren unterschiedlich, aber ich glaube, das hat sie auch so alt gemacht. Mein Vater ist ja mit 70 Jahren gestorben. Ich glaube, da gehe ich lieber in Richtung von meiner Großmutter und meiner Mutter. Meine Mutter erzählt, ich kann mich natürlich nicht mehr erinnern, wir hatten die Mutter meines Vaters, meine Großmutter väterlicherseits, auch bei

- uns zu Hause, weil keiner sie von seinen Brüdern haben wollte. Das war so eine Fabrikantentochter, die einen [Handwerksmeister] geheiratet hatte (Husten) und wir holten dann immer vom benachbarten Bauern, so 200 m entfernt, jeden Tag die Milch mit einer kleinen Kanne und die Großmutter ging dann hin und holte die Milch, aber zu der Zeit war ja nur mein älterer Bruder, der war drei Jahre älter, dann kam ich und dann 194X ist dann mein jüngerer Bruder [Horst] geboren. Aber wie meine Mutter war, ohne mich zu loben, sie wollte nur den [Hans] mithaben. Jetzt habe ich kein Bild bei mir, ich könnte ihnen eins von 194X zeigen, da sieht man ja, ich war an sich ein fröhlicher, frohgemuter Junge damals, ja. Und wahrscheinlich war ich froh, wenn ich mal da bei der Bauersfrau da auftauchte ne, das war natürlich in Küche (unv. vor allem schwarz?) und Fliegen usw. Das waren alles liebevolle Leute. So könnte ich sagen ja, was meine Eltern und mich angeht.
37. I: Wie ist Ihre Beziehung zu Ihren Eltern jetzt?
38. N: Ja nun sind sie ja alle verstorben. Ich versuche zu verstehen, wie sie reagiert haben, vor allem was meinen Vater angeht, möchte ich aber auch. Ich war ja auch noch sieben Jahre in [Stadt F] nach meiner Rückkehr nach Deutschland und da habe ich oft meine Mutter angerufen und sie konnte dann nicht mehr so richtig lesen, hatte auch Schwierigkeiten mit den Augen und sie las gerne plattdeutsche Bücher. Sie hatte einen ganzen Schwung plattdeutsche Bücher und nicht jeder kann plattdeutsch lesen und sprechen, aber sie konnte das richtig flott weg lesen und da sie dann wegen der Augen nicht mehr lesen konnte, habe ich dann im Internet recherchiert. Gibt es da, eh, so eine kleine Geschichte auf plattdütsch, das ich am Telefon erzählen kann. So ja, dann sagte sie, ja du bist auch der Beste. (Lächeln) Ja, wahrscheinlich hängt das auch damit zusammen, weil ich ja auch katholischer Priester bin wahrscheinlich. Das ist für Mütter [der Region A] das Topding, das sie sich vorstellen können ne. Aber auch glaube ich, dass ich verständnisvoll reagiert habe. Ich war auch natürlich nicht immer zu Hause. Mein jüngerer Bruder, der rastete schnell aus ne, weil er meine Mutter dann nicht verstand, die das schlecht hörte, dass sie schlecht sah usw. ne, und wo ich dann wahrscheinlich von meiner Erfahrung als Priester Verständnis gezeigt habe und das war für sie im hohen Alter wichtig.
39. I: Wie hat sich Ihr Bild von Ihren Eltern im Laufe der Jahre verändert?
40. N: Wie und wo, das kann ich gar nicht so richtig sagen. Aber ich kann vielleicht sagen, wenn ich nachdenke, wie mein Vater da reagiert hat, wenn es mir nicht so gut ging oder auch meiner Mutter. Ich hatte schulisch mal Schwierigkeiten und da (unv.) Internat zu dem [Ordensgemeinschaft D] übergewechselt und mein Vater ist dann mit mir den ganzen Wege von [Kleinstadt C], [Stadt B] nach [Stadt F] gefahren, hat mich da abgeliefert und ist dann wieder zurückgefahren. Sonst normalerweise, ich setzte mich in den Zug, fahr mal los. Aber da hat er sich wirklich um mich gekümmert, muss ich sagen. Wenn ich über solche Dinge jetzt nachdenke ne, also im Grunde war er auch emotional und verständnisvoll auf der anderen Seite. Waren so zwei Aspekte, muss ich sagen. Das findet meine Schwester immer noch schwierig, diese Zeiten zu sehen. Meine Mutter war auch, als wir nicht parierten, so hieß es früher, parierten, auch sehr streng. Da hat es auch mal Hiebe gegeben, aber das habe ich irgendwie alles verdrängt. Durch das, was ich als ich dann meine Mutter dann später erlebt habe.
41. I: Und wenn es Veränderungen gegeben hat, woran hat das gelegen?
42. N: Sie sehen, ich zögere, weil ich das nicht so recht weiß. Vielleicht auch, weil ich mir gesagt habe was mein Vater z. B. angeht,

muss ich immer an das Negative, das ich durch ihn erfahren habe, denken. Das hilft mir nicht und das hilft auch nicht, weil ja jetzt ist er verstorben. Aber wenn ich da sagen wollte, die Beziehung zum ihm, auch wenn er verstorben ist, hilft da gar nicht. Ich muss einen Weg finden, der versöhnlich ist, sonst gehe ich einen Weg, der vielleicht in mir Verärgerung auslöst, Ängste, Beklemmung usw. Ich glaube das und das ist glaube ich im Laufe der Zeit wohl verschwunden. Für meinen Vater war es selbst schwierig, als ich im Januar '7X wegging ins Krankenhaus und da weiß ich noch, da sagte meine Mutter, gib ihm mal deinen Segen. Obwohl er Beruhigungsspritze bekommen hatte, ist er fast ausgerastet, ja emotional sagen wir mal ja. Das war für ihn schwierig.

43. I: Gibt es andere Beziehungen, die Ihnen bedeutsam erscheinen?

44. N: Wichtig sag ich mal. Bei bedeutsam habe ich das Gefühl, oh das sind dann bestimmte Personen, auf die ich konzentriert bin und das nicht. Als ich von Rom wegging, habe ich mich bewusst nach [Stadt F] hinbeworben, denn die hatten eine kleine Kommunität von fünf, sechs Leuten ungefähr. Wie gesagt, ich will eine kleine Gemeinschaft, nicht eine große Gemeinschaft, wo ich mich total verliere. Das war nämlich der Fall in meinem Studium. Da waren große Gemeinschaften. Da verlor man sich und es war auch nicht wichtig, wie sich jemand fühlte oder empfand, solange man die Regeln einhielt. So hieß es halt, die Regeln und die Regel halte ich so und so hieß es. (Husten) So habe ich mich da und da bin ich auch gut aufgehoben gewesen, muss ich sagen und die Gemeinschaft hatte sich auch bewusst schon darauf selbst zusammengestellt, dass sie sich öfter traf auch zur Reflektion, Glauben teilen, Bibel teilen, Klausurtagung usw. und das war wohl für mich sehr wichtig und dann wurde ich natürlich der Chef des Hauses und das hatte geholfen auch, in dem Sinne da

weiterzumachen. Das fand ich, als ich dann da wegging, dann ging ich nach [Ort K], da fand ich das ein bisschen schwierig ja, weil da waren zu viele Individualisten. Das würden die wahrscheinlich nie von sich glauben, aber es war so der Fall. Und hier ist es natürlich etwas anderes, weil viele sind älter nech. Ich glaube, es ist im Vergleich zu früher mehr respektvoller auch hier ja. Was ich erwarte, ist vor allem Respekt. Das ist das Minimum, was ich immerhin erwarten könnte. Respekt ja.

45. I: Welche Gruppen, welche Einrichtungen, Ideen oder Anliegen sind für Sie zentral?

46. N: Ja, jetzt möchte ich nicht mit Kirche unbedingt kommen, obwohl sie für mich wichtig ist. Ich habe das Empfinden, wenn hier in Deutschland von Kirche gesprochen wird, dann meinen die Leute der Pfarrer, der Pastor, der Bischof und was weiß ich sonst da, aber sonst haben wir (plattdeutsch sprechend) nex mit to don, da haben wir nichts damit zu tun ja. Und das ist mein Verständnis in dem Sinne etwas anderes und das fehlt mir teilweise hier. Das fehlt mir. Die Erfahrung von [Inselstaat H] her, dass Kirche Gemeinschaft ist, wo jeder oder jede den anderen unterstützt usw. und suchen gemeinsam einen Weg. Das fehlt mir oft noch, muss ich sagen ja, ja das fehlt mir. Und das hat mir in [Stadt F] sehr geholfen. Wir hatten da ja nicht eine kleine, in der Citykirche die vielleicht was Sorgen hatten und da gab es zwar Gottesdienste, drei Mal am Tag, aber auch Beichtgespräche usw. Da kann ich natürlich nicht drüber sprechen. Aber ich kann nur sagen, dass ich gelernt habe da zuzuhören. Bei der Beichte kann einer mit ganz einfachen Dingen daherkommen, aber von der Stimme her oder vielleicht, wenn sich die Person mir gegenüber hinsetzt von der Körpersprache, ich denke irgendetwas ist da, was ich vielleicht ansprechen darf, oder auch nicht. Das ist eine Balance ohne jemanden zu verletzen oder die Person sagt nein, möchte ich nicht. Sagt es zwar nicht, aber zwischen den

- Zeilen habe ich gelernt zu lesen und zuzuhören. Das muss ich sagen, das habe ich dabei gelernt und das fehlt teilweise, finde ich. Wenn ich sage, dann wird sofort rational reagiert. Anstatt ja, wie meint er das? Wie empfindet er dabei? Wie fühlt er sich dabei oder sie? Ja das, finde ich manchmal, fehlt, fehlt, fehlt mir so was ja. Das war wohl in [Stadt F] vielleicht ein bisschen anders ja. Die Gefahr bestand natürlich, dass man einen Fanclub sich da aufbaute (Lachen), die Gefahr bestand. Ich hatte einen Mitbruder, der hatte seinen Fanclub aufgebaut. Aber das wollte ich ja nie. Es geht ja nicht um mich. Es ging nicht um mich. Obwohl die Leute wichtig für mich waren, es geht nicht nur um mich, sondern um die Person, die mich anspricht. Darum geht es. Oder auch nicht ansprechen möchte ne.
47. I: Warum ist Ihnen dies so wichtig?
48. N: Ich glaube, weil ich, ja wenn ich ehrlich bin, auch selbst Affirmation vielleicht gebrauchen könnte, die unausgesprochen ist. Nur dass ich erfahre, aha ich habe die Person verstanden und sie versteht mich, ohne dass das ausgesprochen ist. Ich glaube, das könnte ich sagen ja.
49. I: Gibt es noch andere Einrichtungen, Gruppen, Anliegen oder Ideen, die Sie noch erwähnen wollten?
50. N: Wenn Sie in meine Bude kommen, dann sehen Sie viele Bücher. Gäste fragen, sammelst du was? Einige, die sammeln Postkarten und Briefmarken, was weiß ich und [Hans], was sammelst Du? Ich sage, ich sammle Bücher (Lachen). Also fast jedes Mal, wenn ich in [Stadt B] bin, gehe ich zu [Buchladen]. Da ist ja irgendwas Neues. Nicht nur Theologie oder Psychologie oder Spiritualität. Gibt es da einen neuen Roman oder so was, nicht. Ich habe auch alle Harry Potter z. B. gelesen. Deutsch, Englisch usw., weil ich verstehen wollte, was zieht da junge Menschen an so was zu lesen und sich damit zu befassen. Außerdem, wenn ich auf Spiritualität wieder komme, ja Anselm Grün, ich wollte mit dem nichts zu tun haben ursprünglich. Aber auf einmal denke ich, ja wenn ich persönlich über mich nachdenke, dann denke ich auch wahrscheinlich wie Anselm Grün ja, und da habe ich auch etliche Bücher z. B. eines der wichtigsten finde ich „Wie klein ist der innere Raum“. Jeder hat seinen eigenen inneren Raum, auch in einer Ehe. Jeder hat einen inneren Raum. Auch innerhalb einer Gemeinschaft und den möchte man für sich behalten, weil, sonst gibt man sich selbst auf. Das ist mein Zufluchtsort oder das ist der Ort, wo ich mich selbst geborgen fühle. Die braucht ein jeder oder eine jede glaube ich, den inneren Raum.
51. I: Spüren Sie, dass ihr persönliches Leben einen Sinn hat?
52. N: Ja, ich glaube, ich sollte vielleicht nicht so reagieren, wenn es keinen Sinn hätte, dann würde ich alle Sachen sofort hinschmeißen. Ich muss aber immer einen Sinn wieder suchen. Ich kann nicht sagen, jetzt habe ich es. Forever and ever, amen. Nein, ich muss ihn immer wieder suchen. Als ich 31, 32 war, war das anders nehm, als ich 40 wurde sagte man, ja [Hans] das Leben fängt erst an und als ich 50 wurde, sagte man och das Leben fängt jetzt erst an. Aber jetzt, wo ich jetzt über 70 bin, ist das natürlich ganz eine andere Frage wieder. Wo ist mein Sinn jetzt? Ich kann nicht mehr so operieren wie früher. Die Energie habe ich einfach gar nicht mehr. Ich habe Zeit zum reflektieren. Ich bereite auch meine Gottesdienste sorgfältig vor und in dem Sinne bin ich auch teilweise behilflich für die Kommunität, wenn ich dann ein Liedheft oder so was zusammenstelle und habe liturgische Erfahrungen von meiner Arbeit von früher. Also in dem Sinne brauche ich ja einen Sinn, muss ich immer wieder suchen. Vielleicht ist es, in einer Woche muss ich die Frage wieder stellen und ich erinnere mich, dass Sie mich gefragt haben. Dann sag ich ja, ich wurde doch da gefragt in dem Interview, was ist das jetzt.

53. I: Trotzdem, darf ich nachhaken, was gibt Ihnen so im Leben Sinn?
54. N: Sinn würde ich sagen sind die Beziehungen. Wenn die nicht da wären, dann, da wäre es glaube ich schlecht um mich bestellt, glaube ich. Ich will nicht unbedingt sagen, brauchen, aber ich brauche sie. Ich brauche sie und wenn ich sage, ich möchte nicht sagen brauche, das heißt ich nutzte jemanden aus. Aber ich brauche sie, ohne dass ich das ausspreche, ne. Und ich bin auch immer froh, wenn ich bei meiner Schwester bin, ja. Die sagt nichts, sie tut nur was. Wenn sie eine Woche weg ist, dann sagt sie, hier das und das und das ist in der Kühltruhe, brauchst du nur in die Mikrowelle rein zutun, ja. Sie tut was, aber ich weiß, was dahinter steht, ne. Und das wäre für mich der Sinn. Wenn Beziehungen hier im Haus schlecht wären, ja was soll ich dann hier? Wenn das so wäre ne, aber das kann ich nicht behaupten.
55. I: Wenn es etwas gäbe, was Sie an sich oder an ihrem Leben ändern könnten, was würden Sie am liebsten ändern?
56. N: Wenn ich könnte. Sehen Sie, ich setzte mich schon in Positur. Ich habe teilweise bedauert und das ist rein pragmatisch, dass ich nicht doch mehr Sprachen gelernt habe. Ich bin zwar flüssig im Englischen in der sogenannten Pidgin-Sprache auch von [Inselstaat H]. Aber damals im Gymnasium nach der vierten Klasse, man nannte sie Untertertia, da musste man sich entscheiden ob man bei Griechisch oder Französisch... und weil ich ja schon damals vorhatte Priester zu werden, habe ich Griechisch genommen. Aber ich habe festgestellt, dass mir im Laufe der Jahre das Französisch total gefehlt hat. Das war auch während meiner Arbeit im Rom. Das hat mir total gefehlt und mein Italienisch ist auch nur mäßig, weil im Hause nur Englisch gesprochen wurde. Ja, ich hätte lieber gerne mehr Sprachen, Italienisch, Spanisch und Holländisch noch gesprochen, ja. Das wäre wohl... und ich würde auch heute mein Studium wahrscheinlich ganz anders gestalten. Ja, in der Auswahl, das war ja in [Stadt F] damals auch gar nicht anders möglich. Da war alles vorgegeben, was man studieren musste und ich habe die spirituelle Seite, das war mehr die rationale Formation oder Training, es war nicht die emotionale und auch nicht die spirituelle unbedingt. Das ist heute wohl ganz anders, was ich bei den jungen Leuten, die im Orden eintreten, sehe ne, das ist das Spirituelle. Wie passe ich in die Gemeinschaft hinein. Wir hatten ein internationales Noviziat. Kennen Sie Noviziate, das ist so eine Art spirituelles Jahr für die Leute, die in den Orden eintreten wollen und da hatten wir eins in [südost-asiatisches Land G] und da waren natürlich [Menschen aus Land G] dabei und ein Neuseeländer, ein Deutscher, ein Spanier und die wurden dann auch zu Anfang in die Slums geschickt zu Familien und da haben die wirklich absolut Basics, Leben da kennengelernt. Das war bei uns gar nicht so der Fall. Also das radikale Leben, wie es auch aussieht, waren Menschen in der dritten Welt nicht kennenzulernen und trotzdem zu sagen, ja was ist da meine Berufung in dem Sinne, ne und wie verstehe ich mich da. Ich glaube, das war wohl, ist heute so ganz anders und das hat natürlich bei uns total gefehlt in dem Sinne, ja. Das musste ich nachholen in einem gewissen Sinne und wäre froh, wenn ich ein Leben wieder anfangen könnte, ja dann wäre es so. Aber ich würde den gleichen Job nehmen, ja. (Lachen)
57. I: Gibt es einen Glauben, gibt es Werte oder Verpflichtungen, die in Ihrem Leben gerade jetzt besonders wichtig sind?
58. N: Ja. Ich muss immer wieder auf die Beziehungen zurückkommen, muss ich sagen. Das sind bestimmte Werte, wo ich die andere Person respektiere und er auch das Gefühl hat, ich werde respektiert und auch verstanden, so wie ich bin. Dann auch das Verständnis. Es ist teilweise auch noch oft so, auch in der Gemeinschaft, ich sage

- irgendeinen Satz (Geräusch, Mimik), da wird sofort darauf gesprungen wie ein Rudel Wölfe und so haben sich auch die Deutschen in [Inselstaat H] von unseren Orden verstanden. Man nannte die deutschen [Mitglieder des Ordens D] da den Bundestag, weil die so immer zusammenhielten, ja. Aber die hatten auch, weil die meisten sind hier durch das Gymnasium gegangen, ich überhaupt nicht hier, ich war ja nur zweieinhalb Jahre unten in [Süddeutschland] und die hier durchgegangen sind, als Schüler usw., die hatten wie man im Englischen sagt ihre pivotal story, das heißt also ihre grundlegende und gemeinschaftsstiftenden Geschichten sind noch mal, wie man sagt, Dönkes von Lehrern über Patres usw., die ich nicht kannte und die ich natürlich im Laufe der Zeit öfter gehört habe, aber ich gehörte da nicht dazu. Also das ist auch wichtig, dass man das Gefühl hat. Die geben dir nicht das Gefühl, dass du nicht dazugehörst. Aber dass Du auch so Geschichten, deine eigenen Geschichten hast, die für dich wichtig sind. Das glaube ich sind bestimmte Werte, glaube ich.
59. I: Wann oder wo haben Sie am meisten das Gefühl mit dem Kosmos in Einklang oder Teil eines Ganzen zu sein?
60. N: Oh Gott, das ist ein bisschen, da komme ich mir fast vor wie Esoteriker. (Lächeln, Husten)Weil ich nicht so richtig weiß, wie soll ich das im Augenblick verstehen. (.....)
61. I: Vielleicht haben Sie auch einen eigenen anderen Ausdruck.
62. N: Ja, ich versuche jetzt gerade nachzudenken. Inwiefern fühle ich mich als Teil eines Ganzen? Sagen wir mal Ganzen und dann käme ich wieder zurück, auf was ich mal am Anfang gesagt habe, interdependence. Wenn ich auch Menschen, wenn ich mir nicht unbedingt bewusst bin über bestimmte Menschen irgendwo in der Welt, aber ich bin mit denen irgendwie verbunden. Auf irgendeine Weise, kann ich auch nicht erklären inwiefern, aber dass sie erstens für mich wichtig sind und dass sie auch das Gefühl haben, dass ich für sie wichtig bin. Auch wenn sie meinen Namen gar nicht kennen oder dass ich existiere, ne und dass sie sich sagen, nun es gibt da in Lateinamerika Menschen irgendwo im Amazonasgebiet, ja, von denen ich zwar gehört habe, aber für, die sind irgendwie für mich wichtig, dass ich an sie auch mal denke. Und die, wahrscheinlich von ihrer Tradition her würden auch sagen, alles was in der Natur ist, Menschen, Tiere, Pflanzen usw., das ist wichtig für uns. Also irgendwie haben wir eine Beziehung dazu. In dem Sinne glaube ich und das wichtigste Wort, interdependence. Unabhängig, Abhängigkeit miteinander da, das würde ich sagen ja.
63. I: Wie sieht Ihr Ideal reifen Glaubens aus oder eine reife Antwort auf Fragen mit einer existenziellen Bedeutung?
64. N: Das müssen Sie wiederholen.
65. I: Gerne. Der erste Teil heißt: Wie sieht Ihr Ideal reifen Glaubens aus? Oder eine reife Antwort auf Fragen mit einer existenziellen Bedeutung?
66. N: Also, wenn ich jetzt einen Aufsatz schreiben müsste da drüber, dann säße ich eine halbe Stunde und wüsste gar nicht, was ich schreiben sollte. Was wäre vielleicht der wichtigste Begriff in dieser Frage? Was würden Sie sagen?
67. I: Also, welches Ideal Sie von einem Glauben haben, den Sie als reif erachten oder eben eine reife Antwort auf Lebensfragen.
68. N: Eine reife Antwort könnte ich nur geben erstens mir gegenüber oder jemanden, der mit mir sprechen möchte. Nachdem ich gewisse Zeit darüber reflektiert habe oder mit der Person darüber reflektiert habe, weil ich dann auch eine Rückantwort habe, weil ich ja die Antwort nicht unbedingt für mich noch für die Person parat habe, sondern die Antwort muss ja aus mir oder aus der Person, die mich anspricht, herauskommen und das geht ja nur, indem ich Zeit lasse und zuhöre und auch Antwort gebe, indem ich das wiederhole, was vielleicht jemand sagt.

Habe ich das so richtig verstanden? Und daraus entwickelt sich, glaube ich, eine bestimmte Reife auch, auch was meinen Glauben selber angeht. Ich kann nicht sagen, oh Glaube habe ich. Nein, habe ich unter Umständen gar nicht. Aber es ist immer neu, neu würde ich sagen. Mit 31 Jahren anders als mit 50 oder jetzt mit 70 ist ganz anders mein Glaube, weil auch die Beziehungen zu Menschen und zu Gott sich anders darstellen, ja. Und wenn ich sage, ach lieber Gott, meinst du von dem [Hans] jetzt, wie er sich fühlt und er würde sagen nun erzähl mal. (Lachen)

69. I: Wenn Sie eine wichtige Entscheidung zu treffen haben, wie gehen Sie dann gewöhnlich vor?
70. N: (Husten) Ja, das ist, wie gehe ich gewöhnlich vor oder wie sollte ich vorgehen. Das sind zwei verschiedene Sachen. Ich kann vom Bauch her schnell entscheiden und ich weiß, das ist enorm, für mich sehr wichtig. Wie die Entscheidung, ich gehe ins Hochland von [Inselstaat H] und nehme eine ganz andere Arbeit von der Bischofskonferenz an, das geht ruckzuck. Das war auch, als ich nach Rom ging. Ja, ich habe mich sofort entschlossen. Ich mach das. Und so ist es eine Bauchentscheidung und nicht großartig überlegt für und wider nach Ignatius usw. Nein, das ist bei mir oft nicht der Fall. Und wenn es aber um Menschen geht, deren meine Entscheidung irgendwie betrifft, dann überleg ich schon etwas länger. Das kann auch mal (Seufzen) ja, ein paar Wochen dauern. Wenn mir jemand erzählt, dass ihr Mann sie urplötzlich verlassen hat, ich sage, na wie gehts ihnen? Nicht gut. Ich denke oh Gott, die wird ja wohl nicht irgendwie Krebs haben oder so was nech. Ja, mein Mann hat mich verlassen ja. Was sage ich? Ich brauche keine Entscheidung zu fällen, aber sie erwartet das, also, sagen wir mal nicht erwartet, aber im Augenblick bin ich der Einzige, der eben in diesem Augenblick zuhört, kann und muss ja. Die Entscheidungen, was da weiter geschieht, im Augenblick könnte ich auch keine Antwort geben. Wenn sie mich fragen würde, ja was meinen sie, was soll ich tun? Ich wüsste es wirklich nicht, weil es eine so tief emotionale Angelegenheit und Betroffenheit ist, die muss ich erst mal ganz verstehen und die Frau muss sie auch erst mal verstehen. So ist eine Entscheidung, je nachdem. Wie gesagt, ich kann nicht aus dem Bauch schnell entscheiden, aber manchmal, es braucht Zeit, Zeit. Vielleicht, dass Wunden heilen oder nicht mehr so schmerzhaft aufsteigen und dass dann vielleicht, ich will nicht sagen, mehr rational, aber mehr verständnisvoller reagiert werden kann, glaube ich.
71. I: Trotzdem hake ich noch einmal nach.
72. N: Gerne.
73. I: Wenn Sie ein besonders schwieriges Lebensproblem lösen müssen, an wem oder woran können Sie sich dann orientieren?
74. N: Es gibt nicht, muss ich sagen, es ist immer schwierig, mit Mitbrüdern oder Patres, die im Hause oder im Orden selbst, es sei denn, es sind Ausnahmen. Das habe ich heute wieder gemerkt, da hat mich jemand gebeten oh [Hans], kannst du mal in die Kapelle gehen und Fotos da von dem Kreuz da vorne machen. Dann habe ich ihm das auf eine DVD gebrannt und gebracht, ja dann hatten wir doch persönliche Gespräche. Ich habe das auch früher in [Inselstaat H] gemerkt, wo es irgendwie mal einen Krach gegeben hat mit einem Bruder aus Neuseeland, dann bin ich einfach ausgezogen zu ihm und ja, der hat Verständnis. (unv. hab ich?) Solche Leute sind selten, aber die brauche ich.
75. I: Glauben Sie, dass Handlungen eindeutig richtig oder falsch sein können?
76. N: Objektiv kann mag man das vielleicht sagen, aber ich möchte das nicht unbedingt sagen, das ist richtig und das ist falsch. Könnte ich gar nicht, weil wie soll ich, ich verstehe meine eigene Situation für mich gar nicht so leicht, wie soll ich dann die Situation eines anderen Menschen dann

- verstehen oder von mehreren Menschen und sagen, das ist richtig, das ist falsch. Wenn ich sage *verstehen*, dann erwarte ich auch Verständnis. Da mangelt es wirklich, glaube ich, in der deutschen Kirche an Verständnis. Dass ich erst versuche zu verstehen und dann mit Menschen zusammen vielleicht eine Entscheidung finde und nicht von (unv. oben?), so und so läuft das. Ich glaube, das erwarten auch heute die Menschen vielmehr, Verständnis. Ob sie nun glauben oder nicht, das ist ja unwesentlich, aber Verständnis.
77. I: Dennoch gibt es hier die Zusatzfrage: Falls das so ist, wann ist eine Handlung richtig? Können Sie diese Frage beantworten?
78. N: Es kommt immer auf, glaube ich, auf die Situation drauf an. Kann ich nicht sagen. Dann und dann ist eine Handlung richtig. Wenn ich sage z. B. was über Abtreibung. (unv.) Objektiv würde die katholische Kirche sagen, das ist objektiv falsch ja. Aber jetzt habe ich da ein vierzehnjähriges Mädchen und die ist total überfordert, total überfordert. Sie will auch mit keinem reden nech, weil sie überfordert ist und sie kann auch mit keinem reden, weil sie überfordert ist und es ist ja auch keiner da in dem Augenblick wahrscheinlich, die Eltern auch nicht. Der Vater ist wahrscheinlich auch ein super konservativer Kerl nech, aus der katholischen Kirche. Objektiv richtig und subjektiv richtig sind zwei verschiedene Dinge. Wie geht jemand damit um? Und wie kann ich jemanden begleiten, dass er oder sie eine Entscheidung fällt, die wichtig ist für wen immer es betrifft. Wenn die Frau schwanger ist, dann betrifft es ja wohl zwei oder drei, was weiß ich oder mehrere. Das sind ja auch noch mal die Großeltern, die da betroffen sind und so ist es doch ein bisschen schwierig und das kann man nur, indem man begleitet und sich auch begleiten lassen möchte. Ja und wenn das nicht der Fall ist, ist es natürlich schwierig. So kann ich nicht sagen, so und so ist das richtig. Der Moses musste ja auch seinen Weg gehen im sogenannten ersten Testament, man spricht ja nicht mehr vom alten Testament. Er musste ja auch seinen Weg finden. Wenn man auch da den Petrus nimmt, ja das war ja ein emotionaler, total labiler Mensch. Der musste auch seinen Weg finden und konnte nicht sagen, an sich müsste ich das so machen, so ist es richtig, aber ich kann es nicht. (.....)
79. I: Gibt es Handlungen oder Handlungswesen, die grundsätzlich richtig sind, unabhängig von irgendwelchen Umständen?
80. N: Ja, sagen wir mal, wenn es um Krieg geht, ja. Ich glaube hier, wenn es um Krieg geht, dann kann man sagen so das geht. Wie in Kosovo, das ist ja unbegreiflich was da innerhalb Europa heutzutage noch möglich ist. Wir dachten doch, das dritte Nazireich wäre vorbei, nech, aber da sind ja auch Geschehnisse genau der gleichen Art und Weise und das ist ja auch noch mal in anderen Ländern in dem Sinne, ja, was Toleranz, Respekt gegenüber Rasse, Religion usw. und so fort angeht, da gibt es nicht falsch oder richtig, finde ich, gar nicht, gar nicht. Aber man überzeuge Leute mal davon, weil da hängen manchmal Erfahrungen von Jahrhunderten und da kann man nicht sagen sollte nicht sein, ist aber so. Objektiv ja, gibt es solche Sachen.
81. I: Und gibt es moralische Grundsätze, über die wir uns alle einig sein sollten?
82. N: Wollten oder sollten?
83. I: Sollten.
84. N: Sollten. (.....) Ich glaube ja. Man braucht ja bloß die UNO-Charta nehmen oder die UNO-Charta für Kinder z. B. Da sind Grundsätze, die an sich für jeden akzeptabel sein sollten. Sind sie aber nicht, aber sollten, sollten, glaube ich, ja. Und die meisten Länder haben eine Verfassung, die sollte auch, ob ich jetzt Christ oder Moslem bin, auch akzeptabel sein für jeden, glaube ich, ohne dass ich sage, ich respektiere dich nicht, aber das ist ein bestimmtes Minimum.
85. I: Glauben Sie, dass unser Leben als Menschen einen Sinn hat?

86. N: Ich glaube ja, ja. Wenn ich sehe, wo Sie jetzt reagieren (Lachen), ja und Sie lächeln, aber das ist dann wichtig, weil welches Lebewesen lächelt z. B.? Ist nur der Mensch, nur der Mensch. Und das ist für jeden wichtig. Meine Mutter erzählte, wenn sie wegging und ich war wahrscheinlich ein paar Monate alt und lag da in dem kleinen Bettchen da und sie ging zu meiner Großmutter auf den Hof, kam wieder, ja der [Hans] lag da und quietschdel. Andere, die würden am Krähen sein, aber das ja, also das hat für sie einen Sinn gehabt und für mich natürlich unbewusstweise auch ja.
87. I: Und wenn ja, worin glauben Sie besteht der?
88. N: Bitte?
89. I: Wenn ja, also wenn das Leben als Menschen einen Sinn hat (Husten), was glauben Sie, worin der besteht?
90. N: Der Sinn, dass wir aufeinander angewiesen sein dürfen, nicht sind, dürfen. Ich glaube, das ist wohl das Wichtigste, was ohne an Religion oder irgendwas zu denken, jeder wahrscheinlich erfahren möchte.
91. I: Wird unser Leben von höheren Mächten beeinflusst oder gar nach einem Plan gelenkt?
92. N: Ich möchte nicht denken, dass Gott denkt, so haben wir das alles geregelt, ne, und so haben wir das immer schon seit Jahrtausenden gemacht ne, so wie Adenauer sagen würde und so bleibt es in aller Ewigkeit. Ich glaube, das glaube ich nicht und ich glaube eher, dass er ein, sag ich mal, wenn er einen Plan hatte, einen liebevollen und verständnisvollen Plan hat und möchte, dass Menschen sich selbst verstehen, andere verstehen und auch ihn verstehen, weil meistens schweigt Gott ja und wir hoffen, dass wir aus dem Schweigen eben entdecken können. Es gibt ja eine Geschichte im Alten Testament, wo Elias, nachdem er so großen Erfolg hatte mit den Baalspriestern, die hat er alle (Geräusch, Mimik), alle erledigt, hunderte von denen und dann, die Königin Isabel hat ihn dann verfolgt, Isabel hat ihn verfolgt und er verkroch sich in einer Höhle. Also in sich selbst verkrochen, ja, damit er nicht noch mehr beschädigt wird. Sein äußeres Image ist ja schon beschädigt, aber er möchte ja auch nicht, dass sein eigenes Selbst auch noch beschädigt wird und dann heißt es, dass Donner kam und da heißt es, Gott war nicht im Donner und dann war da Erdbeben, Gott war nicht im Erdbeben, und Feuer und er war nicht im Feuer und dann heißt es im Deutschen, „und da hörte er ein leichtes Säuseln“. Aha, vor etlichen Jahren lese ich einen amerikanischen Exegeten, der sagt, „da war Stille“. Da war nichts. Also da, wo gar nichts ist, da erfahre ich vielleicht Gott in der Stille, in der Ruhe, in der Abgeschiedenheit, in mir selbst. So würde ich dann auch, glaube ich, dann das, was Gott meint, wenn du mich suchst, dann wirst du mich auch finden.(.....)
93. I: Was denken Sie über den Tod?
94. N: Vor einigen Jahren entdeckte ich, das war ursprünglich ein Buch auf Englisch, aber dann gab es das auch auf Deutsch, „90 Minuten im Himmel“. Das habe ich dann weitergegeben und Leute, die das lasen, waren ganz begeistert. Das war ein amerikanischer Pastor, der einen schweren Verkehrsunfall hatte und die Ärzte usw. meinten er wäre schon tot. Da war gar nichts, keine Funktionen, keine Gehirnfunktion, nichts mehr. Aber, wie er beschreibt, sah er, wie er da auf der Straße lag, das Auto total kaputt und zerbeult und er lag da fast im Tod und irgendwie entschwindet er und trifft dann Verwandte, die vor Jahren gestorben waren, ganz normal gekleidet in Jeans, nicht älter als dreißig Jahre alt und die haben ihn begrüßt, aber nicht mit Worten, sondern der Empfang sprach aus ihnen heraus. So verstehen wir automatisch, man muss nichts sagen, man versteht sofort. So ist also der Tod, etwas, ich verstehe, ohne etwas sagen, denken, fühlen zu müssen. Es ist einfach das Verständnis da von Person zu Person und es ist eine Beziehung

- von Person zu Person. So ist dann auch der Tod ein Übergang zu einer anderen Beziehung. Auf einer anderen Ebene.
95. I: Das wäre die nächste Frage. Was passiert mit uns, wenn wir sterben?
96. N: Ja, das sind natürlich Gedanken, die sich Menschen seit Jahrtausenden und auch die Theologen sich gemacht haben, wie das sein könnte. So kann ich mir auch persönlich nur vorstellen, wie es sein könnte. Sagen wir mal, ich würde jetzt, instantly, jetzt plötzlich sterben, dann ist die Art und Weise, wie ich bis jetzt existiert habe, Teil wohl richtig, aber auch vielleicht auf einer ganz anderen Ebene. Wie die aussieht, kann ich ja gar nicht sagen. Dass ich weiterhin als [Hans] existiere. Aber im tiefsten Wesen, so wie ich bin. Wie ich bin, der vom Bauch her denkt und fühlt und das wird dann auch von allen anderen, denen ich vielleicht begegne, verstanden, so ist der. Wir sind auch glücklich darüber, dass er sich selbst gefunden hat. So nehme ich an, das heißt, ich finde mich selbst in meinem eigenen Wesen endlich.
97. I: Halten Sie sich für religiös, spirituell oder gläubig?
98. N: Ja, ich glaube mehr spirituell. Gläubig? Ja, das war ja auch, das Wort, das in diesem Test erschien, gläubig. Da dachte ich, oh ich denke an gottgläubig von den Nazizeitern z. B. Religiös? Ja, im Grunde ist wahrscheinlich, ob einer jetzt an irgendwas glaubt oder nicht, religiös, weil jeder sucht sich selbst im Grunde. *Wie* ist ja eine ganz andere Frage. Aber ich glaube, ich bin wohl mehr spirituell, ja. Dass was ich da einen Weg für mich suche, der für mich wichtig ist.
99. I: Und was bedeutet das Wort spirituell für Sie?
100. N: Es bedeutet für mich, dass ich nicht rein rational verstehen versuche, wer ich bin, wohin ich gehe, wohin ich gehen möchte und wohin ich vielleicht eingeladen bin. Nicht rein rational, sondern persönlich, wie ich eben schon sagte, wie ich bin. Das wäre für Sie ganz anders wahrscheinlich und auch für andere Menschen wäre das ganz anders. Aber für mich ist es ja so wie ich bin der [Hans R.] so, von seinem Bauch her, von seinem Gefühl her und von seinen Träumen ja, so könnte ich sagen ja.
101. I: Und das Wort religiös oder gläubig? Was bedeuten diese Begriffe für Sie?
102. N: Aha, religiös, da denke ich meistens an ein bestimmtes System von Glaubensverständnissen. Es könnte auch sein, ich bin religiös, das heißt, ich gehe gerne zur Kirche, kann auch sein. Aber das muss bei mir nicht unbedingt. Gläubig, wenn ich das verstehe mit dem Substantiv Glauben oder mit dem Verbum glauben, da heißt es mehr, Glauben heißt festhalten. Ich möchte mich an etwas festhalten. Ohne das, glaube ich, könnte ich nicht existieren oder sein, so könnte der [Hans] nicht sein. (.....)
103. I: Gibt es religiöse, spirituelle oder andere Vorstellungen, Symbole oder Rituale, die Ihnen wichtig sind oder in der Vergangenheit wichtig gewesen sind?
104. N: Ja, einige, die ziehen es vor z. B. eine Kerze anzuzünden. Meine Schwester tut das immer. Wenn wir uns hinsetzen zum Essen, wird die Kerze angezündet. Ich habe nie gefragt warum, aber für sie ist das irgendwie auch wichtig. Ich finde es auch ganz angenehm und sonst setzt man sich einfach dahin ne, aber die Kerze sagen wir mal vermittelt Wärme z. B. und sie flackert da ein bisschen, als ob da eine gewisse Lebendigkeit drin wäre. Die Art von Symbolen habe ich, glaube ich, weniger. Ich würde sagen, wenn ich gehe ja, wenn ich gehe. Als ich in den dreißigtägigen Exerzitien war, bin ich viel spazieren gegangen, gegangen. Also auf dem Weg sein und zur gleichen Zeit die Gegend angucken. Die Schafe da in [Land in Nordeuropa] usw. Über Zäune zu klettern und am Straßenrand wilde Blumen zu entdecken und es kann sein, dass so irgendetwas, was ich sehe, etwas bei mir hochkommen lässt. So kann ich sagen, ja, in dem, was ich sehe oder wenn ich etwas

- ergehe, ja, aber nicht, dass ich sagen muss, das ist bei mir regulär das und das Symbol, das ist glaube ich bei mir nicht unbedingt der Fall. (...)
105. I: Hier ist noch die Frage, wenn ja, also wenn es Symbole gibt, also z. B. Ihr Gehen, warum ist das für Sie so wichtig?
106. N: Jetzt fragen Sie diese Frage, die ich mir noch nie gestellt habe. Wenn ich jetzt nachdenke, dann denke ich nach, während ich spreche. Dann würde ich vielleicht sagen, es ist die Bewegung, erstens die Bewegung selber, zweitens Bewegung, dass ich unbewusst hoffe auf etwas zuzugehen und vielleicht drittens, dass ich beim Gehen etwas vorfinde. Das heißt entweder in mir selbst oder außerhalb, in der Natur oder Menschen, denen ich begegne, deshalb ist ja das englische Wort *encounter*, gibt es ja auch im Französischen so ein ähnliches Wort, das sagt mehr aus als das deutsche Wort *Begegnen*, ja. Man spricht ja auch von *countenance*, das *Angesicht* z. B., also ich begegne jemanden in seinem Angesicht, in seinem Wesen. So wenn ich mich ergehe, dann hoffe ich, dass ich mein eigenes Angesicht oder des anderen Menschen vielleicht entdecken dürfte.
107. I: Beten Sie, meditieren Sie oder tun Sie auf anderer Art etwas für Ihre Spiritualität?
108. N: Ja, ich würde sagen, wenn ich bei meiner Schwester bin, dann verschwinde ich da ins Büro, da kommen die auch nicht so, morgens die stehen also sowieso später auf, dann bete ich die Psalmen ja. Das muss ich sagen ja. Und hier im Hause werden die Gebete nicht gesungen, aber ich ziehe es vor, die zu singen. Der heilige Augustino sagt, wer singt, betet doppelt, weil da der ganze Körper und die ganze Emotion da mit drinnen ist und die Konzentration auch. Ich singe ja nicht so schnell weg, also ich muss schon aufpassen, dass ich richtig singe (lächeln), ja. Das wäre z. B. ja.
109. I: Und Meditation oder noch etwas anderes?
110. N: Meditation ist bei mir nicht so oft, muss ich sagen, ganz ja ehrlich. Ich will ja nicht etwas behaupten. Das passiert, wenn ich da vielleicht zehn Minuten da sitze, weil ich dann meinen Blutdruck messe und dann vielleicht kommt irgendetwas auf, ja. Oder lese irgendeinen Text. Das ist nicht unbedingt ein spiritueller geistlicher Text von irgendeinem Kirchenschriftsteller. Kann auch sein irgend, ach da ist ja noch ein Buch, ein Roman, les mal einen Paragraphen und das kann auch bei mir plötzlich was auslösen ja.
111. I: Was ist Sünde?
112. N: Oh Gott was... (Lächeln)
113. I: Was verstehen Sie darunter?
114. N: Ehrlich gesagt, ich gebrauche das Wort sehr sehr sehr selten, weil in der Vergangenheit, ja, ist es eine Art Verfehlung und meistens eine schwere Verfehlung gewesen. Ich glaube aber, wenn ich Sünde heute verstehen sollte oder könnte, ich habe meinen eigenen Weg verfehlt, würde ich sagen. Den eigenen Weg, was ich selber bin. Den habe ich irgendwie verfehlt und das empfinde oder merke ich vielleicht nach einer gewissen Zeit oder wenn einer mich darauf hinweist. Das würde ich sagen, könnte ich auch nicht objektiv sagen, das ist eine Sünde, bums. Was hilft es mir, wenn ich sage, das ist eine Sünde und sage das zu jemandem? Inwiefern hilft es der Person? Gar nicht und es hilft mir auch nicht. Es hilft mir nur, wenn ich empfinde oder festgestellt habe, ohoh [Hans], du bist ja in einer ganz falschen Richtung ja. In dem Sinne, aber die Richtung verfehlen, ja. Das heißt vom Griechischen her, ich habe ja Griechisch wie gesagt studiert, das heißt auch verfehlen, die Richtung verfehlen. (unv. *Ama tannen?*), das ist das (die Richtung verfehlen).
115. I: Wie erklären Sie das Böse in der Welt?
116. N: Oh Gott, das hat, das hat ja schon immer Schwierigkeiten gegeben, wie man das erklären soll. Einfach wärs, wenn ich das mit der Freiheit des Menschen erklären wollte. Es ist zwar alles richtig, aber das reicht noch nicht aus, glaube ich. Wie soll

ich den Holocaust erklären z. B.? Kann ich nicht. Indem man es erklären möchte, läuft man schon die falsche Richtung, weil es Millionen Menschen betroffen hat und immer noch betrifft. Das Böse ist ja auch an sich das weniger Gute. Das weniger Gute. Das Böse, oh da stellt man sich da ganz was Schlimmes vor, aber das an das weniger Gute. Dass jemand oder manchmal auch eine Gruppe von Menschen nicht verstanden hat, was sind wir und das war auch im Hochland von [Inselstaat H] mit den Stammeskriegen. Da wurden ja schnell Leute umgebracht. Schnell, ganz schnell. Da hängt natürlich auch Verständnis von, was sind wir als Gruppe. Das war ja auch vielleicht auch der Nazizeit, die ein Verständnis vermittelten, was sind wir als Gruppe von Deutschen, ohne nachzudenken wie versteht sich die Gruppe denn. Der jüdische Mitbürger z. B. oder der Roma (unv.), wenn eine Gruppe oder ein Mensch vergisst, wie ist der andere und ich verliere auch Respekt und Toleranz. Das ist für mich immer das Minimum, Toleranz und Respekt. Wenn das weg ist, dann ist es weg und dann muss ich fragen, wieso kommt das? Es ist sehr schwierig, wie will ich Stammeskriegern in [Inselstaat H] erklären, wie Stammeskrieger in Kosovo usw. oder den letzten Krieg oder wahrscheinlich auch, wie werde ich den Bürgerkrieg von Stämmen in Libyen in Zukunft verstehen wollen, ne. Ja, Änderung geschieht nur durch Verständnis von Toleranz und Respekt. Und ich brauchte eine Gruppe oder einen Menschen lange dazu, lange dazu. Das sieht man ja auch, wenn Mörder Kinder umgebracht haben, aus welchen Gründen auch immer. In der letzten Zeit hört man das ja manchmal. Ja, warum ist das so? Warum ist das so? Dann geht es hauptsächlich um die Kinder, die ihr Leben verloren haben oder ganz oder teilweise. Aber wie der Täter, wie der dazu gekommen ist, das weiß ich manchmal gar nicht. Weiß ich gar nicht. Ob unser ganzes System hilfreich ist, ich weiß

es manchmal gar nicht so richtig. Wenn mehr Verständnis da wäre und dazu braucht es Bewusstseinsänderung. Das war für mich auch in [Inselstaat H] wichtig, (unv.) eine Dorfgemeinschaft, dass sie sich als christliche Dorfgemeinschaft versteht, dann muss auch das Bewusstsein sich ändern auf vielfacher Weise. Aber wie geschieht das? Indem sie selbst darüber reflektieren. Zum Beispiel, ein Beispiel: Es gibt ja viele kleine Gruppen, manchmal sind das nur ein paar hundert Leute nech, ganz voll andere Sprache, ja jetzt heiratet einer von einer anderen Sprachgruppe in eine andere und ist auch eine wichtige Person, weil er sich auch um die Schule da kümmert, ob Kirche und was weiß ich alles, ist auch mit einer von dort verheiratet, ja jetzt hatte ich mal ein Kursus und hatte Zeitungspapier auseinander gerissen und sag jetzt für alle, jeder sein Häufchen und jeder muss sein Puzzle zusammenstellen und wenn dir was fehlt, du darfst nicht etwas vom anderen annehmen, du darfst auch nicht fragen, wenn er es dir gibt und dann gibt er dir das. Dieser Mann, der von einer anderen Sprachgruppe kam, hatte am Schluss nichts. Kein Papier, alles hatte er weggegeben und da sagte die, habt ihr das gesehen, was da passiert ist? Och ist doch nur Spiel. War aber kein Spiel. Nech, da war das Bewusstsein noch nicht geändert. Aber irgendwie hat das Spiel was angekratzt.

117. I: Das leitet schon über zur nächsten und letzten Frage: Wenn Menschen sich über weltanschauliche oder religiöse Fragen nicht einig sind, wie können solche Konflikte gelöst werden?
118. N: Die kann ich nur lösen, indem ich auf auch rein menschlicher Weise erstmal, wie fühlst du dich als Mensch? Und dann ist das, hoffe ich, was für Glaubensvorstellung ich habe sind in dem Augenblick nicht wichtig. Wie fühle und denke ich als Mensch. Das ist das Grundlegende und auf der Grundlage kann ich den anderen verstehen und auch begegnen und sagen, ja,

der hat andere Vorstellungen. Gut, ich respektiere sie, muss ich ja nicht annehmen, muss ich ja nicht folgen. Aber für ihn ist das wichtig und für ihn ist das auch ernsthaft und das möchte ich auch aus Toleranz respektieren, sonst wüsste ich keinen Weg.

119. I: Wie kann man das wohl fördern bei den Menschen jetzt unterschiedlicher Einstellungen, dass sie sich als Menschen sehen, oft fällt gerade das ja schwer?
120. N: Ja, weil ich ja bestimmte Vorstellungen von vorneherein habe. Ich habe natürlich auch (Husten) keine richtigen Vorstellungen von nem Moslem, ne. Ich habe wenig Ahnung davon, muss ich ehrlich sagen. Aber ich sage mal, ich würde jemanden begegnen und ist, wenn ich nach [Stadt B] fahre mit dem Zug oder ich fahre nach [Stadt F] und da trifft jemand (unv.) und irgendwie stellt sich heraus, er ist Moslem und er hört, dass ich ein katholischer Priester bin. Das ist mir auch schon passiert, dass ich da zugehört habe und eine Frau sagt: Sagen Sie mal, sind Sie ein Pastor? (Lachen)Ja, weil sonst keiner zuhört nech. (Husten) Ich glaube, das Zuhören, (Husten) wie man das fördern könnte, das geht glaube ich nur, indem man Leute einlädt. Sagen wir mal, die haben ein Fest hier, das möchten wir alle zusammen irgendwie feiern. Jeder ist da eingeladen, ob einer was glaubt oder nicht. Das wäre in Berlin natürlich viel einfacher als im katholischen Hümling vielleicht. Es geht nur, dass Leute sich einladen lassen. Wenn einer sich nicht einladen lässt, kann ich (unv.) nicht viel machen, dann kann ich nur hoffen, dass er oder sie hört, da ist irgendetwas geschehen. In welcher Hinsicht auch immer, ob es positiv war und sagt, ah irgendwie schäme ich mich oder ich möchte mehr drüber wissen und macht sich Gedanken. Dann haben wir schon was angetickt. Das ist ein langer Prozess. Kann ich nicht sagen, wir machen einen Prozess, die und die Methode und am Ende kommt das und das raus, das geht nicht, ja. Es geht nur um Bewusstsein. Das ist das, genau das gleiche,

ob Leute zur Wahl gehen oder nicht. Ja, keine Partei kümmert sich darum und fragt, warum gehen die denn überhaupt nicht mehr. Fragt die Leute auch gar nicht. Das ist ja, das ich mich drum kümmere, was denken und empfinden die Leute und warum? Nech, dass ein Abgeordneter sich hinsetzt und sagt, ich halte jetzt keine Rede. Ich habe verschiedene Leute gebeten, etwas hier zu sagen und die hier aus dieser Gemeinde sind, nech, und ich komme an sich zum zuhören und nicht dass sie meinen, ich höre zu und tu doch was anderes, nech. Das ist es ja, Zuhören. Anders wüsste ich es nicht, aber ich selber könnte schlecht was in den Gang bringen, glaube ich, das wäre nur, wenn eine Gruppe sich sagt, wir machen uns wirklich Gedanken. Wie können wir das machen? Jetzt habe ich ja, am nächsten Sonntag ist ja wieder 11. September und ich bekomme dann von der evangelischen Kirche, theologie.de, manchmal so Nachrichten und dann war auch ein Hinweis auf ein Gedenken zum Tag von einer Pastorin [einer Rundfunkanstalt] und den Namen kannte ich, weil ich da schon mal rumgesucht hatte früher. Ja und die erzählt davon natürlich und 2001 und nachdem das geschehen war, ja da hielt der Moslem die Hand des katholischen Pfarrers und der katholische Pfarrer hielt die Hand des Juden, Buddhisten, Rabbi usw., alle haben sich die Hand gehalten. Da war es irgendwie symbolisch möglich. Warum ist das auch nicht anders möglich? Das ist nur eine Frage.

121. I: Meine letzte Frage ist, ob Sie noch irgendwas hinzufügen möchten zum Interview, bevor wir die Aufnahme beenden? Ob Sie irgendwas ergänzen möchten?
122. N: Jetzt weiß ich gar nicht mehr alles, was ich gesagt habe und ich dann das alles schnell durchscannen müsste (Lachen), um zu wissen ah, da fehlt noch was Wichtiges. Hätte ich aber, glaube ich, im Augenblick gar nicht.
123. I: Gut.
124. N: Ja.

125. I: Dann bedanke ich mich.
 126. N: Gerne.
 127. I: Ganz herzlichst.
 128. N: Wie lange hat das jetzt gedauert?

B.6 Faith Development Interview with Laura D.

1. I: Wenn du über dein Leben nachdenkst, kannst du es in unterschiedliche Abschnitte einteilen?
2. N: Ja schon. Natürlich entlang meiner bisherigen Ausbildungslaufbahn vor allen Dingen. Ja, erst halt Schule, Grundschule, Gymnasium und dann ein wichtiger Einschnitt, das Abitur und dann eben meine Studienzeit ist eigentlich der zweite große Abschnitt nach der Schulzeit und der Kindheit und diese Studienzeit lässt sich eigentlich auch wieder in verschiedenen Abschnitte einteilen, nämlich Studium in [Stadt A in Süddeutschland], dann Studium in [Stadt B in Westdeutschland]. Ja und da bin ich momentan.
3. I: Im Studium noch?
4. N: Genau.
5. I: Und angenommen, dein Leben wäre ein Buch, welche Kapitel müsste es enthalten?
6. N: Ja, wahrscheinlich ganz platt einfach auch diese verschiedenen Stationen. Also, Kindheit bei den Eltern, dann ja Jugendzeit in der Schule, dann Selbständigkeit im Studium, das wären wahrscheinlich so Kapitel. Also man könnte das auch noch in kleinere Unterkapitel natürlich unterteilen. Die groben Kapitel sind also diese drei eigentlich, ja.
7. I: Welche Ereignisse sind rückblickend besonders bedeutsam?
8. N: Ja, besonders bedeutsam war vor allen Dingen, dass ich meinen Freund kennengelernt habe 200X, wobei wir dann erst [ein Jahr später] zusammengelassen sind und das Bedeutsame daran war, dass ich [in jenem Jahr] gerade auf den Sprung nach [Stadt A] war zum Studium und er studiert aber hier und das hat mich dann auch tatsächlich u. a. dazu bewogen, mich wieder mehr in diese Richtung Deutschlands zu orientieren und dann bin ich tatsächlich auch mehr oder weniger durch Zufall tatsächlich wieder hier in [Stadt B] gelandet. Also, das hat schon also vieles sehr beeinflusst dann, mein ganzes Studium denke ich mal und das war halt glaube ich, das Wichtigste, der wichtigste Einschnitt. Ja und davor gab es nicht wirklich gravierende Einschnitte, weil eigentlich meine ganze Kindheit bis zum Abitur relativ klassisch bürgerlich verlaufen ist bei meinen Eltern zu Hause und mit meiner Schwester und dann gab es vielleicht halt noch Einschnitte dadurch, dass ich angefangen habe Musik zu machen, das war aber schon, als ich fünf war, da habe ich angefangen Klavier zu spielen und der erste größere Einschnitt, der dann kam, war als ich mit ungefähr 14 angefangen habe Orgel zu spielen. Das hat mein Leben noch mal so ein bisschen neu organisiert, weil ich dann also ab 14 ungefähr habe ich dann irgendwann auch an Gottesdiensten gespielt und das war noch mal was ganz neues irgendwie und deshalb könnte man schon auch sagen, dass diese Kirchenmusik auch für mich noch mal so ein einschneidendes Erlebnis war, ja.
9. I: Und ist das noch aktuell jetzt im Studium und so?
10. N: Ja, jetzt im Studium habe ich leider wenig Zeit dafür und das ist auch immer ein Problem, weil meine Heimatgemeinde, die auch am Ende von [Stadt B] ist. Unser Kantor sehr, wenn er weiß, dass jemand Orgel spielen kann, dann kommt er immer schnell und fragt und so und ich habe mich da ganz rausgezogen, weil ich immer nicht nein sagen kann, sonst würde ich da jede Woche auf der Orgelbank sitzen und das geht gerade nicht.
11. I: Sonst noch irgendwelche Ereignisse, die besonders bedeutsam waren?
12. N: Ja, indirekt vielleicht, dass mein Vater nach einem relativ langen aufwärts verlau-

fenden Berufsleben Manager geworden ist in einem mittelständischen Unternehmen hier in der Gegend und das wäre wahrscheinlich auch alles irgendwie so weitergelaufen, wenn nicht der Firmenbesitzer ums Leben gekommen wäre bei einem Unfall und das hat unser Leben halt schon sehr verändert, weil unser Vater dadurch noch mehr Verantwortung bekommen hat in der Firma und natürlich dann auch wahrscheinlich noch mehr Geld verdient hat. Er hat dann dieses Unternehmen zu einer sehr großen (unv. Güte?) geführt und das ist und das ist uns als Familie auch sehr zugute gekommen sozusagen und das war schon noch mal ein Einschnitt sozusagen. Als die Nachricht kam, dass der gestorben ist, der Inhaber, da waren wir gerade in Urlaub und dann musste unser Vater schnell zurück nach Deutschland fliegen und den Urlaub abrechnen und das war irgendwie auch noch mal so ein Einschnitt, der aber relativ spät war, mit 17 glaube ich, war das noch mal. Aber das wäre jetzt auch wieder so ein Unterkapitel sozusagen.

13. I: Gibt es in deiner Vergangenheit Beziehungen, die deine persönliche Entwicklung entscheidend beeinflusst haben?
14. N: Ja, gibt es natürlich reichlich, angefangen bei meiner Familie. Natürlich vor allen Dingen meine Eltern. Das ist ja wahrscheinlich normal. Die waren auch immer da, also ich bin kein Scheidungskind oder so, sondern meine Eltern sind immer noch zusammen und ich habe also immer in einem halbwegs funktionierenden Elternhaus gewohnt, was mich natürlich sehr beeinflusst hat sozusagen, was meine Wertvorstellungen angeht und meine Vorstellung, wie Beziehungen funktionieren usw. Ja, dann habe ich eine Zwillingsschwester, das ist natürlich auch immer, was einen sehr geprägt wahrscheinlich. Ich weiß es nicht genau, weil ich kenne den Vergleich nicht, wie es ohne Zwillingsschwester ist. Es gibt sicherlich Geschwister und auch Nicht-Zwillinge. die eine engere Bindung

als meine Schwester und ich, weil wir sehr verschieden sind und uns auch sehr gut ergänzen, aber trotzdem gibt es immer wieder Phasen. wo wir wieder uns sehr aneinander annähern und dann entfernen wir uns wieder ein bisschen und machen jeder sein eigenes Ding und nähern wir uns wieder an und auf diese Weise prägt mich das eigentlich auch die ganze Zeit und dann in der Schule habe ich festgestellt, dass ich doch sehr offen bin für, ja für Persönlichkeiten, die ich irgendwie, die Autorität besitzen und die mich dann prägen. Wichtigstes Beispiel dafür war meine Latein- und Religionslehrerin, die ich schon ab der 5. Klasse eigentlich hatte in Religion und später auch in Latein, genau, und die hat mich sehr geprägt. Das war wirklich eine Respektperson, die auch noch vom alten Schlag war, also die ist reingekommen wir mussten aufstehen, man wurde auf Latein begrüßt und so, also die war wirklich eine Wahnsinns-Respektperson und ich glaube, die hat mich in der ganzen Schulzeit sehr geprägt und hat mich auch sehr früh schon gut eingeschätzt und als ich mich dann im Religionsunterricht mal wieder als einzige gemeldet hat, da hat sie mich angeguckt und gesagt, du studierst mal Theologie und ich habe das damals nicht verstanden, das war in der 6. Klasse und da hat sie anscheinend irgendwie, ich studiere jetzt Theologie, also jetzt nicht mehr im Master, aber im Bachelor, da hat sie das anscheinend schon erkannt und das beschäftigt mich immer noch gedanklich, dass sie das damals so gesagt hat. Also diese Person und wie sie so vor den Leuten stand, was ihre Bildungsideale waren, das hat mich auch sehr geprägt, genauso eigentlich wie viele andere Lehrer. Mein Griechischlehrer z. B., das war ein ganz Toller, bei dem wir Leistungskurs hatten, mein Deutschlehrer, der mir so viele gute Sachen mit auf dem Weg gegeben hat. Also ich sehe halt viele Lehrer sozusagen, die mich auch sehr geprägt haben. Ja und da

- gibt es natürlich im persönlichen Umfeld noch Leute wie meine Patentante, die ich immer sehr bewundert habe als Kind, auch weil sie auch sehr sportlich und aktiv ist und viel macht und ja, das sind so wesentliche Sachen und natürlich kam dann 200X bzw. [ein Jahr später] dann mein Freund hinzu, der jetzige, der mich glaube ich von allen Menschen am meisten geprägt hat nach meinen Eltern und meiner Schwester.
15. I: Erinnerst du dich an Veränderungen in Beziehungen, die einen entscheidenden Einfluss auf dein Leben oder auch auf deine Ansichten hatten?
16. N: Veränderungen in Beziehungen?
17. I: Mhm.
18. N: Jetzt zum Beispiel auch zu meinen Eltern?
19. I: Zum Beispiel.
20. N: Ja schon. Also klassisches Beispiel ist da die Mutter-Tochter-Beziehung, das gibt es bei mir auch, dass da irgendwann so ein Knick gekommen ist, wo man dann sagt, nein die Mutter hat nicht immer recht und man fängt dann langsam an sich zu emanzipieren, das ist bei mir relativ spät gekommen. Also ich war eigentlich immer jemand der sehr, ich sag mal autoritätsgläubig war und wir wurden eigentlich auch so erzogen, dass unsere Eltern Autoritätspersonen waren an erster Stelle und dann Eltern und wo sich das aber verändert hat, war eigentlich, als die Mutter unserer Mutter im Sterben lag oder gestorben ist. Das war für unsere Mutter eine sehr schwierige Zeit, als sie dann ihre eigene Mutter sozusagen beim Sterben begleiten musste. Das war nicht einfach und da gab es auch viel Ärger mit [dem Krankenhaus] und... also was ihre Unterbringung anging und ihre Versorgung und so und das war eine sehr schwere Zeit für alle und da habe ich zum ersten Mal meine Mutter so richtig emotional erlebt in der Zeit. Ich weiß nicht, ob ich das als Kind einfach noch nicht wahrnehmen konnte, als kleines Kind ja eh nicht, aber später war immer so eine

gewisse leichte Distanz auch da, bei aller Nähe, die trotzdem auch da war. Ich kann das nicht so gut beschreiben. Aber da hat sich dann unser Verhältnis schon verändert und das quasi, vor allem der Höhepunkt dieser Veränderung war dann, als wir ausgezogen sind. Das ist wahrscheinlich auch eine ganz normale Entwicklung, dass dann auf einmal alles besser wird sozusagen, dass man einerseits nicht mehr alles glaubt, was die Eltern sagen und auch seine eigenen Wege geht und auch eigene Ideen und Vorschläge hat und wie man Dinge jetzt lösen kann. Aber auf der anderen Seite, dass man sich dann auf einmal bei den Eltern wieder unglaublich wohlfühlt sozusagen und das war vorher, gerade so ab der Teenagerzeit, nicht unbedingt nicht mehr da. Da war man natürlich in dieser Pubertätsphase irgendwann drin und wollte sich auflehnen, musste aber gleichzeitig immer alles so machen, wie die Eltern das haben wollten. Also dieser Abschnitt, also der Tod unserer Großmutter, der war kurz vor dem Abitur. Also das ist eigentlich so ein Ereignis, der Tod unserer Großmutter und dann das Ausziehen, das hat diese Beziehung schon sehr verändert zu meiner Mutter. Ja bei meinem Vater gab es halt auch so einen Einschnitt in der Beziehung, nämlich als er dann Manager in diesem besagten Unternehmen geworden ist, weil davor er erst in [Kleinstadt C in Norddeutschland] und dann in [Stadt D in Westdeutschland] lange Jahre gearbeitet hat, das heißt, er war eigentlich in den wichtigsten Jahren unserer Kindheit gar nicht da, also nur am Wochenende oder auch mal in der Woche abends und dann war er auf einmal immer da und kam jeden Abend nach Hause und konnte uns jeden Morgen mit zur Schule nehmen auf dem Weg zur Arbeit und das war ganz toll, das war auch ganz wichtig für uns. Also, ich glaube nicht, dass uns da also vorher hat es ja auch funktioniert und wir hatten auch einen guten Draht zu unserem Vater immer,

aber danach wurde es noch intensiver und das merke ich halt auch jetzt noch, also nachdem wir ausgezogen sind, auch zu unserem Vater sich unser Verhältnis noch weiter verbessert hat und dass es dafür auch wichtig war, dass er irgendwann wieder mehr in unserer Nähe war. Das war zwar auch erst in der Mittelstufe oder so sag ich mal, ich weiß jetzt grad gar nicht genau, aber ab dann war er eben wieder da und zu Hause und das hat viel bewirkt. Ja und wenn ich dann jetzt noch mal die Beziehung zu meinem Freund rausreiß, da hat sich eigentlich sehr früh alles verändert. Als ich erfahren habe, dass sein Vater gestorben ist, als er noch sehr jung war, weil das löst in mir immer sehr starke emotionale Impulse aus und das war auch, bevor wir zusammengekommen sind. Wir waren erstmal ein Jahr lang so bekannt, haben uns dann immer besser verstanden und haben uns viel unterhalten und dann hatten wir eines Tages irgendwie ein Gespräch und dann erzählte er mir ja, dass sein Vater eben gestorben ist und ich habe so ein paar Fälle in der Bekanntschaft, wo das passiert ist und das führt immer dazu, dass ich, ich sag mal, emotional sehr stark auf diese Person zufalle. Also, ich habe mich jetzt nicht in ihn verliebt, weil er mir das erzählt hat, aber das hatte in mir sehr starke Emotionen ausgelöst so ihm gegenüber und das hat auch natürlich auch viel verändert und hat dazu geführt, dass ich noch intensiver mich mit ihm auseinandergesetzt habe und noch mehr von mir auch erzählt habe und das hat diese Beziehung sehr verändert. Ja und dann noch meine Schwester, da gab es auch einen Einschnitt, nämlich als sie zur Oberstufe hin die Schule gewechselt hat, weil wir eigentlich vorher immer in einer Klasse waren, davor natürlich auch in einer Kindergartengruppe usw. bis zum Beginn der Oberstufe und es war tatsächlich so, dass ich immer die war, die so ein bisschen im Vordergrund stand oder sich in den Vordergrund gedrängt hat, weil ich, also mir

sind die Sachen leichter zugefallen in der Schule. Ich hatte bessere Noten. In der Regel musste ich mich nicht so viel anstrengen und ich hatte auch schneller Freundinnen und das ist ja natürlich auch für ein Mädchen sehr wichtig und ich hatte immer eine beste Freundin und sie nicht so richtig. Sie ist auch immer mit Jungs besser klar gekommen. Das tue ich mittlerweile auch. Aber sie war immer die, die so ein bisschen zurückstand und das hat sich dann schlagartig geändert, als sie dann die Schule gewechselt hat, um auf der anderen Schule dann einen Kunstleistungskurs machen zu können, weil es bei uns nicht ging, deswegen hat sie gewechselt und auf einmal hat sie ganz schnell eigenen Freundeskreis gefunden, hatte dann natürlich immer noch ihre Probleme in Mathe und in Englisch, aber ist in Kunst dann wirklich gut geworden und dann hat man echt gemerkt, dass das für sie gut war und auch für unsere Beziehung gut war, weil ich hatte das zwar damals alles nie so wirklich reflektiert, dass ich da irgendwie ein Schritt voraus sein könnte oder dass sie jetzt in meinem Schatten steht oder so, das merkt man ja als Kind auch nicht unbedingt, das merken nur die Eltern. Aber ich glaube, dass es eben sehr gut war für uns und das hat sicherlich dazu geführt, dass wir uns auch ein bisschen voneinander entfernt haben. Das habe ich ja eben schon angedeutet, dass man manchmal dann irgendwie das Gefühl hat, jeder macht so sein Ding und man kriegt nicht viel vom anderen mit. Aber das hat auch dazu geführt, dass wir jetzt wirklich auf einer super Ebene uns auch dann immer wieder annähern können und immer wieder auch, also dass es ganz toll ist mit uns beiden, was zusammen machen.

21. I: Seid ihr ein- oder zweieiige Zwillinge?
22. N: Wir sind zweieiige Zwillinge.
23. I: Jetzt habe ich dich unterbrochen.
24. N: Ne das waren aber auch so die, also wenn ich jetzt mal so die wichtigsten Beziehungen in meinem Leben raus greife und

- aber alle haben irgendwie so einen Punkt, wo dann so ein Einschnitt war, dann sind das aber jetzt auch die wesentliche Sachen, die ich dazu sagen wollte.
25. I: Mhm. Wie hat sich dein Weltbild inkl. evtl. dein Bild von Gott oder einer höheren Macht zu den unterschiedlichen Phasen deines Lebens verändert?
26. N: Ich glaube auch so auf diese klassische Art und Weise. Als Kinder sind wir natürlich auch zum Kindergottesdienst gegangen und unsere Eltern waren nicht übermäßig gläubig oder so, aber sie haben ein relativ kirchennahes Leben geführt. Also ich unterscheide dann immer zwischen Glaube und Kirchennähe sozusagen als Institution. Das ging im Kindergarten los, dass mein Vater dann von einem Pastor in unserer Gemeinde überredet wurde, ins Presbyterium zu kommen und so und dann war man auch mal sonntags in der Kirche und wir gingen dann auch mal zum Kindergottesdienst und da hat man diese schönen biblischen Geschichten, die man dann immer so bearbeitet im Kindergottesdienst und dann hat man dann natürlich auch dieses Bild vom lieben Gott. Also unsere Eltern haben eigentlich nie abends mit uns gebetet oder so was, aber es war immer, irgendwie haben sie schon uns so ein christliches Weltbild auch vermittelt und ja dann gab es immer den lieben Gott, ohne dass man aber quasi jetzt im Alltag so öfter zu ihm in Kontakt getreten wäre durch Beten oder dass man gesagt hätte, der ist jetzt hier immer da und passt auf. Das war eigentlich gar nicht so die Message, die da rüber gekommen ist. Die Message war irgendwie nur, es gibt ihn und ja er ist da, einfach ohne weitere Konkretisierung eigentlich und natürlich haben wir dann auch, ja sind wir Weihnachten natürlich besonders in die Kirche gegangen und Ostern, also vor allen Dingen halt wie viele Leute zu den besonderen Festen und haben dann aber auch Geschichten gelesen irgendwie auch in der Weihnachtszeit und so und

haben uns schon auch in Form von Geschichten und Liedern auch mal so mit christlichen Themen beschäftigt, aber nicht übermäßig und das Ganze wurde dann auch noch ein bisschen mehr in diese Ecke gedrängt, als eine Nachbarin von uns in der Straße angefangen hat Bibelstunden für Kinder abzuhalten. Die war glaubensmäßig doch etwas mehr dabei als wir. Also die war, ich will jetzt nicht sagen evangelikal, aber die hat schon einen sehr starken Glauben gehabt und wollte das auch weitervermitteln und weil es in unserer Straße halt sehr viele Kinder gab, die da auch immer auf der Straße rumrannten und die man leicht mal packen konnte, hat sie das halt gemacht und hat dann einmal die Woche so eine Kinderbibelstunde abgehalten in ihrer Wohnung mit den Kindern aus unserer Straße. Ja, da kam dann schon dieses „Jesus liebt auch dich“ und „Gott ist immer da“ und also auch verbunden mit aber sehr stark christlich eingefärbten Geschichten und so. Also nicht das, was wir von zu Hause kannten, sondern wirklich so, ja so ein bisschen auf Mission angelegt oder so, ich weiß es nicht. Aber jedenfalls sehr stark christlich eingefärbt und ja das war mir eigentlich schon ein bisschen fremd, aber es hat auch wieder dieses Bild vom lieben Gott sozusagen vermittelt und ja dann kam aber irgendwann, also diese Bibelstunden hörten irgendwann wieder auf und mein Vater war auch irgendwann nicht mehr im Presbyterium und in der Teenagerzeit kam halt dann dieses Kritische dazu, das man angefangen hat Sachen zu hinterfragen. Dann hatte ich meine Metal-Phase. Da war ich sowieso ganz anders drauf und dann hatte ich auch eher so ein pantheistisches Weltbild und habe gedacht, wieso soll ich mir Gott so vorstellen, wie die Kirche ihn erklärt, wenn ich mir ihn auch auf meiner eigenen Art und Weise vorstellen kann und wenn die Welt so schön ist, wie sie ist und da und da aber auch schlecht ist, dann ist doch Gott irgendwie auch mehr

so nach meinen Vorstellungen, damit ich mir das dann hier alles erklären kann sozusagen. Ich habe dann so, immer wenn ich dann draußen im Wald war oder so, ich hatte also irgendwie sehr viel Interesse daran, viel in die Natur zu gehen und so und dann war da irgendwie auch immer auch Gott für mich. Also nicht so der christliche Gott, wie er in der Bibel stand. Dann hat auch meine, ja, also die kritische Phase angefangen, in der ich mich auch kritischer mit der Kirche auseinandergesetzt habe.

27. I: Wie alt warst du da ungefähr?

28. N: Wie alt war ich da? Na ja, vielleicht so 15 / 16, also jetzt ganz früh auch nicht, aber also so mit 15 / 16 wurde ich dann also schon relativ kritisch, weil ich da ja auch dann schon langsam Orgel gespielt habe und in den Gottesdiensten war und ich habe gemerkt, das ist es einfach nicht irgendwie, dann alles läuft immer nach Schema X ab. Es kommen nur alte Leute. Es ist nichts irgendwie lebendig und die Predigt ist, wenn man Glück hat gut, aber auch nur wenn man Glück hat und dann habe ich halt auch angefangen mir zu denken, wieso wird Gott eigentlich von dieser Kirche in so eine feste Form gezwängt und wieso nimmt man immer die Bibel und sagt, da steht alles drin, also das ist die Offenbarung und dann habe ich das echt hinterfragt und habe gedacht nein, also ich glaube an Gott auf meine Art und Weise. Ich mag die Kirche trotzdem als Institution, weil sie einfach gute Werte vertritt und gute Sachen macht, aber ich habe das getrennt. Also so in der Jugendzeit kam dann die Trennung zwischen, also der Kirche und meinem Gottesbild, das sich dann eben so ein bisschen verselbständigt hat sozusagen und das lief dann quasi darauf hinaus, dass ich, als ich dann Abitur gemacht habe und wusste, ich möchte jetzt Theologie studieren, da habe ich dann immer gesagt, ich mache das auch so ein bisschen, weil ich gerade auf der Suche bin nach Gott. Also ich wusste, dass ich den nicht so unreflektiert schlucken

kann, wie er von der Kirche vermittelt wird. Das war so das Ergebnis dieser ganzen Jugendzeit sozusagen und ich habe gedacht, ja irgendwo muss er doch sein oder irgendwo muss doch mein Glaube sein. Also ich habe mir eigentlich gewünscht, dass sich auch ein fester Glaube entwickelt, der mich irgendwie trägt oder stützt und ich glaube, ich habe halt wirklich weniger Gott gesucht als meinen eigenen Glauben und habe gedacht, das, das Theologiestudium hilft mir dabei vielleicht. Hat es eigentlich nicht, also es hat mich natürlich sehr mitgenommen dieses Studium und sehr interessiert und es war genau das Richtige für mich, aber es ist nicht so gewesen, dass ich dann viel gläubiger geworden bin und da bin ich jetzt eigentlich immer noch an dem Punkt, dass ich sage, ja man kann einfach nicht davon ausgehen, dass alles, was wir hier um uns sehen und was Wissenschaft rausgefunden hat, dass das alles ist, was es gibt, weil ich glaube, dass wir mit unseren Sinnen sozusagen einfach viel zu beschränkt sind um alles wahrnehmen zu können und glaube auch, dass es da irgendwas gibt, was vielleicht hier auf der Erde Sachen angestoßen hat oder so. Ich glaube nicht, dass es jetzt irgendwie einen konkreten personell gedachten Gott gibt, der seine Hand über uns hält und der irgendwie quasi eingreift. Also, was mich da irgendwie am meisten schockiert hat, ich habe also grad auch zu Abizeiten bin ich mal mit einer Freundin mitgegangen, die in einer Freikirche ist und die war auch in einer freikirchlichen Jugendgruppe und ich habe mir das mal angeguckt und bin ja dann auch eigentlich sehr aufgeschlossen gegenüber solchen Sachen und dann war diese Jugendgruppe und jeder erzählte dann von seiner Woche, im Kreis sozusagen, in dieser freikirchlichen Jugendgruppe und dann sagte einer dann, als er dran war, ja ich bin gerade zum zweiten Mal durch meine Führerscheinprüfung gefallen, aber das ist ok, Gott wollte das so und da habe ich, also

- das ist genau das Gegenteil von dem, was ich denke. Da habe ich echt, das fand ich schon, ja erschreckend. Also einerseits ist natürlich auch gut, wenn man sich da so reinfallen lassen kann in den Gedanken, dass Gott das dann so wollte. Aber das ist überhaupt nicht das, was ich denke. Also ich denke schon, man hat in erster Linie eine Eigenverantwortung und Gott ist nicht, ich denke mir Gott nicht so, dass er eingreift und das ist immer noch so. Ja ich bin jetzt nicht konkret verzweifelt auf der Suche nach meinem Glauben. Ich hoffe halt, dass ich ihn irgendwann finden werde. Aber ich denke auch wirklich, seinen Glauben zu finden ist ein langer Prozess und das kann man nicht von jetzt auf gleich und irgendwann finde ich ihn vielleicht dann auch, ja.
29. I: Da hast du schon auf die nächste Frage vorgegriffen, die wäre nämlich: Was bedeutet es für dich heute, dein Bild von Gott oder deinem Weltbild?
30. N: Ja also, das ist wie gesagt im Prinzip da, was ich eben schon erklärt habe, angekommen. Also ich bin aus dieser ersten Jugendphase raus, dass ich sage, Gott ist der liebe Gott, der immer da ist. Ich bin auch aus der Phase aus, dass ich sage, ich weiß zwar nicht, wer Gott ist, aber er hat mit Kirche zu tun. Ich bin auch aus der Phase raus, dass ich sage, Gott ist in allem und alles fließt. Ja es ist im Prinzip, also je länger das jetzt gedauert hat, desto größer ist das Fragezeichen eigentlich geworden. Also es ist einfach ein großes Fragezeichen. Ich glaube aber auch für die Zukunft, und dass habe ich immer schon gemerkt, es gibt so spezielle Momente und wenn man die erlebt, dann merkt man, das ist jetzt irgendwie im weitesten Sinne göttlich. Also so blöde Beispiele wie: Man geht durch den Wald und auf einmal scheint die Sonne durch die Blätter und das sieht ganz schön aus und man denkt, jetzt guckt grad einer von oben und sagt was oder gibt irgendwie ein Zeichen von sich und das ist irgendwie göttlich. Aber ich glaube, dass da eventuell noch auf so einem Lebensweg noch viele Ereignisse kommen, die auch von sich aus schon so sind, also die Geburt der Kinder oder so was. Ich glaube halt, ich lass das so auf mich zukommen und glaube halt, dass mir noch Ereignisse bevorstehen, die mich dann auch wieder beeinflussen und meinen Glauben irgendwie oder die mir da weiterhelfen. Ja.
31. I: Gab es in deinem Leben Befreiungserlebnisse oder Durchbrüche, die den Sinn deines Lebens gefestigt oder verändert haben?
32. N: Ja Befreiungserlebnisse, ja da könnte man jetzt eigentlich alles Mögliche nennen, wenn ich den Sinn meines Lebens schon kennen würde, wäre das schön, tue ich nicht so richtig. Was mich sehr befreit hat war, als ich meinen Singkreis kennengelernt habe. Das war für mich noch mal so ein einschneidendes Erlebnis vielleicht auch. Da war ich 15 und kannte halt mein bürgerliches funktionierendes Elternhaus und hatte einmal die Woche Klavierunterricht und ja, es war irgendwie, man musste sich nie fragen, was eigentlich am nächsten Tag kommt, weil es war alles sicher und alles abgesichert und es war alles gut. Und dann ist eine neue Klassenkameradin in unsere Klasse gekommen, die kam aus [Stadt A] und die war in diesem Singkreis und ich wusste erst gar nicht, was das ist, aber ich wusste, diese Klassenkameradin fährt zwei Mal im Jahr mit diesem Singkreis irgendwohin. Nach Finnland oder nach Ungarn oder nach Bremen und da wohnt und hat da irgendwie eine Singwoche und da singt man und tanzt und hat dann halt quasi auch viele Proben und man macht aber auch Ausflüge zwischendrin und ich konnte mir da erst gar nicht so richtig was drunter vorstellen. Aber nach einer Singwoche in [Land C] im Sommer hat sie mir dann Fotos gezeigt und dann habe ich gesagt, das will ich auch machen und dann bin ich zur nächsten Wintersingwoche, die

immer über Silvester stattfindet in [Region D], bin ich mitgefahren und was da passiert war, das ist echt so mit meiner, der großen Befreiung aus meiner Jugendzeit zu vergleichen, weil da waren auf einmal Leute, da war es völlig egal, wie alt die waren oder wie reich die waren oder wo die herkamen. Die kamen aus ganz Deutschland zusammen. Der harte Kern war in [Stadt A]. Und da gab es unseren Chorleiter und unsere Tanzleiterin und das war wie eine große Familie irgendwie. Da kamen Leute hin, die aus Überzeugung da immer mitfahren sozusagen und die dann eben so eine Art Urlaub mit dem Singkreis verbrachten. Einmal im Sommer, einmal im Winter und halt über das Jahr verteilt auch Wochenenden und das hat mich irgendwie so befreit, weil ich dann auch, dann habe ich neue Freunde kennengelernt, unabhängig von meiner Schulklasse, wo man ja dann doch irgendwie zusammengewürfelt ist, aber mit den Leuten sich arrangieren muss, die da sind und Leute, die einfach genau die gleichen Interessen hatten wie ich, die so naturverbunden waren und mit denen man absolut Quatsch machen konnte und mit denen man echt die ganze Zeit dann rumgekultet hat, die Nächte durchgemacht hat, tagsüber hat man gesungen und das war so schön, weil man hat auch nicht irgendwas gesungen, man hat tatsächlich auch deutsche Volkslieder gesungen. Also altes Liedgut sozusagen. Also nicht jetzt irgendwie Schlager oder so, sondern wirklich alte deutsche Volkslieder, die der Gründer dieses Singkreises neu vertont hatte sozusagen und man hat auch nicht irgendwas getanzt, sondern europäische Volkstänze und wenn man einmal schottisch getanzt hat, dann ist man süchtig und dann weiß man, was diese Befreiung bedeutet. Also der ganze Singkreis mit dem, was da gemacht wurde, mit den Leuten, die da zusammengekommen sind, die nicht gefragt haben, was man schon geleistet hat oder wie viel Geld man hat und mit den Werten,

die dahinter standen, das war für mich so eine große Befreiung und da habe ich mich da auch sehr reingestürzt und das ging also vielen Jugendlichen, da waren viele in meinem Alter, ging das da ähnlich, dass sie quasi immer, wenn sie zu Hause waren, in der Schule waren, haben sie dann ihr Dasein gefristet und die Tage runtergezählt bis zur nächsten Singwoche und da war ich halt auch dann unabhängig von meinen Eltern sozusagen. Das war so meins und das war irgendwie für mich so eine Art Befreiung.

33. I: Deine Schwester war da auch mit?
34. N: Die war da auch mit. Doch, die war da mit, aber die war da nur die ersten Jahre mit und danach, als sie ihren Freund kennengelernt hat, ist ihr das passiert, was mir jetzt mit meinem Freund auch passiert ist, wenn der Freund da nicht so für zu haben ist und das ist ja schon eine sehr spezielle Sache mit so Tänzern, man muss das halt mögen irgendwie ne. Das macht wahnsinnig Spaß, da alte deutsche Webertänze zu tanzen und so. Aber wenn der Freund das nicht so mag und lieber mit einem im Sommer zwei Wochen an die Ostsee will, dann ist man schnell raus und das ist meiner Schwester dann schon eher passiert als mir. Deswegen war sie am Anfang schon noch dabei und war genauso begeistert davon wie ich. Also das war, wir haben das auch genau in der richtigen Zeit unseres Lebens glaube ich auch kennengelernt, diesen Singkreis, wo das für uns echt im Kontrast zu dem, was wir bisher gemacht hatten und wo wir das echt total dankbar aufgenommen haben und uns da total reingestürzt haben. Ja.
35. I: Hast du Krisenzeiten oder Zeiten des Leidens und der Enttäuschung erlebt oder Zeiten, in denen du keinen Sinn in deinem Leben gesehen hast?
36. N: Oh ja. Ja habe ich, klar. Als ich das erste Mal so richtig doll verliebt war, das war nicht gut. Als ich das zweite Mal so richtig doll verliebt war, war das auch nicht gut. Also das hat sich gesteigert und es wurde immer schlimmer und das zog sich hin ab,

wie alt war ich denn da, so 13 und von 13 an war ich irgendwie in, drei Jahre in einem Typen aus meiner Schule verknallt, das war ganz schlimm, vor allem ist das hinterher alles schief gegangen und so und da habe ich wirklich gelitten. Das war auch ganz schlimm. Da habe ich auch ganz viel gewieint und habe, also was man so macht als verknallter Teenager. Tagebuch geschrieben und so. Aber das war echt eine heftige Zeit für mich. Und der zweite Freund, das war einer aus diesem besagten Singkreis. Das war auch noch einer, der wirklich das gemacht hat, was mich interessiert und der auch so ein Romantiker irgendwie war und mit dem man dann stundenlang irgendwie durch den Wald spazieren und reden konnte und so und das war total toll. Aber das hat dann auch nicht funktioniert und das führte dazu, dass ich auch eine ganz ganz große Krisenzeit erlebt habe und das war auch noch in meiner Metal-Phase, wo ich dann halt immer, immer düstere Gedanken dann sozusagen hatte und immer mehr mich irgendwie selbst zurückgezogen habe und dann bin ich auch in Internet-Foren gewesen, wo auch so Gothic-Leute dann waren und habe mit denen halt düstere Gedanken ausgetauscht und irgendwie war das ja dann schon, also es war nicht so, dass ich dann so den sozusagen vordergründigen Sinn des Lebens verloren hätte in der Zeit, also ich habe das schon nicht hinterfragt. Das hat mir auch gefallen, das war irgendwie eine schöne Phase. Ich habe da zwar sehr gelitten und ich habe dann teilweise tatsächlich mich auch selber verletzt, weil ich es sonst nicht ausgehalten hätte. Aber ich bin dann auch heil wieder da rausgekommen aus dieser Phase am Ende. Das war einfach so ein sehr heftiges quasi eine sehr heftige Reaktion auf diese nicht funktionierende Beziehung und das ist auch auf diese Weise dann halt irgendwann ausgelaufen, ist weniger geworden und irgendwann habe ich dann auch angefangen wieder bunte Sachen anzuziehen. Also die Metal-Phase

hing gar nicht an dieser Beziehung oder so, aber das war dann quasi die Plattform, auf der ich mich dann austoben konnte sozusagen mit meinen düsteren Gedanken und das noch weiter steigern konnte und hinterher habe ich das einfach alles abgestreift, was aber sehr lange gedauert hat und habe wieder bunte Sachen angezogen und irgendwann ging es dann auch wieder, also auch psychisch ging es dann wieder. Das war, also diese zweite Phase, das war im Prinzip von 17 bis 18, also mit diesem Freund, der da auch in diesem Singkreis auch war.

37. I: Ein Jahr?

38. N: Und das war eigentlich so, ja, wobei hinterher hat es noch mal anderthalb Jahre gedauert, bis ich wirklich drüber weg war sozusagen. Aber das war schon so das heftigste Jahr in meiner Jugendzeit bisher. Und eine richtig heftige Krisenphase habe ich jetzt aber neuerdings wieder seit einem Jahr, wobei es jetzt schon wieder geht. Aber jetzt kommen auf einmal ganz andere Themen hoch, weil ich letztes Jahr meinen Bachelor fertig gemacht habe und jetzt eben mitten im Master stecke, aber halt leider auch nicht BWL oder Jura studiere, sondern [eine Geisteswissenschaft] und ich habe also den Bachelor sehr erfolgreich studiert und habe da auch immer den Kopf sehr in den Sand gesteckt und war total zufrieden und hatte dann auch relativ früh Promotionsangebote und wusste dann auch schon, ja also nach dem Studium erstmal promovieren, das ist ja wunderbar. Aber letztes Jahr, als ich meinen Bachelor bekommen habe und das war eben auch nicht so einfach, weil es da Schwierigkeiten mit dem Zeugnis gab und dem Prüfungsamt. Das hat eine unheimlich große Krise in mir ausgelöst, weil ich das erste Mal in meinem Studium da den Kopf aus dem Sand genommen habe und mich gefragt habe, was machst du eigentlich später mal. Dann habe ich gemerkt, alle konnten viel machen, nur ich nicht, weil ich bin Geisteswissenschaftlerin und dann habe

ich angefangen mich zu informieren und habe irgendwie Zeitungsartikel gelesen und Berichte im Internet und überall stand nur drin, oh ja, Sie sind Geisteswissenschaftlerin, dann stellen Sie sich drauf ein, dass es sehr sehr schwer für Sie wird, wenn Sie überhaupt was finden und das ist so die Message, die immer rum kommt und das hat mich echt in eine absolute Krise gestürzt. Dann habe ich ach sehr viel geweint und musste auch dann quasi therapeutische Hilfe in Anspruch nehmen, weil ich nicht mehr konnte. Also das war noch mal jetzt der zweite große Tiefpunkt, den ich jetzt eigentlich wieder halbwegs überwunden habe, aber das war ganz schrecklich. Also dass ich dann gemerkt habe, ich mache das, was ich mache, aus Überzeugung und gerne, aber auf der anderen Seite, wo komme ich damit hin und wer will mich eigentlich später haben, ich möchte doch auch gerne irgendwie und jetzt kommt wieder meine Prägung aus dem Elternhaus ins Spiel, ich möchte auch gerne irgendwie ein Haus haben und eine Familie und so. Was passiert, wenn ich mir das nicht leisten kann? So, also diese Gedanken sind dann auch gekommen, dass mir auf einmal meine ganze Basis unter den Füßen weggerissen wurde und ich das Gefühl hatte, mit dem, was ich gerne und aus Überzeugung und gut mache, kann ich gar nicht so leben, wie ich das gerne möchte. Ja und das war noch mal eine sehr anders geartete große Krise, aber die zweite große Krise in meinem Leben jetzt.

39. I: Das hast du eigentlich schon gesagt, was ist damals mit dir passiert, also jetzt zum Beispiel auch die letzte Krise. Welchen Einfluss hatten diese Erfahrungen?
40. N: Ja die erste große Krise, das weiß ich eigentlich gar nicht mehr so genau. Es hat halt noch lange nachgewirkt, also dieses unglückliche Verliebt sein sozusagen in diesen zweiten Freund, den ich da hatte. Es hat mich sehr kreativ gemacht. Also ich war in der Zeit unglaublich kreativ und habe auch viel geschrieben und so. Das ist aber wieder

ein bisschen abgeflaut. Das ist ja immer so, wenn es einem schlecht geht, dann ist man besonders kreativ. Zumindest bei mir ist das so. Wenn es mir gut geht, dann nicht. Und längerfristig nachgewirkt hat es eigentlich nicht, nur was vielleicht ein bisschen gemein ist, ist dass immer noch so der Gedanke da ist, dass dieser Kerl einfach so der Maßstab ist irgendwie für alles und ich versuche, das immer so zwanghaft irgendwie zu unterdrücken, weil das ist gemein gegenüber allen anderen Leuten und ich will das eigentlich auch nicht, weil das nicht gesund ist. Also der Typ ist auch nicht gesund für mich gewesen und ist er auch immer noch nicht. Jetzt haben wir auch keinen Kontakt mehr. Also diese Krisenphase hat mich, das hat mich nur insofern beeinflusst, dass es manchmal immer noch wieder so einen kleinen Stich gibt und es wieder hochkommt und ich aber eigentlich versuchen will das abzustreifen und mehr beeinflusst hat mich natürlich jetzt, war ja auch auf einem ganz anderen Fachgebiet angesiedelt, diese zweite Krise, weil ich halt angefangen habe, ganz viel Beratungsangebote in Anspruch zu nehmen für Geisteswissenschaftler und jetzt ganz viel bewusster als vorher ja mein Leben angucke und das, was ich beruflich machen will und plane und ich hör dann immer auch jetzt bei den Leuten vom Arbeitsamt, dass das total toll ist, wie bewusst und gezielt ich da immer hingehe und alles schon durchdenke und plane und das machen anscheinend nicht so viele Leute, was irgendwie ich gar nicht so gedacht hätte. Aber das hat mich echt beeinflusst, dass ich aus dieser Krise sozusagen mit mehr, ja, Weisheit ist ein blödes Wort, aber das ich aus dieser Krise mit mehr, ja mehr Klugheit rausgegangen bin, sozusagen was meine Lebensplanung angeht und davor war ich einfach total ignorant und habe einfach nur studiert. So und das sehe ich schon als großen Gewinn an.

41. I: Wenn wir nun die Gegenwart betrachten, wie würdest du deine Eltern beschreiben?

42. N: (Lachen) Meine Eltern, oh je. Ja meine Mutter wird immer mehr wie ihre eigene Mutter, was sie eigentlich nie wollte, was wir auch nicht wollen würden, aber was leider unaufhaltbar ist, weil unsere Omi war echt ein Drachen und sie wird auch bald einer. Leider ist meine Mutter halt auch der Typ etwas verbitterte Hausfrau, die früher mal Medizin studiert hat und Potenzial hatte, auch dann früh Karriere im Krankenhaus gemacht hat. Dann diese Karriere abgebrochen hat, als wir gekommen sind und seitdem als Hausfrau ihr Dasein fristet, was ihr halt dann doch, wenn sie es mal ehrlich sieht, sehr frustriert und verbittert hat und sie jetzt eben große Angst davor hat, dass in zwei Monaten auf einmal ihr Ehemann zu Hause sitzt, weil er dann in Rente ist. So, also das ist meine Mutter. Mein Vater ist ein sehr, ja der ist wirklich weise und gerecht, aber auch gleichzeitig eine große Respektperson. Also das ist schon ein sehr interessanter Mann eigentlich, weil wenn er halt in die Firma geht oder auch wenn er früher irgendwie, weil unsere Lehrer was nicht richtig gemacht hat, dann ist er dahingegangen und wir haben uns fremd geschämt und er hat mit den Lehrern solange geredet, bis das alles lief nach seinen Vorstellungen und er ist einfach eine wahnsinnige Respektperson für andere. Das sagen auch Freunde, die dann mit nach Hause kommen, dass der irgendwie so eine Respektperson ist und dahinter versteckt sich natürlich aber auch, dass er jetzt im Privaten so ein bisschen auch verklemmt ist oder ne, also gerne auch zu Hause für sich dann da sitzt und rummuckelt und mit seinen Bekannten was unternimmt, aber auf der anderen Seite auch manchmal halt wirklich so ein bisschen respekteinflößend wirkt. Aber er ist unglaublich humorvoll. Ich freue mich total, dass ich auch seinen Humor zum Großteil geerbt habe sozusagen und er ist ganz lieb. Also er ist auch unheimlich tierlieb und so. Also seine Geschichte finde ich nicht so

tragisch wie die Geschichte meiner Mutter, weil meine Mutter halt wirklich einfach, die hätte viel bewirken können und hat das auch schon oft gesagt, dass sie das bereut, dass sie nicht wieder angefangen hat und dass sie aber auch, vielleicht hätte sie sich was suchen müssen, was sie jetzt neben den Kindern und dem Haushalt noch irgendwie ehrenamtlich ausfüllt oder so, aber das hat sie nicht gemacht und die war immer für uns da und ja, das hat dazu geführt, dass sie sehr verbittert und dass sie aber auch jetzt gerade im Alter einen Weg einschlägt, der in Richtung unserer Großmutter geht. Dass sie manchmal halt auch ein bisschen anstrengend wird so. Also wenn sie dann was will oder wenn sie ihre Vorstellungen nicht umsetzen kann, dann müssen sich immer alle ducken. Also, das ist etwas blöd. Man will dann mit ihr grillen und sie kommt dann aus dem Urlaub wieder und wir kommen alle dann zu denen Hause und unser Vater hat schon was eingekauft und dann kommt sie nach Hause und ist gestresst und dann ist alles nicht richtig und dann haben wir extra besprochen, bloß irgendwie keine Salate oder so, damit es nicht so kompliziert wird, weil das haben wir auch schon mal gehabt, dass sie dann auch total ausgerastet ist, als sie noch so komplizierte Sachen in der Küche machen musste und dann war es aber auch wieder nicht richtig, weil dann fehlten ihr zu viele Sachen und das schmiert sie einem auch den ganzen Abend auf das Brot. Also sie ist viel zu sehr und das tut mir immer sehr leid für sie, dass sie gar nicht sich fallen lassen kann und solche Sachen einfach so genießen kann, wie sie sind, sondern dass sie immer mit Ansprüchen da dran geht und dann irgendwie schwingt auch immer ihre Verbitterung dann so ein Stückweit mit und das ist ja schade, weil sie, auf der anderen Seite ist sie halt eben auch sehr kreativ, also sie ist auch Malerin, sie malt in ihrer Freizeit immer sehr viel und ich liebe ihre Bilder. Also sie macht viel mit Aquarell und

viel freie Malerei, aber auch Landschaften und so und ich finde das wirklich schön, was sie macht und hänge mir auch gerne Sachen von ihr dann auf und sie müsste einfach sich mehr befreien von diesen ganzen Erwartungen. Ich glaube, dass sie das einfach auch nicht schafft mehr. Das wird immer mehr, glaube ich, jetzt im Alter und deswegen, jetzt ist grad eben der Stand, mein Vater ist [demnächst] in Rente. Dann darf er nicht mehr jeden Tag in seine Firma fahren und da sein Schiff lenken sozusagen, was ihm großen Spaß gemacht hat und dann müssen die beiden zu Hause sitzen und ich merke jetzt schon, dass meine Mutter da mit so schlechten Erwartungen dran geht, dass das gar nicht funktionieren kann. Also sie sagt dann schon immer, wie soll das bloß werden, wenn der zu Hause ist und so und giftet ihn dann schon immer so an und sagt, aber die Küche bleibt dann mein Revier und so und er will dann glaube ich einfach nur friedlich irgendwas machen. Ich weiß nicht, ob du Loriot kennst? Also meine Eltern sind einfach 1:1 Loriot und das ist einfach auf der einen Seite witzig und auch normal und deswegen muss man sich da auch keine Sorge drum machen, aber auf der anderen Seite ist das halt auch ein bisschen traurig, weil sie hätten es beide halt verdient, dass sie es sich gegenseitig so angenehm wie möglich machen sozusagen, jetzt dann auch die Zeit des Ruhestandes zusammen zu verbringen und sie machen auch viele Reisen und so. Also das machen sie schon und sie unternehmen auch viel zusammen. Aber ansonsten steckt da glaube ich schon so ein klassischer Verlauf einer bürgerlichen Beziehung hinter. Also manchmal denken meine Schwester und ich, vielleicht wäre es besser, wenn sie jetzt doch sich trennen würden oder so. Andererseits denkt man dann, sie tun es wahrscheinlich nicht mehr, das hat keinen Sinn mehr und sie ziehen das jetzt so durch und eigentlich wäre es ja auch schön, wenn sie es sich nicht so schwer machen würden. Also dann hätten sie da

auch beide noch mehr Gefallen sozusagen dran und so wirkt es halt leider irgendwie ein bisschen verkrampft und traurig, wie sie dann da zu Hause sind und das tut mir immer unheimlich leid.

43. I: Wie ist deine Beziehung zu deinen Eltern jetzt?
44. N: Ah das ist ein schwieriges Thema. Es wird immer schwieriger. Also ja leider immer noch geprägt davon, dass ich sehr viel das mache, was sie sagen. Also ich habe jetzt gerade gemerkt, also vor ein paar Monaten, dass ich mich jetzt von denen doch noch mehr emanzipieren muss. Also ich bin zwar ausgezogen und habe da auch ein schönes Leben und es ist immer schön, wenn ich sie besuche, aber wenn die anrufen und sagen, hier wollst du morgen mit uns grillen, dann sag ich immer sofort ja, ich komme. Ich müsste, was ich nicht kann ist zu sagen, nein ich will lieber morgen Abend einen Film gucken oder ich komme nicht. Das kann ich nicht. Ich habe immer diesen Drang hinzugehen und das zu machen, was sie sagen und das ist glaube ich nicht so gesund. Aber auf der anderen Seite ist eigentlich meine Beziehung zu meinen Eltern sehr positiv und ich genieße es, das auch sehr, wenn ich da bin, weil meine Mutter halt wirklich, dann auf einmal immer was Leckeres kocht, weil die Tochter ist ja da und man wird dann richtig verwöhnt und das ist einfach total schön und mit meinem Vater ist es halt auch sehr schön, weil ich mit dem so tolle Gespräche jetzt führen kann und das gab es früher zwar auch schon, aber das hat sich noch intensiviert und wenn ich sie dann besuche, also die wohnen ja hier am anderen Ende der Stadt, wenn ich sie besuche und dann abends mit denen noch zusammensitze, dann kommen so tolle Gespräche da raus und so, dass es auch schön ist. Der einzige Wermutstropfen ist halt, wenn dann wieder Anspannung ist und die beiden sich dann wieder angiften oder irgendwas nicht passt und das ist dann das Problem, dass es dann

- sehr schnell umschlagen kann. Dass ich dann auf einmal, obwohl ich mich da grad noch so wohl gefühlt habe, ganz schnell weg will. Ja etwas zwiegespalten also.
45. I: Hat sich dein Bild von deinen Eltern im Laufe der Jahre verändert?
46. N: Ja klar sicherlich. Also je mehr ich angefangen hatte so zu reflektieren und nachzudenken und ich habe relativ früh angefangen sehr viel zu reflektieren und nachzudenken, da hat sich das natürlich verändert. Also vor allen Dingen halt insofern, als ich jetzt viel mehr wahrnehme, was ihre Lasten und ihre Aufgaben sind. Ich meine, das ist ja normal. Als Kind war alles selbstverständlich für mich. Mama war immer da. Papa dann auch oder halt eben dann abends und am Wochenende und das war ganz normal. Ja in der Jugendzeit, da war es eigentlich, ja immer noch ganz ähnlich. Man konnte sich so fallen lassen. Ich habe das ja irgendwann gemerkt, dass das eigentlich ein ziemlicher Luxus ist, dass Eltern immer da sind und alles machen und anstatt dass ich aber gesagt habe, ich werde jetzt selbständig, habe ich mich da so reinfallen lassen und das war total schön und das war schon eine schöne Zeit. Wobei meine Schwester dann gar nicht mit meinen Eltern klargekommen ist in der Jugendzeit. Also für die war es sehr schwierig und ich war immer die, die versucht hat, Konflikte zu vermeiden, damit das alles schön ist und ich habe dann aber auch noch nicht gesehen, was die eigentlich alles machen müssen, was ihre Verantwortungen sind und so, das habe ich da noch nicht verstanden so richtig und das verstehe ich jetzt vielleicht immer noch nicht richtig, aber ich fange an das zu begreifen, was das für eine Verantwortung ist Kinder zu haben und was das unter Umständen mit einem macht und so. Also diese Entwicklung, das zu verstehen, die ist da schon sehr im Vordergrund. Ja und halt jetzt ist man ja auch mehr auf Augenhöhe mit seinen Eltern und manchmal kommen dann halt auch so Sachen wie Mitleid dazu, wenn halt ich mir überlege wenn meine Mutter wieder schlecht drauf ist und jetzt langsam fangen halt auch noch an, so wie der Rücken tut weh und kommen auch noch langsam die Gebrechen des Alters sozusagen. Sie sind beide so Anfang, Mitte 60 und das verändert mein Bild schon. Also dass ich auf einmal auch anfang, wirklich so mir Sorgen zu machen um meine Eltern und jetzt eben nicht mehr sage, ach Gott sei Dank, dass meine Eltern da sind und die machen ja alles und da kann ich immer hingehen, wenn was ist, sondern jetzt fange ich langsam an drüber nachzudenken, oh was ist denn eigentlich, wenn es ihnen mal wirklich schlechter geht und so und da mache ich mir schon ziemlich Sorgen. Und das war vor zehn Jahren noch längst nicht so und ja vor fünf Jahren vielleicht auch noch nicht so doll wie jetzt. Das wird immer mehr.
47. I: Ja und wenn es solche Veränderungen gegeben hat wie bei dir jetzt, woran hat das gelegen?
48. N: In der Beziehung zu meinen Eltern?
49. I: Ja.
50. N: Ja also würde ich jetzt eigentlich weniger auf einschneidende Erlebnisse zurückführen, außer die Sache mit dem Tod meiner Oma. Das habe ich ja vorhin schon erzählt. Dass sich da mein Verhältnis, aber auch mein Bild von meiner Mutter sehr geändert hat, weil das ist vielleicht ein bisschen krank, aber das war das erste Mal, dass ich sie habe weinen sehen und das habe ich vorher noch nie oder ich habe es nicht wahrgenommen als Kind und dann habe ich schon gemerkt, sie ist nicht nur eine Mutter, sie ist auch Mensch. Ich weiß nicht, ob das so der entscheidende Prozess bei Kindern ist, dass sie irgendwann merken, das ist nicht nur die Mutter mit der Funktion, sondern sie ist auch ein eigener Mensch mit eigenen Erwartungen und Gefühlen und Ansprüchen und Prägungen, die sie selber noch früher irgendwie mitgekriegt hat und das war so die Erkenntnis,

die vor allen Dingen auch durch den Tod meiner Oma angestoßen wurde und die dann bei meinem Vater dann natürlich auch nach und nach gekommen ist, aber bei ihm mehr so durch Gespräche, weil er eigentlich auch jemand ist, der nicht so viel redet und wenn, dann halt abends mal. Wenn man sich dann gut unterhält, dann redet er auch mal über sich und seine Gefühle oder so, aber auch immer sehr vorsichtig. Da ist er schon typisch Mann und bei dem haben diese Gespräche eigentlich dazu geführt, dass sich diese Erkenntnis dann auch ungefähr parallel ergeben hat sozusagen. Das kam einfach so nach und nach im Wesentlichen. War das jetzt die Antwort auf die Frage oder habe ich den Faden verloren?

51. I: Nein du hast nicht den Faden verloren. Also wenn es solche Veränderungen gegeben hat, woran hat das gelegen? Das war die Frage.
52. N: Ja also an keinem konkreten Auslöser sozusagen, sondern so. An der Gesamtentwicklung von mir selber auch als Person.
53. I: Gibt es andere Beziehungen, die dir bedeutsam erscheinen? Also das kann sich auch auf wichtige Personen beziehen, die nicht mehr leben.
54. N: Ja, ja klar. Ach da gibt es ja noch meine Großeltern alle. Also jetzt zusätzlich zu den Beziehungen, die ich schon genannt habe oder?
55. I: Ja.
56. N: Ich hatte ja schon von den Beziehungen zu meinem Freund und meiner Schwester.
57. I: Ja. Genau, die hast du schon erwähnt.
58. N: Ja dann gibt es natürlich noch meine Großeltern, die sind nicht mehr. Die sind auch leider sehr früh gestorben und ich denke halt heute, also meine Omi, die war halt die letzte kurz vorm Abi, aber die fünf Jahr davor war sie auch schon eigentlich bettlägerig - sagt man das so - und pflegebedürftig und am Ende hat sie gar nicht mehr gesprochen und lag nur noch im Bett und das war eigentlich auch sehr traurig, weil man konnte ihr etwas vorlesen und irgendwie Musik vorspielen und ihr was erzählen, aber also sie war nicht mehr so da als Großmutter, wie man das noch so kennt von früher. Also heute bin ich immer sehr traurig, dass gerade meine Großväter so früh gestorben sind. Als der Vater unserer Mutter gestorben ist, da waren wir noch in der Grundschule, er war der Erste und danach ist auch der andere Opa als nächstes gestorben sozusagen und die waren auf ihrer Art beide ganz toll und ich glaube auch, dass ich mit beiden noch super tolle Gespräche hätte führen können, auch gerade dann so später in der Teenagerzeit und ich hätte viel von denen lernen können und meine Mutter sagte auch immer, die Interessen, die ich entwickelt habe, das hätte super an meinem Opa dran gepasst und ich hätte mich noch super verstanden später sozusagen, also nicht mehr als Kind sondern, ja also das gleiche, was ich mit meinem Eltern jetzt erlebe, dass ich auf einmal mit ihnen auf Augenhöhe bin, von Person zu Person mit ihnen reden kann, das hätte ich gerne auch mit meinen Großeltern noch erlebt. Dass ich wegkomme über diesen Punkt, wo die Großeltern einfach nur aus dieser Funktion Oma und Opa bestehen und man fährt gerne hin und kriegt Süßigkeiten und kriegt auch mal einen Taler zugesteckt und so und jetzt einfach noch mal mit denen zu sprechen über Früher und über ihre Ansichten vom Leben, das fehlt mir total. Also das hätte ich sehr gerne und ich freue mich auch sehr, dass mein Freund noch eine Oma hat. Die hat sich mir auch gleich vorgestellt mit, „Ich bin die Oma“ und das ist jetzt so meine Ersatzoma. Also das ist ganz toll und wer weiß, wie lange die noch ist, aber das freut mich sehr, dass die noch da ist und dass ich da jetzt so eine Ersatzoma jetzt habe. Was natürlich meine eigenen Großeltern nicht wirklich ersetzt, weil das ja auch ganz besondere und tolle Menschen waren, mit denen man auch halt tolle Gespräche hätte führen können, aber immerhin ja.

59. I: Welche Gruppen, Einrichtungen, Ideen oder Anliegen sind für dich zentral?
60. N: Oh das ist aber viel auf einmal. Gruppen, Einrichtungen, Anliegen und Ideen?
61. I: Ja, vielleicht greifst du auch irgendwas für dich besonders raus.
62. N: Ja also als Gruppe auch mit bestimmten Ideen verknüpft ist natürlich wieder der Singkreis, jetzt so die Gruppe der Wahl sozusagen, weil die einfach so viele Ideale quasi unter einem Hut bringt. Wir machen gerne Musik und empfinden dabei total Spaß und wir sind aber auch alle gleich und wir sind auch eine große Familie und jeder ist für den anderen da und solange man auf der Singwoche ist, ist es auch völlig egal, ob man schon seit zwei Jahren jetzt keinen Job mehr hatte oder ob man gerade irgendwie mit seiner Stelle im Krankenhaus nicht zufrieden ist oder so, da geht es wirklich um die Musik und um die Leute selber und ja also, so sagt das zwar keiner da, aber das ist es ja im Prinzip auch um die Pflege alten europäischen Kulturguts und was da auch wichtig ist, ist halt der Austausch mit anderen Kulturen. Also im Sommer gehen die Singwochen immer an verschiedene Orte und dann halt auch z. B. mal nach Ungarn und dann wird aber Ungarisch gelernt. Dann werden da irgendwie ungarische Tänze geübt und dann hat man da auch Vorführungen und so und das ist einfach auch cool, dass da auch so dieser kulturelle Austausch so ein bisschen gepflegt wird und das sind alles Ideen, die irgendwie dieser Singkreis verkörpert, die mir einfach total gefallen.
63. I: Und warum ist dir das so wichtig?
64. N: Warum ist mir das wichtig? Ich weiß es nicht. Also weil ich es halt als befreiend empfinde. Man kann dahin kommen und man wird gemocht und man wird nicht nur gemocht, sondern man hat sofort total Spaß mit den Leuten. Die alle irgendwie wahrscheinlich auch zu Hause eher, also jetzt gerade die Leute in meinem Alter, die dann eher auch in der Schule immer Außenseiter

- waren und so, aber man kommt dann auf einmal zusammen und dann funktioniert es und man hat total Spaß und es zählt überhaupt nicht, was sonst so ist und man hört dann auch teilweise ähnliche Musik und man ist dann zusammen kreativ und denkt sich coole Aktionen aus oder liegt dann halt mal nachts einfach nur auf der Wiese hinter dem Haus und guckt Sterne an. Das geht in [Land C] total gut, wie wir ja gemerkt haben oder solche Sachen. Also wenn dann da einfach richtig lustige Leute dabei sind und die genauso sind. Also der Punkt ist vielleicht, ich denke immer, wenn alle so wären, dann würde es einfach funktionieren auf dieser Welt. Da sind einfach so viele Sachen, die ich als Ideal empfinde, die sind irgendwie in diesem Singkreis präsent und das ist einfach total toll. Da sind einfach viele Leute, die ohne Fernseher aufgewachsen sind und die deswegen selber noch kreativ sind und sagen, egal wir machen jetzt keine Ahnung was und sind kreativ und haben dann trotzdem einfach Spaß und das ist einfach für mich, was total wichtig ist. Was ich immer sehr ansprechend finde auch bei anderen Leuten. Also da sind halt nicht so viele, ja ich habe das früher immer Tussen genannt. Also diese Leute, die so auf Partykultur aus sind und immer auf irgendwie Styling und so, also der Mainstream eigentlich, aus dem ich früher als Außenseiterin ja auch schon rausgefallen bin sozusagen, weil ich einfach anders war und die waren auch alle so drauf wie ich und das ist mir einfach total sympathisch dann diese Leute, die nicht so sind wie der Mainstream und sagen, am Wochenende trinken gehen und so und keine Ahnung. Jetzt muss ich mal überlegen, es ging jetzt um Gruppen, Einrichtungen...
65. I: Genau, Anliegen oder Ideen.
66. N: Anliegen und Ideen. Ja, also der Singkreis war ein schönes Beispiel, weil der so viel von dem, was mir wichtig ist, schon so verkörpert irgendwie. Das ist ganz wichtig und ja Anliegen und Ideen kann jetzt ja alles Mögliche meinen, was mir wichtig ist.

Also was mir ganz wichtig ist, ist Kreativität und ist auch Rücksicht auf andere. Jetzt kann ich wieder anfangen, mich über die heutige Zeit aufzuregen. Was mir immer wichtig ist, ist dass die Leute Rücksicht aufeinander nehmen und das ist einfach heute so weg irgendwie. Man setzt sich in die Straßenbahn und dann rülpeln da irgendwelche Jungs rum oder irgendwie Leute sprechen total laut. Das sind nur so Kleinigkeiten, die mir immer auffallen oder im Straßenverkehr, die Leute fahren ohne zu blinken und ich denke immer, eh, die denken alle irgendwie, sie wären die einzigen auf der Welt und hätten immer Recht und mir ist es total wichtig Rücksicht auf andere zu nehmen, wirklich zu sein und so und das macht mich immer so traurig, dass das gar nicht so da ist oft sozusagen. Ich weiß nicht, ob das früher besser war. Das kann ich nicht beurteilen, aber irgendwie habe ich das Gefühl, dass es weniger geworden ist. Also als Gruppe oder Einrichtung ist mir dann die Kirche natürlich auch noch ein bisschen wichtig, wobei ich das eigentlich eher so aus einer gewissen Distanz betrachte. Also ich sehe die Kirche schon als sinkendes Schiff an und mir sind wichtiger eigentlich die Ideale oder die Ideen, die die Kirche transportiert und die müsste man halt retten. Also die Kirche als Institution ist mir nicht so wichtig bis auf den Gedanken, dass man da halt wirklich auch irgendwie so eine Art von Gemeinschaftsideal hat, aber das funktioniert ja auch irgendwie nicht mehr und ich mag einfach irgendwie den Gedanken, mit dem man heute immer als Loser abgestempelt wird. Am schönsten wäre es doch, wenn sich alle mögen und sich alle gleich behandeln und sich alle reflektieren ja, ist aber leider nicht der Fall. Ich glaube, das wäre so das, was mir grad dazu einfällt.

67. I: Und warum sind Ideale so wichtig für dich?

68. N: Ja das ist eine gute Frage. Ich glaube, das resultiert auch so ein bisschen aus meinem

Sicherheitsbedürfnis. Also egal worum es geht, ich fühle mich immer am wohlsten und am sichersten, wenn ich eine klare Vorgabe habe. Ob das jetzt ein Arbeitsauftrag ist, je konkreter der ist, desto genauer und besser kann ich den erfüllen oder ob das jetzt eine Autoritätsperson ist, an der ich mich orientieren kann oder ob das jetzt halt auf wirklich einfach auch ganz allgemeine Ideale sind, von denen ich weiß, das ist, was mir was bedeutet, daran kann ich mich dran orientieren, dann weiß ich auch, wohin ich gehöre. Wenn ich z. B. Leute treffe, die diese Ideale für mich verkörpern, dann weiß ich sofort, das ist jetzt für mich ein Argument, mich zu denen, irgendwie mit denen verbunden zu fühlen. Also deswegen sind Ideale für mich so wichtig, glaube ich.

69. I: Spürst du das, dass dein persönliches Leben einen Sinn hat?

70. N: Ne noch nicht. Also spüren tue ich das nicht. Ich würde es gerne spüren. Aber ich weiß auch nicht, ob das nicht müßig ist sozusagen. Also alle Welt macht sich immer über den Sinn des Lebens Gedanken. Also ich glaube schon die Frage, ob mein eigenes Leben einen Sinn hat, ist viel leichter zu beantworten, als die ob menschliches Leben generell einen Sinn hat, weil für mich selber halt kann ich Antworten finden und kann sagen, ja mein Leben hat einen Sinn, wenn ich die und die Sachen mache und erfülle und ich persönlich leide sehr stark unter dem sogenannten Helfersyndrom, also ich muss immer allen Leuten helfen und alle Leute unterstützen. Wenn irgendjemand Probleme hat, dann will ich dann immer helfen und ja, keine Ahnung, und dann fühle ich mich halt auch, dann macht das alles Sinn, was ich mache. Wenn ich andere dann glücklich machen kann, ob ich jetzt quasi in der Uni über die Flure laufe und den Verwaltungsangestellten irgendwie Kekse vorbeibringe einfach so oder ob ich jetzt irgendwelche Erstsemester unter den Arm klemme und denen die Uni zeige oder, also solche Kleinigkeiten einfach. Da

- habe ich das Gefühl, ja also wenn man auf diese Weise zu funktionieren der Gesellschaft auf eine schöne Art und Weise beiträgt, dann macht mein Leben Sinn und das ist auch mein Anspruch.
71. I: Also ich hätte im Anschluss gefragt, was gibt deinem Leben Sinn und das wäre das.
72. N: Ah ja ok.
73. I: Frage ich noch mal (unv.)
74. N: Ja genau. Also das ist das im Prinzip schon. Dass ich das Gefühl habe anderen Leuten helfen zu können irgendwie und ja, was aber vielleicht auch in Zukunft noch dazu kommt, ist halt wieder die Sache mit den Kindern. Ich hätte schon mal gerne Kinder später und ich sehe das aber auch so als Auftrag an sozusagen, dann diese Kinder zu verantwortungsbewussten Menschen zu erziehen sozusagen, um dann auch durch sie das Funktionieren der Gesellschaft weiter zu ermöglichen und ich glaube, da werde ich sehr viel Sinn draus ziehen sozusagen aus dieser Aufgabe und bisher beschränkte sich natürlich aber darauf, dass ich selber quasi ja durch mein Handeln einfach Leute unterstützen kann oder dazu beitragen kann, dass Sachen funktionieren. Also quasi grenze ich mich da auch teilweise dann auch dadurch von anderen ab. Also z. B. wenn ich mir denke, nicht alle Leute würden jetzt jedem helfen, den sie treffen oder würden jetzt irgendwie so Rücksicht nehmen auf ihre Umwelt und dann denke ich immer, dann versuche ich mich schon hervorzuheben und das verleiht meinem Leben auch einen besonderen Sinn irgendwie und grenzt sich ein bisschen ab.
75. I: Wenn es etwas gäbe, was du an dir oder deinem Leben ändern könntest, was würdest du am liebsten ändern?
76. N: Ja die erste Antwort, die dann im letzten Jahr einmal gegeben habe ist, ich würde BWL studieren, aber das würde mich ja auch nicht glücklich machen. Also letzten Endes würde ich nicht so viel ändern. Ich würde nur gucken, dass ich auch schon zu Schulzeiten, also auch in der Jugend schon viel mehr darüber nachdenke, was ich eigentlich später machen will und das immer im Auge behalte und nicht einfach so vor mich hinstudiere, mit guten Noten und passt schon und, also das würde ich auf jeden Fall ändern, so meinen Blick nach vorne sozusagen. Das würde mir auch sehr helfen, wenn ich das irgendwie geändert hätte. Also dann wäre alles noch ein bisschen besser.
77. I: Aber hättest du dich dann vielleicht für ein anderes Studium wirklich entschieden, wenn du das schon früher gewusst hättest?
78. N: Ja das weiß ich in Wirklichkeit nicht so recht. Also vielleicht hätte ich mich dann doch nicht für diese Bachelor-Master-Geschichte entschieden und jetzt bin ich halt doch auch für den Master hingerblieben und manchmal denke ich auch, oh nein. Also ich persönlich finde das super und das macht mir auch Spaß, aber manchmal denke ich, oh nein, wenn ich mich später irgendwo bewerbe, dann wollen die doch nur sehen, dass ich an fünf verschiedenen Orten studiert habe und so und das habe ich halt nicht. Ich habe das an zwei bis drei Orten studiert und dann denke ich immer, oh nein, eigentlich mache ich es mir viel zu leicht und mache das, was mir gefällt und ich müsste eigentlich viel mehr noch für meinen Lebenslauf sozusagen arbeiten, aber das ist irgendwie, ich bin doch so zufrieden, wie ich bin und eigentlich könnte ich das auch sein, wenn nicht zwischendurch immer wieder diese Angst hochkäme, was wird aus mir später und das versaut mir gerade die Geschichte, aber ob ich es deswegen anders machen würde, weiß ich nicht. Also wahrscheinlich muss ich einfach damit leben, dass ich das mache, was ich will, dass es damit nicht so einfach ist und dass es immer unsicher ist, was später kommt, aber an sich, ne also ich glaube, wenn ich die Chance hätte, richtig viel ändern würde ich dann am Ende doch nicht.
79. I: Gibt es einen Glauben, gibt es Werte oder Verpflichtungen, die dir in deinem Leben

- gerade jetzt besonders wichtig oder bedeutsam sind?
80. N: Ja es gibt da einen ganz weltlichen Glauben daran, dass jeder Mensch in dieser Gesellschaft irgendwie eine Funktion zu erfüllen hat und die auch erfüllen kann. Also jetzt auch konkret auf meine berufliche Zukunft sag ich mal ausgerichtet. Glaube ich momentan einfach ganz doll daran, dass jeder irgendwo seinen Platz findet in der Gesellschaft, wenn er sich anstrengt. Und das gibt mir momentan schon sehr viel Kraft und wenn man jetzt mal das Säkulare beiseite lässt. Eigentlich mein Draht nach oben ist grad wirklich nicht so ausgeprägt. Also dieses Fragezeigen ist einfach da. An was soll ich eigentlich glauben da oben und das beeinflusst mich gerade nicht so stark. Also ich habe mir schon vorgenommen, auch mal wieder mehr mich damit auseinanderzusetzen, aber irgendwie, man ist so hier verstrickt in diesem Ganzen, ganze Fragen mit Studium und was mache ich dann und so, da kommt man irgendwie gar nicht dazu, sich wirklich so mit Glaubenthemen intensiv auseinanderzusetzen, das ist echt so ein bisschen in den Hintergrund gerückt.
81. I: Können ja auch andere Wert oder Verpflichtungen sein, die jetzt nichts mit dem Glauben (unv.)
82. N: Ja das stimmt. Ja klar. Aber das ist im Prinzip wieder das, was ich eben schon gesagt habe. Die Verpflichtung einfach dazu beizutragen, dass die Gesellschaft funktioniert auf einer Weise, die meinem Ideal am nächsten kommt. Also zu helfen und irgendwie verantwortungsbewusst umzugehen mit meinen Aufgaben in der Gesellschaft und so was. Also da fühle ich mich schon sehr verpflichtet und leider fühle ich mich dann aber auch für mich selber parallel auch noch verpflichtet, möglichst gut zu sein und möglichst schnell zu sein und das führt dazu, dass ich immer so permanent sehr gute Noten habe, aber es macht mich auch so ein bisschen kaputt schon und da fängt es dann an kritisch zu werden und wo die Verpflichtungen oder die Überzeugungen, die ich habe, dann ja mich selber einfach angreifen auch und das ist halt leider auch der Fall.
83. I: Wann oder wo hast du am meisten das Gefühl, mit dem Kosmos in Einklang oder Teil eines Ganzen zu sein?
84. N: Ja das ist ganz einfach, nämlich immer, wenn ich draußen in der Natur bin und nichts um mich rum ist. Also wenn ich in den Wald gehe oder wenn ich so durch die Felder laufe oder irgendwie in einem besonders schönen Park bin und so, dann habe ich immer das Gefühl, jetzt bin ich irgendwie am richtigen Ort in diesem Kosmos. Das ist tatsächlich so. Aber das geht auch wirklich nur, eigentlich nur wenn ich draußen bin oder, ja gut, das geht auch, wenn ich drinnen bin und es mir dann gemütlich mache und ein besonders schönes Buch lese oder so. Aber so richtig, dass es dann so ein leicht erhebendes Gefühl ist, das kommt immer nur, wenn ich wirklich in der Natur bin und da irgendwie alles friedlich ist.
85. I: Wie sieht dein Ideal reifen Glaubens aus oder eine reife Antwort auf Fragen mit einer existenziellen Bedeutung?
86. N: Mein Ideal reifen Glaubens?
87. I: Mhm.
88. N: Das heißt quasi, wie mein Glaube idealerweise aussehen müsste? Ja, also ich bin der Meinung dass ein idealer Glaube hinterfragt. Also ein idealer Glaube ist nicht die Gewissheit, dass da jemand anders ist, der meine Dinge schon regelt, sondern ein idealer Glaube ist für mich mehr so eine Art ja kritisches Hinterfragen, so eine Art Dialogbereitschaft mit einem unbekanntem Gesprächspartner sozusagen, wo man weiß, da kann man Kraft draus ziehen und sich auf dieses Wissen auch verlassen kann, wo man aber nicht einfach sozusagen zu viel rein interpretiert. Also ich finde Glauben ist immer so viel verbunden mit reininterpretieren. Die Leute denken sich dann ihren

Gott und denken, der ist so und so und interpretieren da aber so viel rein und das merkt man ja, wenn man sich mal die Geschichte der Religionen anguckt, wie sie einfach auch das, woran sie glauben, instrumentalisieren in Wirklichkeit, um sich Sachen zu erklären und das war ja schon in der Antike so und immer eigentlich und ich finde, also ein reifer Glaube müsste das irgendwie überwinden. So, und deswegen muss halt ein reifer Glaube oder ein idealer Glaube auch nicht sich so sehr auf ein spezielles, meinetwegen personell oder auch nicht personell gedachtes Wesen irgendwie richten, sondern Glaube hat für mich halt auch viel mit, na ja bestimmten Überzeugungen zu tun, die aber auch wieder verbunden sind mit irgendeiner höheren Macht oder so, aber vor allen Dingen auch mit den Handlungen, die daraus resultieren. Also Glaube ist für mich nie nur irgendwie „ich glaube jetzt an den lieben Gott“ oder so, sondern Glaube ist für mich, ich habe die und die Überzeugung und es gibt da was, woran ich glaube, dass es irgendwie unsere Welt zusammenhält und ich persönlich habe aber auch in Verbindung damit den Auftrag dafür zu sorgen, dass es hier auf dieser Welt funktioniert und deswegen handle ich entsprechend. Ja.

89. I: Wenn du eine wichtige Entscheidung zu treffen hast, wie gehst du dann gewöhnlich vor?
90. N: Ja ich hasse Entscheidungen treffen. Das kann ich nicht so gut. Ich brauche da auch immer recht lange für. Ja meistens versuche ich halt einfach nach dem Ausschlussverfahren irgendwie zu gucken, was bleibt am Ende über, also welche Optionen kommen da nicht in Frage und welche steht am Ende und manchmal kommt es aber vor, dass dann zwei Optionen stehen bleiben und ich dann mich nicht entscheiden kann und dann mache ich es meistens ganz schnell aus dem Bauch raus und nehme einfach einen davon und dann ist es gut. Aber ja, also viele Entscheidungen treffe ich auch, also auch die Entscheidung, wieder nach [Stadt B] zurückzugehen im Studium, das war ja ganz klar einfach weniger rational als emotional. Also ich hatte auch rationale Gründe, dann aus [Stadt A] wegzugehen, aber es hat mich dann so stark nach [Stadt B] gezogen, nur aufgrund der Beziehung auch vor allen Dingen und dann hat sich der Rest dann auch so ergeben. Dann merke ich halt schon, dass ich sehr stark auch mich dann von Emotionen leiten lasse, wenn ich Entscheidungen treffe.
91. I: Und kannst du mir ein Beispiel nennen, vielleicht noch ein anderes, außer die mit dem Umzug.
92. N: Ja also ich kann natürlich auch ganz weltliche Beispiele nennen. Zum Beispiel, wenn ich mir im Internet eine schöne Ledertasche angeguckt habe und die möchte ich jetzt unbedingt haben. Aber eigentlich habe ich gerade kein Geld dafür und dann habe ich auch noch schöne Schuhe gesehen, die genau dazu passen und die ich jetzt auch unbedingt haben muss, weil die auch so schön sind, ja dann sitze ich tagelang rum, gucke jeden Tag im Internet nach ob die Tasche noch da ist, guck sie mir an, finde sie schön, guck mir auch die Schuhe an und ja, das sind aber so Entscheidungen, dann überlege ich immer Für und Wider und das ist aber auch so ein Beispiel dafür, dass ich dann aus dem Bauch raus einfach mal sage, jetzt klick und bestellen und dann ist auch egal und das wäre so ein anderes Beispiel.
93. I: Und wenn du ein besonderes schwieriges Lebensproblem lösen musst, an wem oder woran würdest du dich orientieren?
94. N: Ein Lebensproblem. Ja da habe ich ja momentan genug von. Da habe ich immer verschiedene Anlaufstellen. Also einerseits versuche ich natürlich immer sehr viel mit meinen engsten Freunden oder auch Verwandten darüber zu sprechen, aber andererseits habe ich da auch jetzt gerade im letzten Jahr so eine sehr pragmatische Ader entwickelt und laufe einfach überall hin, wo ich glaube, dass die Leute kompetent sind

- mir zu helfen. Also wenn ich jetzt mir Gedanken über meine berufliche Zukunft mache, dann gehe ich sofort ins Arbeitsamt und da kann auch mein Freund mir so viel erzählen wie er will, ich glaube ihm das nicht, ich glaube das nur dem Typ vom Arbeitsamt. Also wenn mein Freund mir sagt, aber mach dir doch keine Sorgen, du bis doch gut und es wird schon alles werden, dann glaube ich ihm das nicht. Wenn der vom Arbeitsamt das sagt, dann glaube ich ihm das. Das heißt also, ich suche mir immer Leute, die ich für kompetent halte, quasi für die sachlichen Probleme sozusagen und so für das Drumrum, Trösten und so, dann greife ich dann schon eher auf meine Freunde und Verwandten zurück. Manchmal hilft es mir aber auch, wenn ich einfach ein gutes Buch lese oder so, das tröstet mich manchmal auch, weil ich dann das Gefühl habe, es gibt auch irgendwie, wenn auch objektive, aber andere Probleme, die noch viel schlimmer sind als meine und so und dann habe ich immer das Gefühl, das tröstet mich auch ein bisschen. Dass ich dann wieder merke, das sind doch alles nur Peanuts hier bei mir, auch wenn es mir immer so groß vorkommt.
95. I: Glaubst du, dass Handlungen eindeutig richtig oder falsch sein können, falls das so ist, wann ist eine Handlung richtig?
96. N: Ja, ich glaube, dass sich natürlich viele Sachen sich in der Grauzone bewegen, dass man nicht immer nur sagen kann, es ist richtig oder falsch, aber ich glaube trotzdem, dass es Handlungen gibt, die eindeutig richtig oder falsch sind. Handlungen sind eindeutig richtig, wenn sie für alle betroffenen Personen, also mich selbst und auch die anderen Betroffenen positive Veränderungen bewirken und Handlungen sind eindeutig falsch, wenn sie für mich und alle anderen Betroffenen eindeutig nur negative Veränderungen bewirken. Also so könnte man das glaube ich thematisieren. Ja.
97. I: Und gibt es Handlungen oder Handlungsweisen, die grundsätzlich richtig sind unabhängig von irgendwelchen Umständen?
98. N: Grundsätzlich richtig?
99. I: Grundsätzlich.
100. N: Unabhängig, da muss ich jetzt überlegen, ob ich die Frage verstanden habe. Also im Prinzip wiederholt sich jetzt ja ein bisschen das, was eben war. Also Handlungsweisen sind grundsätzlich richtig, wenn sie quasi das Umfeld berücksichtigen und Mitmenschen berücksichtigen und Handlungsweisen sind dann grundsätzlich falsch, wenn sie ja ohne Verantwortungsgefühl einfach passieren. Also es gibt natürlich viele Beispiele. Einfach eine Interaktion zwischen Menschen, einfach sind Handlungen grundsätzlich falsch, wenn sie nur anderen Schaden zufügen oder also sogar zufügen wollen, aber wenn ich mir jetzt so den Fabrikbesitzer irgendwie vorstelle, der auch dafür sorgt, dass Giftfässer in den nächsten Fluss gekippt werden, das ist halt auch grundsätzlich falsch, weil das ohne Verantwortungsbewusstsein passiert. Ja.
101. I: Gibt es moralische Grundsätze, über die wir uns alle einig sein sollten?
102. N: Ja natürlich. Also, da gibt es ja immer noch den kategorischen Imperativ, den finde ich einfach sehr wichtig irgendwie und auch also dieses Ziel eigentlich, dass die Menschen ja, was ja nie passieren wird, dass sie lernen, sich alle gegenseitig so zu respektieren, dass sie sich nur das gegenseitig antun, was sie sich selber auch tun würden. Also das wird ja nicht erreicht werden, weil das erfordert ja eine Menge Respekt, die man allen Menschen entgegenbringt, das schafft ja keiner, alle Menschen so zu respektieren. Ich finde, darüber sollte man sich dann schon einig sein und ja das biblische Liebesgebot, das ist halt, ja wird ja auch immer viel genannt, aber das finde ich halt schon schwierig. Also ich fühle mich jetzt gerade so ein bisschen unter so einem Rechtfertigungsdruck, wenn ich mir schon so viel mit christlichen

Gedanken mache oder mich auseinandersetze oder auch mit der Kirche und mit dem Theologiestudium, dann muss man das ja auch so ein bisschen erklären oder finde ich jedenfalls, warum man das nicht nennt. Ich nenne das deshalb nicht, weil ja seinen Nächsten lieben wie sich selbst, das ist nicht realisierbar, wenn die Leute sich nicht mal selbst lieben, nicht mehr auf die ideale Art und Weise und wenn ich mir die heutige Gesellschaft angucke, dann ist das einfach nicht realisierbar und es wäre natürlich ein schönes Wunschdenken und man könnte auch sagen, ja eigentlich sollten sie sich schon darüber einig sein, aber ich glaube einfach, das funktioniert nicht. Man müsste das rationaler angehen, einfach nur zu sagen, liebt euch alle, das wird nicht gehen. Man müsste sagen, ja respektiert euch alle und zwar ganz bewusst und dann guckt mal, wie ihr euch gegenseitig wirklich auch voller Respekt behandeln würdet und das müsste funktionieren.

103. I: Und das wäre leichter zu erfüllen?
104. N: Ja das wäre leichter zu erfüllen. Das, finde ich, ist eigentlich das Minimum, was quasi erfüllt sein müsste, aber es ist ja trotzdem sehr schwer zu erfüllen. Was man quasi jetzt an Grundsätzen könnte, ist glaube ich alles schwer zu erfüllen.
105. I: Aber die Frage war ja, ob du der Meinung bist, dass es so was geben sollte (unv.)
106. N: Ach so, natürlich auf jeden Fall, würde vieles einfacher machen.
107. I: Glaubst du, dass unser Leben als Menschen einen Sinn hat (unv.)?
108. N: Ah jetzt kommt die schwierige Frage von der anderen Seite. Also wie man es dreht und wendet, also da finde ich keine Antwort drauf. Also ich weiß es nicht, ehrlich gesagt. Also manchmal glaube ich schon, aber dann wieder glaube ich, wir haben doch überhaupt keine Ahnung. Also das kommt ja so auf die Perspektive an. Also jetzt mal ganz überspitzt gesprochen, die ja, ich weiß nicht, bedrohten Tierarten auf dieser Welt, die finden vielleicht, dass es keinen Sinn hat, dass wir Menschen da sind, so. (unv.) hat eine sehr große Tragweite, dass Menschen da sind, aber es hat einfach keinen Sinn oder hat einen reinen negativen Sinn. Die Außerirdischen auf einem Planeten 100 Millionen Lichtjahre weg, die merken gar nicht, dass wir da sind, denen ist es egal. Also im Prinzip muss man dann diese Frage selber beantworten und es gibt einfach keine objektive Meinung dazu, denn alles, was wir Menschen uns überlegen, ist halt subjektiv. Ne ich persönlich weiß es einfach nicht. Das ist einfach, weil ich zu sehr von der Frage komme, ist das, was wir machen, gut oder schlecht. Also das ist eigentlich mein Bewertungskriterien, was für Folgen hat das, dass wir hier sind und ich finde es hat sowohl gute als auch sehr viele schlechte Folgen halt. Ja.
109. I: Und wird unser Leben von höheren Mächten beeinflusst oder gar nach einem Plan gelenkt?
110. N: Frage 1 Ja, Frage 2 Nein. Höhere Mächte deshalb, weil ich der Meinung bin, dass es schon Kräfte gibt und seien es halt irgendwelche Natur, also Kräfte der Natur oder irgendwas, was wir einfach nicht erfassen können, was aber trotzdem da ist und uns irgendwie beeinflusst oder bestimmt oder unser Leben bestimmt, unser Denken bestimmt. Es werden dauernd auch naturwissenschaftlich neue Erkenntnisse gewonnen und dann wird alles wieder auf Null gesetzt und so und man merkt doch daran, es gibt keine Grenze dessen, was wir erkennen, also nicht erkennen können so. Es gibt immer noch was, was wir nicht erkennen können und ich glaube auf jeden Fall, dass da irgendwas ist, was uns irgendwie beeinflusst. Ich glaube aber nicht, dass das nach einem festen Plan passiert. Das hängt mir zu sehr mit diesem personellen Gottesbild zusammen, wo man dann denkt, da sitzt einer und schreibt in sein großes goldenes Buch, was wir alles so machen und was wir als nächstes machen sollen und das glaube ich einfach nicht. Also ja

vielleicht (unv.) wenn Plan, dann irgendwie welche Naturgesetze auch oder so. Aber ich glaube eigentlich nicht, dass es wirklich so ein ganz konkreter Plan wäre, weil ich auch denke, dass die Menschen da viel zu sehr für sich selber handeln und nach eigenen Interessen handeln und ich glaube nicht, dass das alles so vorgegeben ist. Man kann natürlich jetzt die Kette wieder weiterspinnen und sagen, ja aber diese Naturgesetze, die kommen ja von diesem höheren Wesen, was die Naturgesetze geschaffen hat, damit sie uns beeinflussen, also das ist natürlich auch möglich. Das kann ich natürlich nicht beurteilen.

111. I: Was denkst du über den Tod?
112. N: Ja, wird bestimmt eine interessante Erfahrung. Ich finde eigentlich nicht, dass, wobei ich habe jetzt gut reden, weil ich habe momentan in meinem näheren Umfeld niemanden, der gerade gestorben ist oder so, aber ich finde irgendwie, der Tod ist jetzt nicht so eine absolute Grenze. Der Tod nimmt mir natürlich meine Leute, wenn sie sterben und mich selber natürlich dann auch und das finde ich sehr, das ist ja schon eine sehr traurige Sache. Aber ich glaube schon, jemand stirbt ja erst richtig, wenn er vergessen wurde sozusagen und ich glaube ja, man kann den Tod natürlich nicht austricksen, aber er verliert so das Schreckliche irgendwie. Also ich finde, was ich schrecklich finde, ist den Vorgang des Sterbens. Also ich habe total Angst zu sterben, aber ich habe keine Angst vor dem Tod, weil das ist ja jetzt ein Übergang und man weiß ja nicht, was nachher kommt und ich habe da selber auch kein direktes Urteil, was nach dem Tod kommt. Aber irgendwie ist es auch spannend. Also ich glaube auch, das Ideal ist ja, dass man irgendwann alles im Leben glatt, sozusagen stirbt und sagt, jetzt ist es auch in Ordnung zu gehen und ich hoffe natürlich, dass ich dann da auch mal irgendwann hinkomme und so weit komme auch und dann fände ich es aber auch irgendwie sehr spannend. Aber ich glaube im Moment des Sterbens halt jetzt mehr auch wieder mit einer großen Panik verbunden, weil man dann weiß, dass der Abschied jetzt endgültig ist und das finde ich sehr schlimm in Gedanken. Ja.
113. I: Was passiert mit uns, wenn wir sterben?
114. N: Ja gibt es ja viele Synonyme für. Das Naheliegendste ist für mich immer, das Licht geht aus. Also man ist dann irgendwie, aber ich weiß gar nicht, es ist dann alles dunkel und man nimmt nichts mehr wahr und dann, also im schlimmsten Fall war es das wirklich oder man geht dann irgendwo drin auf und ja man kann es jetzt natürlich Seele nennen, aber irgendwas von einem, irgendeine Essenz von einem bleibt irgendwie da oder so. Also so stelle ich mir das schon irgendwie vor und geht halt wieder zurück. Also dann bin ich wieder bei diesem, ich weiß nicht ob das zu diesem pantheistischen Weltbild gehört, aber das man dann wieder zurück in die Erde geht und in die Natur geht und dann irgendwie als solches Teil davon bleibt und man geht irgendwie ein Stückweit wieder in den Zustand in dem man war, bevor man geboren wurde. Das ist immer so meine Vorstellung. Dass das Leben so eine kurze Phase ist, wo man einfach Sachen wahrnehmen darf und sich bewegen darf und handeln darf und dann geht man wieder in diesen Ausgangszustand zurück hinterher.
115. I: Und passiert dann noch etwas oder bleibt man dann in diesem Ausgangszustand, in dem man zurückgekehrt ist?
116. N: Also ich glaube schon, dass man dann da bleibt in diesem Zustand. Also ich glaube jetzt einfach nicht so, irgendwann kommt dann hier Jesus Christus wieder und dann stehen wir alle auf oder so was. Das glaube ich tatsächlich einfach mal nicht.
117. I: Hältst du dich für religiös, spirituell oder gläubig?
118. N: Ja also gläubig nicht richtig, also in dem Sinne, dass ich eben noch nicht meinen idealen Glauben gefunden habe. Ich bin wohl auf der Suche danach, aber wenn ich

dann quasi diesen Glauben gefunden habe, dann würde ich es wahrscheinlich gläubig nennen und andere würden mich nicht gläubig nennen. Also weil mein Glauben ja sehr sehr kritisch ist und sich nicht einfach auf irgendeinen Gott bezieht, der dann da ist für mich sozusagen, das ja nicht. Also ich glaube tatsächlich, ich bin irgendwo in der Mitte zwischen diesen drei Begriffen. Also ich habe zu viel Bodenhaftung um spirituell zu sein. Also ich kann mich jetzt auch nicht so fallen lassen und spirituelle Gedanken und so. Das kann ich irgendwie nicht. Ich kann auch nicht gut, ich müsste es mal probieren beim Meditieren oder so, das kann ich nicht so gut. Ja ich übe nicht genug sozusagen irgendwie Glaubenspraktiken aus um religiös zu sein und ich habe auch noch nicht genug die Überzeugung, ich hätte jetzt einen Glauben gefunden um gläubig zu sein. Also es ist irgendwie ein bisschen von allen drei Aspekten.

119. I: Oder würdest du eine ganz andere Beschreibung für dich finden?
120. N: Ich bin suchend.
121. I: Suchend.
122. N: Aber mit Aspekten von all diesen Dingen sozusagen. Also ich bin schon sehr aufgeschlossen gegenüber dem, was da eventuell noch jenseits unserer Vorstellungskraft ist oder Sachen angestoßen hat, die uns erschaffen haben oder was weiß ich. Aber ich kann mich da nicht auf eins von den drei festlegen.
123. I: Und was bedeuten die jeweils für dich, also du hast eben angedeutet mit religiös z. B. das du zu wenig (unv.)
124. N: Also Religiosität hat für mich halt immer sehr viel mit Ausübung von Glauben zu tun, deswegen hängen gläubig und religiös für mich halt sehr stark zusammen und Religiosität drückt sich darin aus, dass man quasi bestimmte Rituale vollzieht, die einen bestimmten Glauben innerhalb einer bestimmten Form vorschreibt, z. B. das simpelste wäre beten oder in die Kirche gehen. Jetzt bin ich nicht katholisch, aber bei Katholiken gibt es da noch eine Runde mehr von solchen Sachen, die an irgendwelchen Prozessionen teilnehmen, beichten gehen und so, das nicht. Ja jetzt habe ich den Faden verloren.
125. I: Du hast gerade erklärt, was religiös für dich ist
126. N: Ach so ja genau.
127. I: Also diese (unv.)
128. N: Ja das war im Prinzip zum Thema religiös. Also das ist schon für mich verbunden. Religiosität ist halt auch dann das Handeln sozusagen. Aber auch das Handeln nach bestimmten Maßgaben, die der Glaube oder das, woran man glaubt, dann vorschreibt. Ja und Glauben habe ich ja im Prinzip auch schon erklärt, was das für mich bedeutet, auch viel mit Hinterfragen und auch mit Verantwortungsbewusstsein gegenüber dem, woran man glaubt sozusagen und spirituell sein, ja das hat für mich viel zu tun mit meiner Beziehung zur Umwelt und zur Natur und zum Kosmos und damit, dass man da bestimmte Grenzen versucht aufzulösen. Also eben kam so eine Frage, wann fühlst du dich eins mit dem Kosmos und so, also das ist für mich so Spiritualität, dass man sich zum Kosmos oder zur Welt irgendwie anders neu in Beziehung setzt sozusagen durch Meditation und durch neue Erkenntnisse, die man dann gewinnt. Also es hat auch wieder mit Handeln zu tun oder mit bestimmten Aktionen, die man dann vollzieht, aber es hat auch sehr viel so Geistiges irgendwie.
129. I: Gibt es religiöse, spirituelle oder andere Vorstellungen, Symbole oder Rituale, die dir wichtig sind oder wichtig gewesen sind?
130. N: Ja das ist ja das Singen. Ich finde religiöse Rituale sehr wichtig, auch wenn ich jetzt ja nicht unbedingt so diesen kirchlichen Glauben übernommen habe, aber ich finde so ein Ritual der Taufe sehr wichtig z. B. und auch möchte ich gerne kirchlich heiraten später mal und ich finde es einfach tatsächlich wichtig, dann wenn halt bestimmte Gläubige irgendwie zusammenkommen und dann zusammen ihren Glauben

- einfach auch feiern und ausüben und da habe ich schon ein Faible für, das stimmt, das tatsächlich. Also obwohl das eigentlich gar nicht so mein Hauptanliegen ist, also mit der Kirche und so wie gesagt. Also mein Gottesbild usw. das ist ja sehr losgelöst vom Christentum, aber ich finde es auch toll wenn die Leute in die Moschee gehen und da beten, das finde ich wahn-sinnig toll, das hat für mich irgendwie echt so eine Kraft irgendwie.
131. I: Und darum ist dir das so wichtig?
132. N: Ja. Also schon, genau. Man hat irgendwie das Gefühl, dann merkt man halt wieder, was so ein Glauben bewirken kann. Also so oft fragt man sich eigentlich auch, was für einen Sinn hat das Ganze mit diesem Glauben und so und ja, wenn es einfach immer so abstrakt bliebe und dann wird es aber konkret irgendwie, auch wenn ja davon auch nicht wirklich viel passiert, wenn einfach Leute zusammenkommen und beten oder so. Aber der Moment für sich hat irgendwie so eine Kraft und das mag ich an diesen Ritualen so. Das ist auch schon, was vor hundert Jahren gemacht wurde und immer wieder gemacht wird und jetzt so als kritisch denkender Mensch denke ich mir, och ja wie langweilig sind denn diese Gottesdienste, die immer nach Schema F ablaufen. Aber andererseits hat es irgendwie auch was, so, und ich mag immer Dinge, die mein Leben strukturieren und habe ich eben ja auch angedeutet, die mir Sicherheit geben und so, deswegen mag ich auch Ideale so gerne. So, wenn ich nur so Feste oder Riten, also ich gehe jetzt nicht übermäßig oft in die Kirche, aber ich respektiere das in jeder Religion, wenn da irgendwelche Riten stattfinden oder ausgeübt werden und so und das ist gar nicht mal wirklich nur auf das Christentum bezogen. Also ich finde das generell einfach ganz toll und auch ganz wichtig.
133. I: Und wie siehst du das mit Symbolen oder anderen Vorstellungen? Gibt es da etwas, was dir wichtig ist oder früher mal?
134. N: Ja Symbole, also ich muss schon sagen, dass mir das ja durch meinen christlichen Glauben so ein bisschen versaut wurde, weil dieses Kreuz ist einfach kein schönes Symbol. Also dass da ein, ne also diese Geschichte mit Jesus, der am Kreuz gestorben ist und das ist jetzt einfach das Symbol. Das hat für mich immer so einen bitteren Beigeschmack irgendwie gehabt. Da bin ich einfach viel zu sehr Ästhet. Was mich dann eher ansprechen würde, sind dann irgendwelche, ja ich weiß gar nicht, was gibt es denn für Symbole. Also irgendwelche Monde oder irgendwelche arabische Schriftzeichen oder so, die dann was, also da gibt es ja auch diese arabische Kalligraphien usw. Das ist ja auch für Muslime sehr wichtig und so was würde mich jetzt eigentlich eher ansprechen z. B., als so ein Kreuz. Aber ja generell spricht mich so was jetzt auch nicht, also ich identifiziere mich jetzt nicht mit dem Kreuz oder mit irgendwelchen anderen Symbolen. Das ist jetzt für mich nicht so, dass da die Identifikation sehr groß wäre.
135. I: Betest du, meditierst du oder tust du auf anderer Art etwas für deine Spiritualität?
136. N: Beten manchmal, aber sehr selten. Wenn ich gerade das Gefühl hab, vielleicht bringt es ja was, aber das kommt wirklich alle nur drei Jahre ungefähr vor und ich komme mir dann auch immer komisch dabei vor. Meditieren eigentlich auch nicht. Was ich halt an mir erlebe, dass ich furchtbar verträumt bin und auch sehr schnell abgelenkt bin und auch Schwierigkeiten habe, mich zu konzentrieren und dass ich oft dann in so einen Zustand gehe irgendwie, wo ich nichts denke und gleichzeitig aber an alles denke und hinterher weiß ich gar nicht mehr, wo ich eigentlich gerade bin und das hat schon was mit Spiritualität für mich zu tun. Ich habe ja eben auch gesagt, dass Spiritualität für mich auch halt Grenzen aufzulösen zwischen sich und allem andern und das passiert in diesem Zustand am ehesten und das mache ich nicht bewusst oder gezielt als

- Aktion um jetzt was für meine Spiritualität zu tun, aber das ist ein ganz natürlicher, ja Bestandteil meines Lebens und meines Alltags. Ja.
137. I: Und mit dem Singkreis zum Beispiel, hättest du das da auch zugeordnet?
138. N: Ja total. Also das ist wirklich was Besonderes, wenn man dann da steht und dann singt man zusammen, weil einfach, also zusammen so schöne Musik zu singen und das Glück an dem Singkreis ist, dass da alle gut singen können. Also ich meine, es ist echt nicht vergleichbar mit irgendwelchen schreibbeligen Kirchenchören oder so, sondern die können wirklich alle sehr gut singen und wenn dann so ein Chor von überwiegend Leuten in meinem Alter zusammensteht und wirklich gut singen kann, dann klingt das einfach toll und dann also, eigentlich sage ich dann immer, das bringt ordentlich Glückshormone, aber in Wirklichkeit, also manchmal habe ich auch da so das Gefühl, jetzt geht es irgendwie alles ineinander auf. Vor allem wenn man dann irgendwie einen Ausflug macht und dann kommt man an einer großen Kirche vorbei und dann geht man rein und guckt sie sich an und am Ende stellen sich alle vorne hin und singen dann zusammen. Das ist immer echt, das ist wirklich toll. Also das geht schon auch sehr in Richtung Spiritualität.
139. I: Sonst noch irgendeine Ergänzung zu der Frage?
140. N: Also zum Thema beten, meditieren. Ne also das ist eigentlich, also es gibt schon so Momente, wie also im Singkreis, das ist schon ganz richtig, wo ich dann das Gefühl habe, das passiert von selber und es ist aber auch so, dass ich ja eben durch meine verträumte Art oft in so einem Zustand gerate, der vielleicht so ähnlich ist wie meditieren und das passiert aber auch von selber. Also es ist nichts, was ich gezielt tue. Aber ich begrüße es sehr als Bestandteil meines Lebens und freue mich dann immer, weil das auch schöne Erlebnisse dann sind.
141. I: Was ist Sünde?
142. N: Sünde ist ein ganz böser Begriff.
143. I: Was verstehst du darunter?
144. N: Sünde setzt für mich voraus, dass es jemanden gibt, der das hinterher beurteilt oder bewertet. Eigentlich gibt es deshalb so was wie Sünde für mich nicht. Man kann natürlich sagen, es gibt schon bestimmte Arten von Sünden auf dieser Welt. Für mich ist der Maßstab aber immer, was sind die Folgen für andere Mitmenschen und für die Umwelt. Also Umweltsünder z. B., das ist für mich so ein wichtiger Begriff oder ich weiß nicht, ob es den Begriff Sozialsünder gibt, aber so Leute, die halt auf Lasten anderer irgendwie ja existieren oder irgendwie Reichtum anhäufen und dabei aber verantwortungslos sind. Also ich will damit nicht sagen, dass ich finde, dass jeder, der irgendwie reich ist, so und so viel Prozent seines Vermögens für Arme abgeben muss oder so. Aber ich finde, wenn es Sünde gibt und eigentlich lehne ich den Begriff aber total ab, dann muss man sie messen an der Verantwortung gegenüber seinen Mitmenschen und seiner Umwelt.
145. I: Wie erklärst du das Böse in der Welt?
146. N: Das Böse in der Welt, das ist ganz normal. Das Böse in der Welt ist ja, da liegt ja wieder eine Kategorisierung zugrunde in Gut und Böse und dann muss man sich natürlich die Frage stellen, wer hat eigentlich diese Begriffe erfunden, die gab es ja irgendwie immer schon und gut war immer das, was niemandem geschadet hat und böse war, was vielen geschadet hat oder wenigen, aber jedenfalls geschadet hat und ich meine, das Böse existiert solange in der Welt, wie es Menschen gibt, die verschiedene Interessen haben, also immer, weil ich glaube, dass viel Böses in die Welt kommt dadurch, dass einfach Interessen sich widersprechen und der eine sein Interesse dann durchsetzt auf Kosten anderer und das wird nicht aufhören.
147. I: Mhm. Also das Böse wären dann immer Konflikte zwischen Menschen (unv.)
148. N: Ja genau. Das Böse sind Konflikte zwischen Menschen. Das Böse ist aber

auch, wenn halt wirklich ein Mensch sagt, ich will jetzt hier meinen Staudamm bauen und Geld scheffeln, deswegen überflute ich jetzt einfach diese Dörfer hier alle. So und das ist für mich irgendwie auch böse, weil dann einer, der einfach auch die Macht dazu hat, nämlich das Geld sozusagen und da seinen Staudamm dahin bauen kann und dann die ganzen Dörfler, die werden dann da verjagt und müssen dann gucken, wo sie bleiben und so. Also und so was ist für mich dann halt auch böse und so was hat es ja schon immer gegeben. Also Böse gehört für mich zum Menschen eigentlich dazu. Ja.

149. I: Wenn Menschen über weltanschauliche oder religiöse Fragen nicht einig sind, wie können solche Konflikte gelöst werden?
150. N: Oh das ist ganz schwierig. Wenn das möglich wäre, dann hätte es ja vielleicht sogar schon funktioniert. Es gibt ja auch manchmal Fortschritte. Ich finde immer, man muss gucken, dass man eine gemeinsame Grundlage findet, wie klein die auch sein mag und von der muss man ausgehen. Also bei den Weltreligionen z. B., da funktioniert das ja noch halbwegs, wenn man dann sagt, es gibt bestimmte Grundlagen, die für alle Religionen gelten, sei es sozusagen die Verwurzelungen in so Urvätern wie Abraham oder so, sei es aber auch, dass man merkt, dass man merkt dass man gleiche ethische Grundsätze hat und das kann halt, das ist noch relativ leicht. Das ist dann natürlich sehr schwierig von dieser gemeinsamen Grundlage aus dann eine Lösung für solche, ja Konflikte zu finden oder so, das ist sehr schwer, aber es muss immer von diesen Grundlagen ausgehen, von diesen Gemeinsamkeiten und wenn es nicht von den gemeinsamen Grundlagen ausgehen kann, dann muss es von den gemeinsamen Zielen ausgehen.
151. I: Mhm.
152. N: Aber ich glaube, man kriegt Leute wirklich nur und ich habe ja eine Meditationsausbildung gemacht, da haben wir viel über so Konflikte und so gesprochen, man

kriegt die Leute manchmal wirklich nur an einen Tisch, wenn man ihnen klar macht, dass ihre Ziele die gleichen sind oder dass ihre Grundlagen die gleichen sind, sonst funktioniert das nicht.

153. I: Ja die letzte Frage, möchtest du einfach noch irgendwas noch ergänzen?
154. N: Jetzt habe ich schon so viel erzählt. Also so spontan fällt mir jetzt gar nichts zu ergänzen ein. Also wenn du mir jetzt die Fragen noch mal stellen würdest, dann würde ich vielleicht ganz anders antworten oder so, das weiß ich nicht. Aber es ist jetzt nicht so, dass mir jetzt noch was unter den Nägeln brennt, wo ich denke, das habe ich eben vergessen, das müsste ich jetzt noch sagen.
155. I: Genau, das wollte ich einfach noch mal (unv.)
156. N: Ne genau, eigentlich habe ich dann soweit alles gesagt.
157. I: Ok, dann bedanke ich mich bei dir.
158. N: Ja gerne.

B.7 Faith Development Interview with Marion N.

1. I: Wenn Sie über Ihr Leben nachdenken, können Sie es in unterschiedliche Abschnitte einteilen?
2. N: Ja.
3. I: Angenommen es wäre ein Buch, welche Kapitel müsste es enthalten?
4. N: Kindheit, Jugend, dann kommt ein Kapitel mit meiner Persönlichkeit – fremd sozusagen und dann kommt das Altern wieder zu mir persönlich zurück. Ja.
5. I: Ok. Was verstehen Sie darunter, unter Persönlichkeit fremd?
6. N: Also, als Kind war ich mir nah. Als Jugendliche auf eine gewisse Weise auch und dann wurde ich dieser [Marion], also mein Leben nahm andere, völlig andere Bahnen, die mit dem, was ich eigentlich im Leben bin, nichts mehr, fast nichts mehr zu tun hatte. Ja so, ist das klarer?

7. I: Ja, es ist noch relativ abstrakt, aber es kommen ja noch viele Fragen. Welche Ereignisse sind dabei rückblickend besonders bedeutsam für Sie?
8. N: Ja im Hinblick auf Spiritualität dann oder ganz allgemein, was nur mit mir zu tun hat?
9. I: Was Sie als besonders bedeutsam sehen also.
10. N: Also, was für mich bedeutsam ist, dass ich immer ein kreativer hochsensibler Mensch war und zu meiner Zeit, als ich Kind war, war das eher störend, also die Menschen oder die Erwachsenen konnten kaum damit umgehen und darum finde ich das wichtig, dass ich mir einen Raum geschaffen habe, also einen sozusagen nicht virtuellen, aber einen eigenen Raum geschaffen habe, in dem ich dann zu Hause war sozusagen. Das finde ich bedeutsam. Äußere Ereignisse, also ich bin aufgewachsen in einem sehr kleinbürgerlichen Haus. Wenn ich das mit wenig Emotionen erzähle, liegt das nicht daran, dass ich da was zurückhalte, also dazu sind Gefühle da durchaus, aber die sind nicht mehr relevant. Also ich habe die therapeutisch und in meinem Leben verarbeitet, u. a. eben auch spirituell, deswegen kann ich das auch, ich muss das hoch holen, das ist nicht mehr in mir präsent in dem Sinne. Ich habe dann ne... Ich bin zum Gymnasium gegangen, habe aber abgebrochen dann in der 10. Klasse, weil mich Jungs und solche Dinge mehr interessierten und ich dann einfach nicht gelernt habe und das wäre sicher nötig gewesen und dann habe ich mit 18 geheiratet und zwei Kinder gehabt, also habe ich immer noch, allerdings sind sie ja jetzt sehr erwachsen und dann habe ich mit den beiden Kindern und der Unterstützung meiner Eltern studiert, Pädagogik, und dann war ich Lehrerin viele Jahre. Jetzt komme ich zu den Einschnitten, die gravierend waren auch in Richtung persönlicher Erweiterung sozusagen. Ich wusste, dass ich immer so irgendwie mit Ehe und Familie, ich wusste nicht, dass das nicht mein Ding ist. Ich bin da ja reingerutscht. Aus heutiger Sicht würde ich das, wäre ich wahrscheinlich, verheiratet weiß ich nicht, aber ich hätte vermutlich keine Kinder, nicht weil ich Kinder nicht mag, sondern weil ich merke, dass ich andere Lebensaufgaben habe und so. Und ein ganz entscheidender Einschnitt war, dass mein jüngerer Sohn mit 18 ungefähr, 19, an [einer schweren psychischen Krankheit] erkrankte und da ist mir klar geworden, dass irgendwas in unserem System Familie nicht stimmt, also sowohl mit den in Herkunftsfamilien, ich benutze da manchmal psychologische Begriffe, das ist ok, ne?
11. I: Ja, das ist in Ordnung.
12. N: Dass dieses System nicht funktionierte, da habe ich erkannt, dass ich sehr symbiotisch verbunden war mit meiner Mutter und dass das auch einen großen Teil dieser Fremdbestimmung ausmachte und wenn man heute nach den Erkenntnissen der Hirnforschung und diese Dinge so weitergeht, dann ist da ja auch ein Anteil, ein erblicher Anteil, das verstärkt sich ja immer mehr. Zu damaliger Zeit war es so, dass die Mütter schuld waren. Den Müttern war nicht gelungen eine Beziehung zu dem Kind herzustellen, so. So wurde man dann, wurde ich auch –ich bleibe mal bei mir –mit anderen in der, von jungen Ärzten in der Psychiatrie oder so behandelt in dieser Art: Sie haben es nicht hingekriegt ihr Kind anständig groß zu kriegen oder so was in der Art und das hat mich nachhaltig beschäftigt. Ich habe immer schon viel gelesen, aber da habe ich das erste Mal wirklich angefangen mich mit Schuld, mit Sühne, mit all diesen, was ist Sein, was ist Mensch sein überhaupt, in welche Tiefen, in welchen Höhen, da hat die, also vorher habe ich immer, hat mich das immer interessiert. Ich war immer ein neugieriger Mensch und bin auch ein neugieriges Kind geblieben. Wie Sie ja schon, sonst hätte ich das ja gar nicht gemacht. Natürlich

- befriedigt das auch einen gewissen narzisstischen Anteil, das ist ja klar. Also es ist wirklich mein tiefstes Anliegen mich zu entwickeln oder war vorher eher unbewusst und dann bewusst auf die Suche zu gehen.
13. I: Ok, und gibt es in Ihrer Vergangenheit Beziehungen, die Ihre persönliche Entwicklung entscheidend beeinflusst haben?
14. N: Ja also auf jeden Fall meine Mutter. So und dann habe ich mich nicht auf Beziehungen eingelassen. Also außer, also jetzt nicht im spirituellen Sinne. Ich hatte niemals, ich habe niemals jemanden angehimmelt, auf Beziehungen ja, aber nicht im spirituellen Sinne, da war ich immer alleine auf dem Weg.
15. I: Und für Ihre persönliche Entwicklung, gab es da noch andere Beziehungen, jetzt vielleicht auch nicht in dem spirituellen Bereich, die Sie irgendwie besonders beeinflusst haben oder?
16. N: Ja klar. Also mit Mutter, das ist klar. Mein Vater weniger. Ich war zweimal verheiratet. Das hat mich sicher auch geprägt und die Kinder haben mich auch geprägt und was mich dazwischen, ich zögere aus folgendem Grund, weil es gibt keine besonderen Persönlichkeiten oder so, sondern ich habe immer neugierig um die Ecke geguckt, was die nächste Situation ist. Ich habe gar nicht jemanden... Also Situationen haben mich geprägt.
17. I: Ok, und erinnern Sie sich an Veränderungen in Beziehungen, die einen entscheidenden Einfluss auf Ihr Leben oder auf Ihre Ansichten hatten?
18. N: Ja. Meine zweite Ehe ist sozusagen daran gestorben, dass ich anfang mir diese Sinnfragen zu stellen und dem streng nachging. Ich habe meinen zweiten Mann, wir haben uns sehr gemocht, aber das war ihm nicht geheuer. Also mein Mann ist auch eher wissenschaftlich tätig und alles was so mit nicht Greifbaren zu tun hat, das war ihm sehr suspekt und das ist daran zerbrochen, aber es gibt auch was Positives, also die Beziehung mit meiner Freundin, die nicht sexuell, sondern auf... aber ein sehr inniges Verhältnis ist, beruht auf diesen Entwicklungen, die sowohl sie als auch ich genommen haben und es wäre diese Beziehung, die wir haben, die ich auch eine Form von Liebe nennen würde, aber mehr in Richtung Nähe, Vertrauen, ja in diese Richtung. Das wäre nicht möglich gewesen ohne diese Entwicklung in die, im weitesten Sinne, Spiritualität.
19. I: Mhm, und jetzt Beziehungen selbst, die sich irgendwie verändert haben? Also das war halt so ein Bezug auf Sie, dass Sie sich verändert haben und dadurch neue Beziehungen eingegangen sind. Aber ob sich jetzt in ihrem Leben sich Beziehungen auch verändert haben?
20. N: Ach so ja, dann habe ich das nicht richtig verstanden.
21. I: Das kann man so und so (unv.)
22. N: Ja Beziehungen haben sich dadurch verändert. Es sind Freunde am Wegrand stehen geblieben und ich habe andere Menschen kennengelernt.
23. I: Und wie hat sich Ihr Weltbild inkl. evtl. Ihr Bild von Gott oder einer höheren Macht in den unterschiedlichen Phasen ihres Lebens verändert?
24. N: Ich bin mit 14 konfirmiert worden. Familie war nicht sehr religiös, also evangelisch, aber ich war mit Leidenschaft Konfirmandin. Ich habe alles hinterfragt, aber auf einer Weise, dass der Pastor, der uns damals dann unterrichtete, mich mochte. Also das war Neugier und nicht, ich habe das nicht abgelehnt und das war Neugier und es hat ungeheuer Spaß gemacht in dieser Gemeinschaft auch unter der Schirmherrschaft Gottes irgendwas zu machen, so. Das hat sich verändert. Ich habe in der 68er-Zeit studiert, so 68/70, an der damals noch pädagogischen Hochschule in [Stadt A], die war sehr rot und ich war jung und habe demonstriert und lila Latzhosen und alles und da war, ob Gott da war, weiß ich nicht, aber jedenfalls war es in keinster Weise interessant zu der Zeit.

Ich bin aber in der Kirche geblieben, bis meine Kinder konfirmiert waren und dann bin ich ausgetreten, weil ich wollte, dass die einen Grundstein hatten um sich später selbst zu entscheiden. Aber ich bin ausgetreten und meine Kinder haben sich auch konfirmieren lassen dann und das habe ich auch unterstützt, weil ich denke, das soll jeder Mensch für sich entscheiden. Aber ich bin außerhalb der Kirche geblieben. Wie war die Frage noch?

25. I: Inwiefern sich Ihr Weltbild oder evtl. Ihr Bild von Gott oder einer höheren Macht in den unterschiedlichsten Lebensphasen verändert hat?
26. N: Ja. Dann ging es eher in die höhere Macht, als meine Kinder erwachsen waren, größer waren. Also dazwischen war ich einfach nichts so und da als mein (unv. Geräusche Mikrophon)
27. I: Sie sind ja die wichtige Information sozusagen. Ich wollte es Ihnen nur ein bisschen hinschieben (Lachen), damit wir das auf jeden Fall besser hören.
28. N: Damit wir die Wichtigkeit (unv. Lachen) ... Dann kam ja auch hier diese ganze Esoterikwelle und ich bin immer noch ein bisschen beschämt, dass ich da auch drauf mitgeschwommen bin. Aber ich merkte sehr schnell, ich bin auch beschämt, weil ich das sehr oberflächlich finde. Fand dann das sehr schnell sehr oberflächlich fand, und nach wie vor auch finde, obwohl es schön ist mit diesen Objekten umzugehen und das haben wir ja in der Religion und in jeglicher Spiritualität, also Rituale und so eine Art Objektverehrung so ein bisschen und das ist natürlich was Gutes für die Seele in jedem Fall. Trotzdem habe ich das immer so ein Stückweit abstrahiert und die Frage, ob es Gott gibt oder nicht, die hat sich mir nicht bewusst gestellt. Ich habe die auch so nie gestellt, sondern ich war eher auf der Suche. Ich hatte Schwierigkeiten mit dem Denken, dass ein Wesen oder Etwas außerhalb meiner selbst sozusagen mich lenkt. Ich hatte mir auch im universellen Sinne, hatte ich

auch Schwierigkeiten, mir so einen Mann mit weißen Rauschebart vorzustellen, der da oben gütig oder donnernd durch die Gegend fegt. Ich habe aber Menschen, die sich mit Theologie beschäftigen, kennengelernt und die habe ich als Menschen sehr geschätzt, so dass wir diskutiert haben. Was ich an denen oft feststellte, war eine angenehme Art mit Menschen umzugehen. Achtungsvoll, liebevoll zugewandt und auch kontaktfähig und das hatten die ja mindestens in ihrer Glaubensrichtung gelernt. Das müssen nicht immer studierte Menschen sein, sondern das sind oft auch Menschen, die sehr einfach sind, aber die durch den Glauben eine Art entwickelt haben, die uns anderen Menschen gut tut so und das habe ich geschätzt. Trotzdem bleiben diese intellektuellen Fragen und dann bin ich nach Indien gegangen und habe da im Ashram, nicht nur, aber im Ashram gelebt, also nicht nur so Tourist, sondern ich habe da eine Weile gelebt und da habe ich eine Menge an Handwerkszeug u. ä. gelernt, was die Bewusstseinsweiterung angeht. Also das war in der Zeit, als man diese ganzen Urschreitherapien und was weiß ich alles machte und manche sind dabei verrückt geworden. Ich bin es nicht. Also ich habe, obwohl das ja durchaus in meiner Familie mit drinnen liegt, aber ich muss doch immer irgendwie, also so eine gesunde Skepsis habe ich immer gehabt. Ich blieb immer noch ich selbst. Also ich habe mich auch keinem Guru zu Füßen geworfen oder sonst irgendwas. Ich war nur neugierig und offen und das hat mir sehr geholfen und ich habe eben vieles dabei über Philosophie, was Glauben ausmacht, was ist Kirche, was ist einfach der Glaube innen, was sind Dogmen. Wenn man da so in so Art Rückführungssachen ging, da ist mir sehr deutlich geworden, wie sehr wir geprägt sind. Also wir können gar nicht sagen, ich glaube nicht an Gott oder ich glaube nicht, können wir gar nicht sagen. Das können wir nur oberflächlich sagen. Das ist uns in jeder

- Zelle, durch tausende von Jahren drin und ich habe gedacht, so kann es nicht sein. Ich kann nicht meine Wurzeln abkappen und dann sagen, ich bin jetzt Buddhist oder irgend so was, wobei ich ohnehin finde, dass das irgendwann nicht mehr zu trennen ist. Aber das ist dann, oder da kommen dann sicher noch vielleicht Fragen dazu. Aber das war eben eine sehr gewaltige Veränderung und eine, noch mal eine gewaltige Veränderung, die mich sehr verändert und geprägt hat, ist, dass ich Hospizmitarbeiterin geworden bin und zur gleichen Zeit eine Ausbildung als Klinik-Clownin gemacht habe.
29. I: Als Klinik?
30. N: Klinik-Clownin oder Clown. Und Menschen mit Demenz oder... Also ich spiele mit Menschen Theater und gehe aber in diesen, also ich spiele nicht den Clown, ich bin nie Clownin, das ist was anderes. Da habe ich endgültig gelernt, dass alles, was Spiritualität ist, egal in welcher Richtung, einfach an jeder Straßenecke zu finden ist. Bei jedem Penner, bei jeden behinderten Menschen, bei jedem, der sich für normal hält und das sind die entscheidendsten Punkte und da bin ich jetzt.
31. I: Eine Frage, wann waren Sie dann in Indien und wo, denn das würde mich interessieren?
32. N: Ja. Ich war in dem Ashram in Poona ein halbes Jahr und den Bhagwan, den gab es schon nicht mehr. Also, der war schon hinüber, um so salopp das zu sagen. Trotzdem, also ich habe diese Zeit für mich als sehr wichtig empfunden und ich würde auch heute noch sagen, ich bin mit Leib und Seele Sannyasin, nicht abhängig von irgendeinem Guru, aber ich habe mich darüber hinaus entwickelt. Also was da steht, der Unterschied ist der, um es kurz zu sagen, der Unterscheid ist der, dass die sagen, Freiheit und Individualität und für mich ist es jetzt so, dass ich gemerkt habe, dass diese Individualität ein Trugschluss ist. Also ich habe immer so ein Bild, wenn ich das mal erzähle, also wenn ich in Urlaub fahre und nehme einen Sandkorn von dem Strand dort weg, ein einziges, dann sieht der Strand genauso aus wie vorher und trotzdem ist es physikalisch gesehen nicht das selbe mehr und wenn ich den woanders hintrage, dann ist das Stückchen Welt auch verändert und jetzt habe ich doch den Faden verloren. Ach Sie wollten wissen wo ich...
33. I: Sie hatten sich bezogen, auf Individualität hatten Sie es jetzt bezogen und das Sandkorn, inwiefern das Individualität und Trugschluss wäre.
34. N: Ja, aber Ihre Frage war, wo ich da gewesen bin.
35. I: Und wann Sie da gewesen sind.
36. N: Und wann ich da gewesen bin. Da war ich 50 ja. Also und jetzt werde ich 66.
37. I: Ok. Ich fand es nur spannend halt. Ne, Sie haben ja jetzt ihr Weltbild beschrieben oder das Bild auch von Gott oder der höheren Macht und was bedeutet es heut für Sie?
38. N: Heute stelle ich nicht die Frage, ob es einen Gott gibt oder nicht, das weiß ich nicht. Mein Weltbild ist heute so, ich möchte achtungsvoll und offen mit dem umgehen im Leben, was auf mich zukommt, wo immer das herkommt. Ich stelle mir diese Fragen nicht mehr. Einen Mann, den ich sehr verehere, ist der Peter Ustinov, der hat kurz vor seinem Tod auf die Frage, ob er denn an Gott glaube, also in seiner unnachahmlichen Art, schon im Rollstuhl gesessen, kurz bevor er starb und hat gesagt, mhm ich bin noch nicht so ganz entschieden. Ich glaube, also für mich stellt sich diese Frage nicht mehr. Alles was mit liebevoll und diesen Dingen zu tun hat, ist entweder der Mann mit dem weißen Rauschebart oder Jesus der, also ich bin losgelöst von diesen Geschichten.
39. I: Ok, und gab es in Ihrem Leben Befreiungserlebnisse oder Durchbrüche, die den Sinn Ihres Lebens gefestigt oder verändert haben?
40. N: Sicher viele kleine, aber es gibt einen ganz besonderen. Als ich da in Poona war,

da sah ich, da ging es um diese Hingabe, sage ich mal. Das ist eine riesige Halle, wo 5000 Menschen reinpassen und ich sah Menschen jeglicher Nationen, auch Männer und Frauen, die keinerlei Abhängigkeiten zeigten, die nach dieser Veranstaltung, die dann da stattfand, nach vorne gingen und sich vor diesem, ich sag mal Poster, ich sag das mal absichtlich so platt, so einem Poster von Osho da auf die Erde legten und verneigten und das habe ich mir oft angeguckt und wenn man in dieser Atmosphäre ist, dann hat man schnell das Gefühl, ich muss aufpassen, dass ich hier nicht irgendwie so auf eine Weise hinter einem Guru herflattere und alles aufgeben oder so. Also ich hatte das Gefühl und es hat mich trotzdem fasziniert. Da dachte ich, wenn diese Menschen, die ein Selbstwertgefühl ausstrahlen, dann muss da was anderes passieren sozusagen und ich habe lange gewartet und dann will ich das, also das ist eine schöne Geschichte, aber die will ich jetzt nicht weiter ausführen, sondern eben halt nur so im Kern und irgendwann habe ich es gewagt und das war für mich wie ein Gang nach Canossa, so psychisch gesehen, da vorne ist jetzt die Welt zu Ende und wenn ich das mache und mich dahingle und mich verneige oder irgend so was dann, dann bin ich für immer und ewig abhängig von keiner Ahnung was und ich habe das gemacht und das sind auch sehr persönliche Gefühle, das lassen wir jetzt mal außen vor, aber als ich aufstand und mich umdrehte, da gab es etwas, was mein Leben von da an geprägt hat und das war, die Welt ging weiter, niemand hatte mich zur Kenntnis genommen, vorher hatte ich so ein Gefühl, alle gucken jetzt, wie die dahingeht, also um mich herum ging alles weiter wie bisher und es war eigentlich für die Menschheit gar nichts passiert und ich wusste mit einem Mal, ich war mir selbst begegnet und das ist für mich, wenn wir diesen Begriff schon gebrauchen wollen, auch göttlich. Von da an habe ich mich selber gern gehabt.

41. I: Also von da an, wo Sie sich da verneigt haben in Poona vor dem...
42. N: Ja, ja.
43. I: Ok, und haben Sie jetzt auf der anderen Seite, haben Sie Krisenzeiten oder Zeiten des Leidens und der Enttäuschung erlebt oder Zeiten, in denen Sie keinen Sinn in ihrem Leben gesehen haben?
44. N: Ja zwei Mal. Das erste Mal, als ich mich von dem Vater meiner Kinder trennte. Das war eine ernsthafte psychische Krise, wo ich nicht an Glauben oder irgendwas gedacht habe, sondern wo ich mich in psychologische Hände begeben habe und da war Religion und Spiritualität kein Thema, da ging es für mich irgendwie so emotional ums Überleben irgendwie. Aber eben nur um das. Als mein Sohn krank wurde, nee, dann sind es doch drei. Als mein Sohn krank wurde, da kann ich das nur im Nachhinein sagen, war das was sehr Spirituelles, ich bin nämlich immer den gleichen Weg gegangen. Also ich habe wie so ein Mant-, da würde man sagen Mantra, wie so ein Gebet. Ich bin aber dieses Gebet gegangen, so. Jeden Tag immer denselben Weg und da hat sich sowohl emotional als auch dass ich irgendwann die Umwelt anders wahrnahm. Es ist erstaunlich, was geschieht, wenn man immer was rituell wiederholt. Also für mich war das auch schon so eine Art Offenbarung und immer aus der Krise heraus kann ich so sagen und dann hatte ich eben noch eine Krise. Wie war die Frage noch mal?
45. I: Ob Sie Krisenzeiten oder Zeiten des Leidens und der Enttäuschung erlebt oder Zeiten, in denen Sie keinen Sinn in Ihrem Leben gesehen haben?
46. N: Ja, und das Entscheidende war, ich habe vor einigen Jahren, ich bin eine Scheidungswitwe, also ich habe meine Enkelin, die ich lange betreut habe, wo also ein sehr enger Bezug da war, dadurch verloren, mein Sohn und meine Schwiegertochter haben sich durch Krach, also das war sehr aufreibend, getrennt. Damit hatte ich ja nun konkret, außer dass ich Empathie dafür

hatte, nun nichts zu tun, aber ich habe zu der Zeit sowohl meine Enkelin verloren, als auch dass mein Sohn sich auf seine eigenen, ganz auf seine eigene Weise auf seinen eigenen Weg gemacht hat, was ich verstehen kann, dass er das auch brauchte, sich von Familie und allem abzunabeln, trotzdem ist es ja ein Schmerz dann so und dieses mit der Enkelin, mit meiner Enkelin, das hat mich völlig aus der Bahn geworfen. Also weil wir beide, also ne...Es war für mich eine große Liebe so, und das ist das Entscheidende, da war ich so haltlos, dass ich in den Dom [von Stadt B] gegangen bin. Dann habe ich Gespräche gehabt bei der katholischen Kirche. Ich habe Bücher gelesen en masse um irgendwo Halt zu finden. Ich habe dann überlegt, ob ich doch wieder einer Kirche beitreten sollte und damit ich in so einer Gemeinde Halt hätte, aber ich bin überall weggegangen wieder. Also das, was ich außerhalb meiner Selbst an Halt haben wollte, das ist nicht gelungen und ich habe wirklich wieder angefangen zu beten. Ich habe um Ostern rum in der katholischen Kirche vor Gott weiß ich jetzt, ich will nicht ironisch werden, es war, damit rückt man ja auch von sich selber dann so ein bisschen weg wenn man, das möchte ich jetzt nicht unbedingt. Also ich habe wirklich ernsthaft Halt gesucht mit allen Fasern meines Seins und habe es in den Institutionen Kirche, in den Institutionen nicht gefunden, für mich das Richtige. Andere sehen das anders. Und was mich wirklich aus dem allen rausgeholt hat, ist die Närrin, also die Clownin, weil das ist Liebe pur, was da, was die rote Nase öffnet bei Kindern und bei Alten, selbst bei den an Demenz erkrankten Menschen, das sind Geschenke, die von Gott, von Buddha, aus dem Universum, ist mir völlig egal, ist mir völlig egal und jetzt in meinem Alter wird das immer mehr und wir haben dann, also jetzt sag ich wir, weil meine Freundin und ich, haben uns diesem verschrieben und nennen das [Name ihres Projektes] und das geht nicht ohne diese Spiritualität und wir

setzen das um. Wir drehen inzwischen Filme darüber, haben eine gut besuchte Website und setzen das künstlerisch um, aber immer unter diesem Aspekt des Liebevollen. Also wir legen uns nicht fest auf eine Religion oder irgend so was, aber auf das, was ethisch wichtig ist so und danach leben wir auch.

47. I: Und wenn wir nun die Gegenwart betrachten, wie würden Sie ihre Eltern beschreiben? Also wie ist Ihre Beziehung zu Ihren Eltern jetzt?
48. N: Mein Vater ist schon lange tot. Das ist irgendwie erledigt oder so. Also das habe ich auch therapeutisch verarbeitet. Ich sehe ihn heute als einen Mann, der hätte beschützt werden müssen. Also das ist durchaus auch ein liebevolles Gefühl so. Der hätte mehr Liebe gebraucht oder so, um wirklich ein Mann werden zu können. So kann ich das sagen. Der ist bei [einem Unfall] ums Leben gekommen, da war ich [Ende zwanzig], von daher habe ich jetzt nicht so ein Gefühl, ich hätte ihm mehr geben müssen. Das hatte ich nicht. Also da waren wir ja eigentlich immer noch in den Positionen, wo man als junge Frau, also da gibt es nichts, wo ich irgendwie so ein Schuldgefühl hätte oder so. Ich denke, er hätte das gebraucht und ich bin ihm sehr viel ähnlicher, so was Kreativität und so was anbelangt, wo er sich nicht hat durchsetzen können. Also das ist eher so ein Verstehen und schade, dass er so nicht die Chance hatte aus seinem Leben was zu machen. Meine Mutter ist jetzt 92 geworden und ich habe mich entschieden, also die ist total topfit noch, also wie man in dem Alter so sein kann. Natürlich braucht sie diverse Hilfe. Und wenn es soweit ist, dass sie nicht mehr kann, werde ich da sein. Also ich werde sie nicht körperlich pflegen, ich möchte emotional da sein und das aus freien Stücken. Das verlangt niemand von mir, aber auch vielleicht so eine kleine Anekdote die das... Wir waren, als ich das letzte Mal da war, ein bisschen in der Stadt und im Bus zurück zupfte sie mich am Ärmel und

- sagt, du [Marion], ich guck mir so gerne die jungen Männer an, wenn die so toll aussehen und wenn man bedenkt, dass diese Generation nie wirklich, also mit Lust im weitesten Sinne, es geht nicht nur um Sexualität, sondern Lebenslust, so was und ja übrigens, das ist auch meine Kritik an der evangelischen Kirche ne, dass das alles so... ne, ich bleib mal bei dem Beispiel. Dann möchte ich mir erstens das nicht entgehen lassen, also solche Erlebnisse, davon hätte ich jetzt einige Beispiele, das finde ich wunderschön, das sind auch Geschenke. Das ist das eine und es zeigt mir, wie sehr der Mensch das braucht, nicht nur meine Mutter, sondern alle und wenn das mit einfließen könnte in die Institution Kirche, würde mich das sehr freuen. So, das sind die Verhältnisse zu Eltern.
49. I: Und hat sich Ihr Bild von Ihren Eltern im Laufe der Jahre verändert?
50. N: Ja natürlich. Ich war rebellisch bis zum geht nicht mehr, also in der Pubertät, war da sowieso alles scheiße, die waren, mit denen konnte man nichts machen und so. Meine Mutter ist sehr dominant gewesen immer und hat einfach, die ging also... Nicht bequem für Sie, ne?
51. I: Der Stuhl, ach ja es geht. (Lachen)
52. N: Nehmen Sie das Kissen raus oder ich weiß nicht was.
53. I: Nein, ich glaub, das wäre ganz bequem, weil dann würde ich mich zurücklehnen, dann kann ich (unv. Lachen)
54. N: Dann würden wir angenehm plaudern (Lachen) und den Ernst der Dinge dann, wobei so ernst muss das ja auch alles nicht sein. Aber Sie halten es noch ein bisschen aus mit den Dingen?
55. I: Ja, ja. Ich setze mich mal so ein bisschen seitlich hin (Lachen)
56. N: Wie war jetzt die Frage?
57. I: Die Frage war, wie sich Ihr Bild von Ihren Eltern im Laufe der Jahre verändert hat.
58. N: Ja einfach sehr. Diese ganzen pubertären Erscheinungen kennt man ja und auch als Erwachsene habe ich mich sehr bevorzugen gefühlt von meiner Mutter, konnte mich lange nicht wehren dagegen. Aber es ist jetzt so, ich bin auch nicht ihre Mutter geworden, darauf habe ich jetzt sehr geachtet, sondern wir sind eine mittelalterliche oder eine ältere und eine alte Frau. Also diese Symbiose, also ganz weg geht sie nie, also das wäre ja eine Illusion, aber es ist angenehm mit uns beiden so ja.
59. I: Und woran hat das gelegen, dass es diese Beziehung oder das Bild von ihnen auch verändert hat?
60. N: Einmal ganz klar an meiner persönlichen spirituellen Entwicklung, dass ich andere Menschen klarer wahrnehme, wahrnehmen konnte und dass ich mich nicht mehr so wichtig nahm und so alle meine Bedürfnisse hinterfragt habe. Einmal das und zum anderen auch die Wandelbarkeit der anderen. Also meine Mutter hat sich jetzt im Alter auch noch mal wieder völlig verändert. Das signalisiert mir, also nicht völlig, ich sag mal, es kommen Dinge zum Vorschein, die ich teils nicht gesehen habe, die sie teils aber auch nicht gezeigt hat und somit finde ich das aufregend, immer wieder mit Menschen zusammen zu sein, anregend, nicht aufregend.
61. I: Und gibt es andere Beziehungen, die Ihnen bedeutsam erscheinen? Das kann sich auch auf alle wichtigen Menschen beziehen, auch auf solche, die nicht mehr leben.
62. N: Meine Urgroßmutter, da ist so eine diffuse, die hat sich viel gekümmert um mich und mit der habe ich schon gelernt wie man Muße leben kann. Also wie man die Fliege an der Wand beobachtet, was die tut, wie die Maserung der Flügel sind und wie viele Beine die hat und so. Sie hat mir das nicht gelehrt, sondern wir haben gemeinsam geschaut, so und alle anderen Beziehungen außer diese zu meinen Eltern, meine Kinder haben mich sehr viel gelehrt, auch in ihrer Form die Welt zu sehen, also das zu achten, dass das ganz anders ist als bei mir und dieses Loslassen und ganz entscheidend ist

- eben diese Beziehung mit meiner Freundin, ich sage auch bewusst diese Liebe zu meiner Freundin, die auch gegenseitig ist, die sich in einem Strom von Kreativität öffnet und auch immer wieder da ist so. Das ist nun nicht Friede Freude Eierkuchen, das möchte ich damit nicht vermitteln. Aber auch die Probleme, die da sind, die immer da sind, sind eher unter dem Aspekt zu sehen, Lösungen zu suchen statt jetzt zu sagen, äh das klappt überhaupt nicht. Ja.
63. I: Ok. Und welche Gruppen, welche Einrichtungen, welche Ideen und Anliegen sind für Sie zentral?
64. N: Gar keine mehr. Ich habe das Gefühl, dass Veränderungen von unten von dem einzelnen Menschen heraus, also wenn ich das Papier aufhebe, dann tut es irgendwann jemand anders auch. Ich gehöre nichts und niemanden an, habe auch gar kein Bedürfnis danach, aber trotzdem haben wir doch jetzt hier ein angenehmes Miteinander und wenn Sie gehen, ist das ok und dann ergibt sich wieder irgendwas und ich lebe nur noch so. Es gibt so, also ich spende sozusagen meinen zehnten Teil, aber immer direkt. Ich unterstütze junge Künstler z. B., aber konkret dann den einen, nicht nur finanziell. Ich berate manchmal aus meiner früheren Tätigkeit, also Beratung, psychologische Beratung zu machen. Wenn mich jemand fragt, kann ich mit dir reden, das mache ich auch gerne. Aber ich habe keinerlei Anbindung mehr, weder an Vereine noch an Kirchen, an Gemeinden, an nichts. Ich gehe dahin, wenn die mich anfordern als Clown. Ich habe auch hier im Dom gespielt, aber ich möchte nirgendwo mehr angebunden sein, sondern wenn ich an der Straßenecke gebraucht werde, weil der Hund was weiß ich weggelaufen ist oder so was, dann bin ich da, aber nicht mehr im ehrenamtlichen Sinne. Das habe ich alles gemacht. Aber seitdem ich jetzt endgültig 65 gewesen bin, ich habe das vorher gemacht, mache ich das nicht mehr. Da bin ich in der Hospizhilfe tätig, also als Hospizmitarbeiterin tätig gewesen. Und ich sehe die Erdhaftigkeit dieser Einrichtungen und ich kann es auch akzeptieren, das geht nicht anders, aber ich möchte meinen eigenen Weg da gehen und fühle mich nicht einsam damit.
65. I: Spüren Sie, dass Ihr persönliches Leben einen Sinn hat?
66. N: Die Frage stellt man sich ja oft. Ich glaube, ich stelle mir die gar nicht mehr. So wie wir hier jetzt sitzen und ich mit meinem narzisstischen Bedürfnis nachgeben kann und es hört mir einer zu, was ja nicht so oft passiert in dieser Ausführlichkeit, dann fühle ich mich gut und wenn es überhaupt einen Sinn gibt, dann der, dass ich mich und die Menschen, die sich mit mir oder mit denen ich mich beschäftige, dass die sich gut fühlen und wenn ich da damit zu beitragen kann, dann ist das vielleicht der Sinn des Lebens, aber wie gesagt.
67. I: Das wäre jetzt auch meine nächste Frage, was gibt Ihrem Leben Sinn?
68. N: Ja genau das, was ich gerade gesagt habe. Die Begegnung an der Straßenecke, wir beide, wenn ich sehe, dass Sie außer mit dem Sitzen, nicht nur mit dem Kopf zuhören, sondern wie ich Sie wahrnehme, wie ich Sie erlebe, das hat für mich ein Geben und Nehmen und was Lebendiges und Punkt. Ja.
69. I: Und wenn es etwas gäbe, was Sie an sich oder an Ihrem Leben ändern könnte, was würden Sie am liebsten ändern?
70. N: Nichts. Aus tiefstem Herzen nichts.
71. I: Auch rückblickend nicht oder?
72. N: Nein. Auch die Dinge, die also gut oder schlecht wie in diesem Fragebogen, das gibt es für mich nicht. Das wissen wir immer erst hinterher und die Situation, die mag schmerzhaft sein, aber wenn ich irgendwann mal begriffen habe, dass ich das auch überlebe und nachdem ich mich mit dem Tod intensiv beschäftigt habe und wenn ich es nicht überlebe, was ist dann anders? Ich sage das natürlich aus meinem 66jährigen Blickwinkel, das ist schon klar. Ich bin nicht 20 oder auch nicht 30 oder 40, ich

- denke, ich kann das nur von diesem Standpunkt aus so sagen.
73. I: Und für die Zukunft, würden Sie da was ändern?
74. N: Nein, nein. Ich weiß, dass das nicht immer so glücklich bleibt. Also dass einfach das Leben auch was anderes bringt. Ich bin theoretisch, weil das ist ja theoretisch, denn die Situationen, die kommen, da kann man noch mal wieder ganz anders reagieren. Also ist es ja auch nur irgendwas in die Zukunft gedacht. Was wir uns eigentlich ersparen könnten, denn das wissen wir nicht. Ich bin vielleicht entschlossen, die Dinge so gut ich kann zu managen, aber zum Schluss wenn man den Tod als Verlieren annimmt, verlieren wir alle, warum soll ich mich denn anstrengen?
75. I: Ok, und gibt es einen Glauben, gibt es Werte oder Verpflichtungen, die Ihnen in ihrem Leben gerade jetzt besonders wichtig sind?
76. N: Ja. Ich möchte Achtung vor allem Lebenden haben. Im Grunde genommen kann ich diese, na ja nicht ganz, aber die, ich sag mal, ich wollte eben gerade sagen die 10 Gebote, aber das stimmt nicht, da gibt es einige Punkte, die ich so nicht unterschreiben würde. Aber alle Menschenrechte und auch das meine ich sehr ernst, denn ich handele danach und ich handele wirklich danach. Also das heißt nicht, dass ich nicht mal unachtsam bin, weil ich irgendwas anderes im Kopf habe. Ich bin ja auch ein Mensch und nicht heilig oder sonst irgendwas. Aber ich habe sehr viel davon so verinnerlicht, dass das alles was auf dieser Erde und im Universum ist, hört sich vielleicht pathetisch an, aber genauso wichtig ist wie ich.
77. I: Und wann oder wo haben Sie am meisten das Gefühl, mit dem Kosmos in Einklang oder Teil eines Ganzen zu sein?
78. N: Beim Meditieren, das ist das Eine. Also einmal beim Meditieren, was ich auch regelmäßig tue. Ich favorisiere da mit dem Zen mit den Zen-Leuten, aber mit der westlichen Art mit Zen umzugehen. Also alles zu reduzieren auf das Wesentliche, so Schnickschnack irgendwie nicht, also diesen esoterischen Schnickschnack, bitte, jeder soll das machen, wie er möchte, also wegzulassen und wirklich also sich mit dem Atem zu beschäftigen. Das gelingt mir inzwischen ganz gut, nicht immer, aber der Mensch übt ja. Das ist der eine Punkt und der andere Punkt ist das, was ich Ihnen vorhin erzählte, wenn ich künstlerisch tätig bin, dann bin ich eins mit dem, was ich da tue und so ist für mich beten, meditieren und sich verlieren in das, was man da tut, das ist dasselbe, das hat dasselbe Ergebnis und das ist immer dann, wenn dieses Ich verschwindet, also dieses, esoterisch nennt man das dann Ego, ich bin da vorsichtig mit, sondern wenn ich mich verliere, wenn ich mich hingeebe an etwas so. In diesen beiden Situationen ist das besonders. Aber auch, also immer dann, ja dann ist es besonders. Aber so wie jetzt z. B. bei diesem Thema und wenn ich mich wohl fühle in diesem Gespräch, ist es latent auch immer da. Ja.
79. I: Und wie sieht Ihr Ideal eines reifen Glaubens aus oder eine reife Antwort auf Fragen mit einer existentiellen Bedeutung?
80. N: Wie sieht meine Antwort aus?
81. I: Wie sieht Ihr Ideal eines reifen Glaubens aus, also was wäre für Sie das Ideal eines reifen Glaubens oder reife Antworten auf existentielle Fragen, was wäre da Ihr Ideal?
82. N: Die Narren in der Religion. Die haben ja auch eine lange Tradition. Dieses, ja und die weibliche Form natürlich davon für mich, dieses klug sein, dumm sein, lebendig sein, sich alles erlauben zu dürfen sozusagen. Also ich sag mal, mit allen Sinnen und allen Gefühlen da zu sein, wo auch immer. Also das wäre für mich, das ist nicht Glaube, denn wenn ich was glaube, dann glaube ich ja an irgendwas, was ich zunächst mal nicht erfassen kann. Aber ich kann das erfassen. So ist es, dieses, nicht

- dass alles erlaubt ist, das ist falsch. Das wäre wirklich falsch, sondern dass alles möglich ist. So ja.
83. I: Und wenn Sie eine wichtige Entscheidung zu treffen haben, wie gehen sie dann gewöhnlich vor?
84. N: Ich ziehe mich zurück. Manchmal auch je nach Entscheidung, ob das was Großes oder was Kleineres ist, wenn das was Wichtiges ist, ziehe ich mich solange zurück, also sozusagen Eremität - heißt das Wort so? - also wie ein Eremit oder Eremitin, also ich ziehe mich wirklich zurück und auch ganz nach innen und das kann auch im biblischen Sinne 40 oder 42 Tage sein. Und wenn ich da rauskomme, dann ist die Entscheidung gefällt.
85. I: Ok, können Sie mir ein Beispiel nennen?
86. N: Ja. In letzter Zeit hat es gerade solche Veränderungen gegeben, wie wir sie vorhin schon besprochen haben, dass ich Menschen, die mich lange an meiner Peripherie begleitet haben oder wir uns gegenseitig begleitet haben, dass ich eine Entscheidung treffen, das Gefühl hatte, innerlich eine Entscheidung treffen zu müssen, ob ich weitergehe meinen Weg, dann würden die noch mehr an der Peripherie verschwinden oder ob ich das nicht soll und das ist eine schwere Entscheidung, denn es ist nicht so, dass die Menschen mir nichts bedeuten, aber die sind zu ihrem Wohl oder wie sie dachten irgendwo dann stehen geblieben und ich hatte das Gefühl ich muss immer zurück und ich merkte, ich wollte nicht mehr zurück und einmal musste ich diese Entscheidung treffen und dann musste ich den Mut aufbringen ihnen das zu sagen und da habe ich das gemacht. Ich glaube, ich war sogar drei Monate oder was weiß ich, ich habe denen mitgeteilt, ich brauche eine Sendepause. Ich muss, also die kennen mich ja auch, ich muss mal wieder... Und dann habe ich jetzt angefangen, reihum ihnen meine Entschlüsse mitzuteilen und das ist so ein Beispiel dafür.
87. I: Und wenn Sie ein besonderes schwieriges Lebensproblem lösen müssen, an wem oder woran würden Sie sich orientieren?
88. N: Immer an dem, was ich Liebe nenne. Das ist ja ein vielschichtiges Wort. Aber ich sage nicht Gott oder nicht Universum oder an was immer ich, also für mich ist das, was sich in meiner Seele bewegt und darauf vertraue ich inzwischen und das kann auch Gott sein, wenn es ihn denn gibt oder auch nicht. Das frage ich mich dann nicht, sondern das ist eine Instanz in mir, der ich vertraue ja.
89. I: Und glauben Sie, dass Handlungen eindeutig richtig oder falsch sein können?
90. N: Das habe ich ja vorhin schon gesagt, eben genau nicht. Das weiß man erst immer hinterher und auch dann, da gibt es, ich weiß nicht, ich habe keine Uhr oder so, eine schöne Geschichte ne, na lassen wir mal lieber, aber es gibt so eine Geschichte, die das sehr deutlich macht finde ich. Also so ein Bauer in alter Zeit hat einen Sohn und ein Pferd und alle beneiden ihn - die kennen Sie, ne? Das dachte ich mir.
91. I: Dann kommt ein weiteres Pferd dazu und dann fällt er vom Pferd, dann muss er in den Krieg.
92. N: Ja genau. Ich finde, die erläutert das sehr sehr genau.
93. I: Ja finde ich auch, eine sehr schöne Geschichte ja. Und gibt es Handlungen oder Handlungsweisen, die grundsätzlich richtig sind unabhängig von irgendwelchem Umstand?
94. N: Nein.
95. I: Ok, und gibt es moralische Grundsätze, über die wir uns alle einig sein sollten?
96. N: Ja. Ich finde, wir Menschen haben nicht das Recht zu töten, auch keine Staaten, die das rechtlich durchsetzen. Ich finde, wenn wir zur Nahrungsaufnahme Tiere töten oder ja auch Pflanzen, dann sollten wir Respekt davor haben und nicht, na ja wir wissen ja, wie das geht. Also so ethische Richtlinien und ich finde eigentlich auch, obwohl es

- unserer Welt ständig passiert, ich habe auch nicht das Recht jemand anderen zu verletzen. Also weder psychisch noch körperlich noch sonst wie und andere haben das Recht auch nicht, das mit mir zu machen. Es gibt keine Gründe. Der liebe Gott hat uns das Gehirn gegeben, um darüber nachzudenken und das macht uns anders als die meisten anderen Lebewesen. Wir wissen es noch nicht, wenn man spannende Bücher darüber liest, steht da, finde ich auch interessant diese Gedanken zu verfolgen, wir wissen es noch nicht, aber das ändert nichts an diesen ethischen Werten für mich.
97. I: Und glauben Sie, dass unser Leben als Menschen einen Sinn hat?
98. N: Klar, natürlich. Das Leben eines Delphins hat auch... Das Leben an sich, wenn die Spezies menschlich da wäre, wäre die Erde anders.
99. I: Und worin, glauben Sie, besteht der Sinn?
100. N: Das weiß ich nicht. Da könnte ich jetzt spekulieren und ihnen eine Menge erzählen. Aber wenn ich ganz klar hingucke, weiß ich das doch nicht.
101. I: Und wird unser Leben von höheren Mächten beeinflusst oder gar nach einem Plan gelenkt?
102. N: Also das ist jetzt eine ganz persönliche Antwort dann. Also ich weiß nicht, ob das ein Plan ist oder ich glaube nicht, dass wir von, irgendwie von außen gelenkt sind, sondern ich glaube, dass das gesamte Universum und all die Dinge, die wir nicht wissen und nicht erfassen können, ineinander wirken und wenn das Eine nicht, dann das Andere und dass das also ein Ineinanderfließen ist und zwar über unsere Vorstellung des Denkens hinaus. Ja.
103. I: Und das wäre dann so eine höhere Macht oder wie würden Sie das beschreiben?
104. N: Nein. Das ist keine höhere Macht. Das hat alles, nein, das ist ein gleichberechtigtes Wirken, wobei nicht starr, sondern mal ist das Eine oben und das Andere unten oder rechts oder links. Bin ich unklar?
105. I: Nein, also es ist nur schwer eine Vorstellung davon zu kriegen. Also ich habe ja so nach höheren Mächten oder Plänen gefragt und Sie sagen jetzt...
106. N: Ja das finde ich nicht.
107. I: Gibt es sozusagen eher nicht dann, eine höhere Macht?
108. N: Ja für mich gibt es das eher nicht.
109. I: Ja ok, und was denken Sie über den Tod?
110. N: Der Tod gehört zum Leben. Das ist für mich nicht nur eine Floskel, aber die wird oft benutzt. Aber da ich Menschen beim Sterben begleitet habe und ich immer, wenn ich interessiert bin, die Dinge auch bis zu Ende bringe sozusagen, ich habe dann auch noch eine Weile, so als Praktikantin in einem Beerdigungsinstitut gearbeitet, weil ich wissen wollte, wie fühlt sich das alles an, wir sind dem ja sonst sehr fern und das ist mir dadurch, also nicht fremd und auch nicht bedrohlich oder so. Natürlich habe ich, wie jeder Mensch, sag ich mal, Wünsche an meine Todin, aber ich glaube auch nicht, dass nach dem Tod irgendwas passiert, sondern ich, also irgendwas, was ich nicht fassen kann, sondern ich finde das ganz normal. Also ich habe einen Platz in einem Friedwald und ich finde es wunderschön, da zwischen Baumwurzeln und da entsteht vielleicht ein Himmelschlüsselchen oder irgend so was. Also die Vorstellung, dass nach dem Tod irgendwas weitergeht, ist sehr tröstlich für Menschen und darum glaube ich brauchen viele Menschen das auch. Aber ich brauche das nicht mehr, also das ist so eine humorvolle Vorstellung, aus meiner Asche wächst ein Himmelschlüsselchen ne, wie so eine Metapher ne, darüber schreibe ich auch Gedichte, und das fühlt sich ganz warm an. Natürlich hätte ich Ängste, keine Luft mehr zu kriegen, aber das ist alles vor dem Tod. Aber mit dem Tod selbst, ich habe auch nicht das Gefühl, irgendwas versäumt zu haben. Wenn ich morgen sterben müsste, wäre das ok. Also das sage ich jetzt. Da

muss man auch immer sagen, ich weiß, dass wenn das Morgen einträte, dass ich auch bitte noch alle Chancen haben möchte diesen Gedankengang zu ändern. Das finde ich ist so eine Geschichte bei den Patienten-Testamenten. Also dann schreibt man das theoretisch auf und alle unterstützen einen, das zu tun und dann sind nachher alle ganz eifrig dabei diese Wünsche zu erfüllen und merken gar nicht, dass der fast Sterbende vielleicht doch Wasser oder einen Krumen Brot möchte. Also das ist mir wohl auch klar, dass ich, ja, dass man nicht weiß, was in der Zukunft passiert. Wir können nur spekulieren.

111. I: Ja und die nächste Frage hat sich eigentlich schon beantwortet. Was passiert mit uns, wenn wir sterben?
112. N: Ja ich werde, wenn ich es mir aussuchen darf, entweder so eine schöne dicke Butterblume oder so ein zartes Himmelschlüsselchen. Ich glaube so als Mensch bin ich beides.
113. I: Und halten Sie sich für religiös, spirituell oder gläubig?
114. N: Das kann ich nicht trennen. Das will ich auch nicht trennen.
115. I: Oder wie würden Sie sich selbst beschreiben? Was für eine Selbstbeschreibung würden Sie bevorzugen?
116. N: Ich bin sehr sicher, dass ab einen gewissen Punkt, dass alles gleich ist. Also ich rede nicht von den Institutionen, die sind menschengemacht. Ich rede davon, dass ich glaube, dass wir alle von dem, letztendlich von demselben träumen. Ob das einen Bart hat oder Ying und Yang oder ich weiß nicht. Ich habe so ein Gefühl, dass wir uns an diesem Punkt alle treffen würden.
117. I: Und wie würden Sie das nennen?
118. N: Liebe, weil das ist universell. Also ich gehe nicht leichtfertig mit dem Gedanken um oder mit diesem Wort. Wir reden davon, dass Gott Liebe ist. Alle Menschen, die spirituell sind, verhalten sich liebevoll, sollten sie zumindest, wenn sie es ernst nehmen ja. Wenn wir liebevoll mit der Natur umgehen, dann ist das erhaltend und mit dieser Achtsamkeit. Diese Achtsamkeit, mit sich selbst und der Welt umzugehen, vielleicht wäre das der Satz, da treffen wir uns glaube ich, weil das alle im Ursprung gemeinsam haben, egal wo wir herkommen.
119. I: Ich kann das gut nachvollziehen mit der Liebe, aber wenn ich jetzt sozusagen, weil ich so nach religiös, spirituell und so gefragt habe, wie würden Sie sich denn selbst einordnen, also wenn Sie das jetzt jemanden erklären würden, würden Sie sagen, Sie sind ein liebender Mensch oder was würden Sie sozusagen als Begriff wählen für ihren Glauben oder für ihre Vorstellung?
120. N: Für meinen Glauben, meine Lebenseinstellung. Mhm auf den Punkt gebracht... Das ist eine Herausforderung. Ich bringe das wieder, weil ich mag diese Dreiteilung da nicht.
121. I: Oder würden Sie alle drei nehmen oder?
122. N: Ja, ich würde wenn dann alle drei nehmen und z. B. in dieser traditionellen Närrin sind alle drei Elemente drinnen und wenn dann würde ich das darauf reduzieren oder eigentlich ist es für mich eine Erweiterung. Dann darf ich neugierig sein, mir alles gestatten, da steckt alles drinnen und gleichzeitig gehe ich achtungsvoll und liebevoll selbst mit den derben Scherzen um und darum ist für mich dieser Narrenbegriff im spirituellen, religiösen Sinne die Figur, die für mich das alles vereinigt. Also da sprudelt bei mir gleich die Phantasie wieder, wie ich das umsetzen könnte, als Clownin was über, also oder Närrin, was über Glauben zu machen. Da gibt es ja Leute, die machen das schon. Es gibt ja auch eine evangelische Pastorin, die das macht. Aber das geht mir alles dann noch nicht tief genug oft, weil wenn ich wirklich am Grund dieser Närrin angekommen bin mit allen Facetten, ich glaube, also mal abgesehen davon, dass da auch ja nur der Weg das Ziel sein kann, im gläubigen Sinne würde ich sagen, dann würde ich zu Füßen Gottes sitzen, im Spirituellen würde ich sagen, dann würde

- ich mit Buddha im Sandkasten spielen und was war das Dritte?
123. I: Religiös, spirituell und gläubig.
124. N: Dies Wort gläubig würde ich mit hingebefähig ersetzen, weil gläubig ist für mich ganz persönlich so besetzt, ich muss was glauben, was ich nicht weiß und das möchte ich nicht. Dann sage ich lieber, ich weiß es nicht. So ja.
125. I: Also sozusagen eine religiös-spirituelle Närrin?
126. N: Ja.
127. I: Die hingebungsvoll mit Liebe lebt.
128. N: Ja genau. Mit allen Fehlern und allem, was dazu gehört ja.
129. I: Und was bedeutet das für Sie dann? Also, gut, Sie haben es ja eigentlich gesagt (unv.), die Frage so gebaut, man fragt nach einer Selbstbeschreibung sozusagen, indem man sich selbst beschreibt.
130. N: Die Essenz ist das, was wir vorhin schon mal hatten. Dieses, dass ich ein zufriedener, sehr oft glücklicher Mensch bin.
131. I: Mhm ok, das bedeutet das?
132. N: Ja das bedeutet das und das ist für mich das Höchste, was ich als Mensch erreichen kann.
133. I: Mhm ok, und gibt es religiöse, spirituelle oder andere Vorstellungen, Symbole oder Rituale, die Ihnen wichtig sind oder die Ihnen wichtig gewesen sind?
134. N: Gewesen ja. Ich habe mich an all diesen Symbolen festgehalten. Also ich hatte ganz viele Dinge, die, das gibt es ja jetzt alles nicht mehr außer die Närrin dort, also ich hatte das alles. Ich habe diese ganze Palette von Symbolen und Buddha-Figuren und so was gehabt und das ist nach und nach von mir abgefallen, das Bedürfnis danach. Also weil ich das, je mehr ich das in mich integrierte, umso weniger brauchte ich.
135. I: Und welche waren das und warum waren Ihnen diese wichtig? Also welche Symbole, Vorstellungen, Rituale?
136. N: Rituale sind mir nach wie vor wichtig, aber nicht so ganz ernst. Also wir haben den gerade fertig in unserer Website jetzt,

Genius Locus, die Initiation einer alten Krähe bzw. einer alten Närrin sagt, wir sind an einen Ort gefahren und haben das Alt sein gefeiert, wir beide und haben das gefilmt und das, wo man das dann nicht... eigentlich heißt dieser Begriff ja Genius Loci, also ich will Sie nicht bevormunden, aber in der Dichtkunst ist das der geniale Ort, wo man eben, na ja eben übersetzt ein genialer Ort und (Lachen) wir wollten nun das auch alles ganz schön heilig gestalten, also so einfach schön gestalten so und der Witz ist, in dem Moment grummelte es bei mir im Bauch, alles war heilig und ich musste zum Klo (Lachen). So, und das ist dann die Närrin, das ist die Närrin, die das so komisch findet, aber auch so freundlich und liebevoll komisch. Also ich käme nie auf die Idee, das ganze Ritual ist im Eimer und so was, sondern ich habe nur gedacht, jawoll das genau gehört dazu. Und das ist das, was eben zum ganzen Leben gehört und das finde ich wieder mal befreiend und das werde ich, wenn ich solange lebe, noch mit 90 erzählen. Und das macht das aus und unter diesem Aspekt sehe ich Rituale. Ich finde es auch schön, so junge Mädchen eher also so reinzuheben in das Frausein und so was, ich finde, das kommt, das wird ja jetzt auch in Kirchen schon angeboten, aber das dürfte noch mehr sein, das dient für mich zur Unterstützung so was. Auch sozusagen Punkte festzulegen im Leben und diese Objekte, die man hatte, wie eine Buddha-Figur oder so was, wenn das überhandnimmt und man anfängt diese Figuren sozusagen als Götzen zu nehmen, dann halte ich das für sehr bedenklich. Für mich war es lange Zeit eine Erinnerung. Man rutscht ja in den ersten Jahren immer so weg von dem, was man, der Alltag ist dann stärker und wenn ich dann da dran vorbeiging, also ich habe mich nie davor gesetzt und gebetet oder so, sondern für mich war das immer eine Erinnerung, aha, so ein Innehalten so einen Moment von ja, das ist auch noch da und als ich das dann

- nicht mehr brauchte, weil ich das verinnerlicht hatte, habe ich die Sachen auch alle weggestellt oder verschenkt.
137. I: Und beten Sie, meditieren Sie oder tun Sie auf anderer Art etwas für Ihre Spiritualität?
138. N: Ja. Ich denke, das ist so ein Gemisch aus Beten und Meditieren. Manchmal ist es ein Reflektieren, manchmal bin ich auch wirklich ganz weg von allem, auch von den Gedanken. Ich habe da nicht so einen Ehrgeiz, jetzt alles richtig zu machen, das macht eine Närrin sowieso nicht, sondern da, wo, was mir gut tut, also ich sage mal vorsichtig, ich halte inne und setze mich hin und dann passiert was und das lasse ich geschehen oder es passiert nichts und das lasse ich auch geschehen, so.
139. I: Machen Sie das regelmäßig?
140. N: Ja.
141. I: Und wie oft oder?
142. N: Jeden Tag.
143. I: Jeden Tag.
144. N: Ja.
145. I: Auch über längere Zeit oder?
146. N: Halbe Stunde / Stunde jeden Tag. Ja.
147. I: Und was ist Sünde?
148. N: Was ist Sünde? Das weiß ich nicht.
149. I: Was verstehen Sie darunter?
150. N: Das kann ich nicht wirklich, mir gehen da ganz viele Dinge durch den Kopf und ich würde spontan sagen, wenn jemand tötet. Dann gibt es aber, auch im spirituellen oder religiösen Sinne gibt es wieder Argumente, also ich würde sagen, dass, also ich möchte mich da auch nicht versteigen. Ganz klar möchte ich sagen, ich weiß das nicht. Ich mache viele Gedanken darüber und es ist auch eine ernsthafte Frage. Ich würde von Fall zu Fall in meinem Inneren schauen, ob ich was dazu zu sagen hätte, würde mir aber nicht anmaßen, da eine Wertung zu treffen, so.
151. I: Und wie erklären Sie das Böse in der Welt?
152. N: Das Böse. Das Böse und das Gute bedingen sich für mich. Das ganze Universum die ganze Weltenbewegung geht immer auf und ab und ich glaube, wir sind Teil des Ganzen. Wir haben ja vorhin auch schon gesagt, das Böse schlechthin gibt es für mich nicht. Da müsste man hinterher gucken und sagen, das ist nun wirklich böse gewesen, aber ich glaube, dass wir das brauchen, um das Gleichgewicht in der Welt zu haben und wenn, dann ist das eine Herausforderung für uns Menschen als die Spezies mit Gehirn, damit umzugehen zu lernen. Was immer wir dann als suspekt oder böse ansehen, so.
153. I: Dass man lernt, damit irgendwie umzugehen auch.
154. N: Ja.
155. I: (unv.)
156. N: Ich glaube einfach, dass das da ist, dass das da sein muss, weil das zur Evolution gehört und dass, auch wenn es Böses nicht gäbe, dann wäre die Welt schon längst hin, weil wenn man sich in den Schlachten oder wenn man sagen würde, der Tsunami ist böse oder das AKW, da wo viele Menschen sterben, wenn man das aus einer Meta-Ebene betrachtet, sag ich mal, losgelöst von unseren Moralvorstellungen und dem Blick, dass wir Menschen die Krone der Schöpfung wären, dann ist das ein natürlicher Ausleseprozess, den wir als böse bezeichnen, den wir vielleicht sogar initiiert haben bei Fukushima o.ä., ich will da nicht mit irgendwas abwälzen. Aber die Naturkatastrophen, wo viele Menschen sterben, sagen viele auch unreflektiert, das ist böse. Aber für mich, also ich würde das zumindest hinterfragen. So ja.
157. I: Und wenn Menschen sich über weltanschauliche oder religiöse Fragen nicht einig sind, wie können solche Konflikte gelöst werden?
158. N: Das ist auch nur eine theoretische Antwort, weil die Welt es noch nie geschafft

- hat, das zu lösen. Auch da habe ich eine Vorstellung, nämlich von unten herauf und da sind wir beide jetzt ein Beispiel. Wenn das jeder Mensch einmal im Jahr täte, jeder auf dieser Welt, einmal im Jahr...
159. I: So ein Interview zu machen oder?
160. N: So über Gott und die Welt und das Universum zu reden auf diese Weise, zwei Stunden einmal im Jahr, dann würden Sie es noch erleben, das die Welt friedvoll wäre. Aber das ist eine Vision und ich finde die wunderschön zum Träumen. Also ich bin auch nicht depressiv oder so, aber ich glaube das wird nie passieren.
161. I: Also die Menschen müssten darüber reflektieren und nachdenken.
162. N: Nachfühlen vor allen Dingen.
163. I: Nachfühlen.
164. N: Also das Denken allein, wissen Sie, denken tun wir alle viel, reden tun wir auch ganz viel, aber das in Handlungen umsetzen, da ist für mich der Knackpunkt. Aber dieses Gespräch und sich dabei wohlfühlen, ist der Anfang davon, dann erinnert man sich da dran und dann denkt man, oh das mach ich mal wieder und so denke ich, könnte das von unten was werden, von uns kleinen Leuten.
165. I: Ja das ist doch eine schöne Antwort. Also ich bin mit den Fragen durch. Ich hätte noch mal eine Nachfrage, wenn ich darf.
166. N: Ja.
167. I: Was mich jetzt einfach noch interessieren würde wäre, weil Sie das vorhin erzählt haben mit diesem Durchbruchserlebnis in Poona und das hatten sie so ein bisschen kurz geschildert, da wollte ich mal fragen, ob Sie das vielleicht noch mal erzählen wollen würden?
168. N: Ja.
169. I: Weil das finde ich eine spannende, weil Sie das so, Sie haben gesagt, das ist so ein ganz wichtiges Ereignis gewesen, aber Sie wollen da jetzt nicht so genau drauf eingehen.
170. N: Ja das war nicht, also ich bin ganz frei im Erzählen. Ich freue mich auch, weil das ist auch eine Art von weitergeben, ne. Das ist ja auch eine Art von, ohne dass ich jemanden was aufdrücke, denn das wäre ja wieder über die Straße helfen, jemanden, der nicht rüber will. Ich habe das vorhin nur eingegrenzt, weil ich den Rahmen nicht sprengen wollte von den Fragen. Das war so, ich sehe Poona übrigens sehr kritisch auch. Also das sollte ich vielleicht doch vorausschicken. Das gibt es ja immer noch und ich finde das auch, ich finde das gut, dass es das gibt, weil man dort lernen kann, dass alle Menschen irgendwie irgendwas Gemeinsames haben. Es gibt Rituale und Möglichkeiten, dort im Bewusstseinerweiternden Aspekt zu erleben... Ich saß einer Japanerin gegenüber in einer emotionalen geöffneten Situation, ich komme auf das andere gleich, nur um so das vorzubereiten.
171. I: Ja ja. Gerne. ich habe ja nachgefragt.
172. N: Ja. Wir saßen in einer Situation gegenüber, die wir jetzt nicht genauer beschreiben müssen. Der Effekt dieser Situation war, dass wir zwei verschiedene Sprachen sprachen, die wir nicht kannten, also sie ja Japanisch, ich Deutsch und mit dieser Bewusstseinerweiterung verstanden wir uns, nicht im Kopf, aber wir wussten, was die andere sagte. Da habe ich gedacht an dieses Sprachengewirr bei Babel und solche, also dieses, das macht was mit einem und dann ist es egal, ob das jetzt wie gesagt Gott oder... man findet das in allen überlieferten Büchern so wieder, diese verschiedenen Dinge und davon hatte ich dort einige Erlebnisse und das erleben zu dürfen, dass über unser Begrenzt sein hinaus, so eine Erfahrung zu machen, dass das, was auch in der Bibel geschrieben ist, ja sicher eine Metapher ist, aber trotzdem etwas ist, was nicht gelogen ist. Das finde ich sehr wertvoll und genauso dieses, dass ich da an diesem Beispiel die Hingabe gelernt habe. Ich hatte ja gesagt, ich habe das lange beobachtet und ich hatte Angst. Je mehr man sich mit so einem Thema beschäftigt, umso größer wird das ja auch. Also dann in so

einem Übermaß im Vorfeld und man stellt sich alles Mögliche vor und ich habe wirklich gedacht, ich war ja auch vorher gewarnt worden, dann kommst du wieder und dann gehst du hier in roten Roben singend durch die Straßen mit Glatzkopf und so was alles. Das hätte ja sein können. Ich wusste es ja nicht. Und ich habe das gewagt und ich hatte furchtbare Angst und auf diesem Weg von 20 Metern oder vielleicht waren es auch 30, bin ich ganz langsam Schritt für Schritt gegangen und ich hatte ein Gefühl, ich gehe jetzt zum Schafott, ich gebe alles, was ich an Leben und Einstellungen und alles habe, gebe ich da ab. Einmal finde ich, ist das ein wunderbares Beispiel dafür, was alles für Unsinn in unserem Kopf ist, aber in dem Moment ist da kein Gedanke von Unsinn und ich bin wirklich mit all meinen Fasern dahin gegangen, da hängt, also was auch immer, das Beil oder irgend so was und ich bin für mein ganzes Leben nicht willensfähig, das war in mir und dann kam eine ganze große, dann kam ich davon weg, dann war eine ganz große Scham, weil ich so dachte, jetzt gucken alle, jetzt gucken alle, also so was, was man dann ja auch und dann habe ich es trotzdem geschafft mich auf die Knie erst zu und dann wollte ich wieder hoch. Ich merkte auch, es kam irgendwas von atemlos und dann habe ich das doch gemacht und die Scham ging weg mit diesem Gedanken, wie jetzt sieht ja keiner mehr mein Gesicht. Da wir ja alle diese Uniform, diese Roben an hatten, jetzt sieht mich ja keiner. Da war ich erst mal so ganz profan erleichtert und dann fühlte ich diesen Marmor unter mir. Ich lag auch wie in dem Kreuz, in so einem Kreuz und ich fühlte den Marmor unter meinen Händen und es passierte scheinbar nichts, außer dass ich ganz ruhig wurde, weil ich merkte, ich war immer noch da und dann habe ich eine Weile da gelegen und weiß nicht so genau, denn zum Teil schossen mir Bilder durch den Kopf wie, mein Gott, das ist ein Plakat einfach und auf

der anderen Seite war es irgendwie so eine Stille, es war irgendwie still so in mir, nicht im Kopf, aber alles andere und als ich dann aufstand, da guckte ich mit diesen Augen wie und ich konnte akzeptieren wie unwichtig ich war, dass die Welt an mir vorbeilief und jeder geschäftig alles machte, was er zu tun hatte und das war aber schön. Ich habe nicht gedacht, Gott jetzt hat keiner meine heroische Tat gesehen, sondern es war genau andersrum, es war wunderschön, dass ich merkte, ja mein Gott, da fiel so was ab von immer wichtig sein zu müssen auch und dieser Gedanke, der dann aufstieg, ich bin mir selbst begegnet, das kann ich nicht begründen. Ich wusste es nur. Da war auch nichts, was irgendwie heilig in mir hochkam oder sonst irgendwas, sondern es war einfach nur, ja ist doch ganz klar, so was. Ich bin da mir selbst begegnet auf diesen 20 Metern. Ich habe mich hingegeben und was dabei rausgekommen ist, war ich. Also das sind jetzt aber alles Interpretationen, die ich da hinterher schiebe. In dem Moment war das nur Gefühl, Empfindung und danach hatte ich ganz langes dieses, was ich, wenn ich sage glücklich, dann ist das nicht, das ist zu viel, also das Wort glücklich, wie wir es normalerweise gebrauchen, das ist zu viel, das ist viel stiller, viel klarer. Also ich kann das nicht wirklich sagen und dann merkte ich, dann kommen so danach die Zeiten, dass man das immer wieder haben will. Das ist ja auch sehr angenehm. Das ist wie eine Antriebsfeder und dann findet man das nirgendwo. Jahrelang unter Umständen, das kommt drauf an, findet man das nirgendwo wieder und irgendwann entdeckt man es wieder oder ich habe es wieder entdeckt und dann habe ich irgendwann gemerkt, dass es bestimmte Situationen gibt, wo das von selbst auftaucht. Machen konnte ich das nicht. Dann habe ich irgendwann erkannt, das passiert beim Meditieren, aber bei mir ganz besonders. Ich weiß das von anderen, wenn sie musizieren oder so. Das ist, wenn man sagt, so was ist spirituell oder

heilig. Das hat jeder Mensch. Wenn Sie Musik machen oder ein Gedicht schreiben oder, jeder Mensch kennt solche Situationen, man nimmt sie oft nur nicht wahr und dadurch kultiviert er das auch nicht. Das ist dann die Arbeit, daran zu gucken, was mache ich denn da jetzt mit. Also festhalten kann man es nicht. Wiederholen kann man es auch nicht. Man kann nur Situationen schaffen, wo es von selbst kommt.

173. I: Und welche Situationen sind das bei Ihnen?
174. N: Bei mir sind das ganz klar, wenn ich Kunst mache. Also ganz klar, wenn ich schreibe, also Gedichte, vorzugsweise Gedichte. Ganz klar ist das da, wenn ich als Clown gehe, dann habe ich eine Öffnung die...
175. I: Seit wann machen Sie das mit diesem Clown?
176. N: Das habe ich auch mit 50 angefangen.
177. I: Danach oder vor, bevor Sie nach Indien?
178. N: Nein danach.
179. I: Danach.
180. N: Ja ja. Also das sind alles Ergebnisse von diesem Erlebnis da in Poona, das ich einfach, auch wie geführt also, aber nicht von außen, diese Führung ist innen. Dieses, och guck da doch noch mal und halb zog sie ihn halb sank er hin. Das kann man psychologisch, physikalisch erklären, warum man genau, wenn man sich innerlich, auch unbewusst, mit was beschäftigt, warum man dann ausgerechnet im Internet dieses oder jenes findet, was man vorher übersehen hätte und ich glaube, das ist der Punkt, dass wir einfach wacher durch die Welt gehen und mehr finden und das ist so genug und die Gewissheit jetzt so nach der Zeit, dass das für mich immer wieder kommt. Dann machen mir auch die Zeiten, wo das nicht da ist, eigentlich nichts aus. Da sage ich dann, na ja die Bella ist mal wieder unterwegs. Also dieses, wenn ich nichts weiß, also ich beobachte mich dann auch selber und merke, dass es sinnvoll ist, jetzt den Humor einzuschalten, also ein humorvolles

Lachen. Humor ist was anderes als Witze erzählen oder so. Das ist eine, wie hat jemand geschrieben, eine Lebenshaltung und so kann ich mich dann auch betrachten, so dass ich sage, na heute habe ich ja wieder für die nächsten 10 Jahre meinen Narzissmus befriedigt. So, also diesen Abstand zu mir selbst zu haben, so ein stückweit auf diese Meta-Ebene gehen zu können und mich dabei auch zu betrachten. Das sind alles so Dinge, die ich dabei gelernt habe und dasselbe, das hat was mit Ihnen zu tun und mit mir und der Bereitschaft. Dasselbe finden Sie für sich, können Sie das, diese Hingabe können Sie überall üben. Besonders da, wo es natürlich ein Hindernis ist, logisch, für einen selbst. Es geht nicht darum, ob das Gott ist oder was, sondern es ist die Hingabe sich zu überwinden und der Glaube oder das Spirituelle oder was auch immer hilft dabei und dafür finde ich es unverzichtbar und ich achte jeden Menschen, der auf diesem Weg weiterkommt, also wenn er das denn will und zufrieden ist. Also weil das Ziel ist das gleiche. Also davon bin ich wirklich zutiefst überzeugt, auch wenn ich vieles andere nicht weiß.

181. I: Ja also für mich ist das ein schönes Schlusswort. Ich weiß nicht, wollen Sie noch was hinzufügen?
182. N: Nein (Lachen)

B.8 Faith Development Interview with Julia D.

1. N: Hi [Julia].
2. I: This is [interviewer name] from UTC.
3. N: Hi, thanks for calling.
4. I: Hi, how are you this evening?
5. N: I doing pretty well I guess, how about you?
6. I: I'm fine. Okay, let's see...
7. N: [Hey I'm going to stop this thing] let me go down stairs [...]. My grandson is here...
8. I: Okay.

9. N: I'm go downstairs [where it's quiet] (laughing) we have to lock the baby gate because he's kind of a little ninja.
10. I: Right, I know how it is. I have two. Okay let's see. Did you get the questions and informed consent that I emailed quite a while?
11. N: I did, oh yeah.
12. I: For the phone interviews we just have to ask permission for you consent to be recorded and that's what we are doing now and I just need to give you your participant number, is [number] and I will give it to you again at the end of the interview so that, so that, what we are going to do is email you a link to a follow-up survey and if you don't mind filling that out that will conclude that interview. And it's something they like you to do right after the phone interview so, I'll go ahead and give you that number again at the end but if you are ready we can go ahead and start.
13. N: Oh yeah, I don't remember the survey that [come to this?] to be...I don't know if you can answer any of that but I don't remember the survey at all.
14. I: Oh really?
15. N: When I got this email that said your answers warranted follow up and I was just like a little...so, anyway I was kind of not prepared for what you are going to. I mean other than these questions that you guys sent to review I don't have much of an idea.
16. I: Alright, I took the survey back in October last year and this is before I was involved with the group and a lot of the questions seem very similar to what I emailed you. The ones in the first, if you remember any of these and by looking at them, they were in the original survey too as well or different versions, so these questions, but it's a little [same?]. I don't know, how did you find out because I know they had an ad and they put an article in the newspaper here Chattanooga.
17. N: I have no idea. I mean I don't, it is so weird I got this email from a guy saying your answers were unique and I'm thinking there is nothing unique about me that can't be right. And it must have just...I have no idea. I mean I'm not like a big survey person and I don't know how I would have stumbled across it but I'm huge, I'm all about religion, I love religion that's probably what caught my eyes. Anything about reading and anything to do with religion is really interesting to me.
18. I: That original survey was kind of long too, it was probably about 30 minutes, it's an online survey but something it will- I'll probably remind you when we go over these questions again but- okay we'll get started on the life [...] life review. Reflecting on your life thus far, identify its major chapters.
19. N: For me, the geographical, the north east, then the south, then [State D in the south of the USA] because that's its own deal. And then the upper Midwest. So, I'm still in upper Midwest but so for me the big chapters seem to be divided into geographic locations.
20. I: And if your life were a book, how would you, would you name the different chapters and what mark or event stand out as especially important?
21. N: Well the, I'm bad at titles, so it would be state names, so it would be [state E in the north east] then the [State A in the south], then [State D], then [State C in the north, upper Midwest]. And what stands out I guess I just, I moved, I was born in [State E] and then I moved to [State A], kind of a critical time you know, I was like seven, which you know just starting school and that kind of developmentally I guess a significant time of awareness and then I was there until I was in my early '20s, then I moved to [State D] which was very formative as far as independence from my parents. I lived in the big city, I lived in [City B] which was [...], it is a big city by any standard especially from [State A], you know. And then [State C] was a big...I guess I got here when I was 26, so that was

- kind of the beginning of your real adulthood in a lot of respects, so that's how I would kind of divide that.
22. I: Are there past relationships that have been important to your development as a person?
23. N: I think- Oh certainly, yes there are. I guess you will want to know which ones. (laughing) I don't know if you do want to know.
24. I: Yes we do, please elaborate as much as you can, (laughing) that's what I want.
25. N: My parents obviously, my brother, my first husband, I had a- I formed attachment as a young girl to older women and I always- my mother's friends, who were older than my mother. Especially there were two women when I was- there was a family that we spent every holiday with because my parents were transferred from [State E] to North [State A], we didn't have any family in our town so for holidays and birthdays and stuff we didn't have anything except for this other family who was also in a similar situation, they were actually from [State F in the north of the USA] and so the mother of that family named [Helena] and her neighbor [Elizabeth] [...] on me. And so I kind of grew up- I always had female attention, some of it wasn't always good, but much of it was. So all of these older women were...and then I had a music teacher, a nun, when I was in grade school. So I was strongly influenced by women.
26. I: Do you recall any changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or your way of thinking about things?
27. N: [I'm looking at the question again so I put it all out?] and I tried to search for answers but I'm a super [patsy?] writer and there is no way I would have gotten through this in a semester. So- well my dad, my father was a pretty larger-than-life character I think, I kind of cut off contact with my parents when I was in my early '20s and I didn't speak to them for, oh gosh, about five years and because my dad- they just- I don't know. There wasn't like any one thing but it was just that I was independent, I married. I had already had a child, I was living with my small child and my husband in [City B] and then my- it's just that distance made me see all these things that were just super inappropriate and hostile, were not, you know that distance made it okay to set boundaries, which they didn't appreciate. But I ended up cutting off contact with them and I wasn't speaking with them at the time that I moved to [State C]. My brother and I- I only have one sibling and so my brother- our relationship changed when I became an adult, he's five years older. But he is still, my brother has- he's kind of a character but he once [...] he had children, then I became brilliant. Because I had all these children and then he would call me for my expertise and so that was a significant change for he looked at me as an adult, an independent person and not just his [...] so that was significant.
28. I: Okay and how has your world view changed across your life's chapters?
29. N: Well, significantly I guess I was as a small kid- I grew up Catholic in a rich Catholic school, I went through that great Catholic kid fascination with nuns and saints and the church. Girls could [not?] be altar boys back then or serv- I don't even know what they call them. I know that girls do it now but I don't know the name of it. I don't think they call them altar girls though, but I would have loved to have done that and I used to pretend I was a priest and I used to say the mass, which I am sure is blasphemous to some but it was- I liked it; we held a funeral for a dead saint, you know as a kid- kids you know. So, but as I became a teenager still in [State A], there was, I do not know that- I think that my world view changes are probably developmentally appropriate, rather than specific to my location or events necessarily.

30. I: How has this affected your image of god or of the divine and what does it mean to you now?
31. N: Well, the things changed radically; I was a creepy kid in high school, kind of- I mean I was- visually I looked normal [...] you know, it was the '80s, I had the big hair.
32. I: Right!
33. N: But I was creepy, like I was really into [...] and Jethro Tull and of course I am from the south and it was the '70s and '80s and so there was lots of Jethro Tull in the world and [...] and I started smoking pot which was also very expanding- mind expanding for me. For some people it is just- you know I do not know what they, what it does for them, I do not know how people could do it every day, because then I would just- you know, I would never get anything done. And- but I smoked a lot of pot in high school because it was cool and creepy, but it was crappy weed.
34. I: Right. (laughing)
35. N: Not like it was [...] you know- I mean you were not having these [...] whatever or however you say his name and you were not having these like, mind blowing, you know, oneness-with-god experiences when we were high on this crappy [...] and so- but it did give me enough to- you know- Like that there was this universal thing going on, I got into- my best girlfriend in high school's older sister used to read [tarot?] cards, so she would read our cards for us and we thought that was super cool and spooky and we were bad ass because we were doing it, you know. But after the birth of my second child my ex-husband, her father, I was married to him then, came home from a business trip and he brought me- he had bought me a deck of [tarot?] cards. And he said I do not know why- and he is a big atheist- and he is like I do not know why, but I just figured you would like this. And so I really started to get into it and I started to appreciate the symbolism, how the certain symbols in the [...] were reflected in the world around you if you looked for them- they were universal symbols, they were- you know, they stretched across cultures and things. And so I started getting into the spirituality behind that, but in the south they are not so hip on that. If you want to buy [tarot?] card you just have to go to a head shop to do it.
36. I: Right.
37. N: And of course, by this time I was a married woman with children and nobody-smoking pot was not- You know, I had no interest in going to a head shop but- But I got into the spirituality and then when I moved to [State C], there was this huge pagan community here. Then I started making some inquiries into pagan things when I lived in [City B]; groups, discussions, lectures, things like that; but it was really- whether, I do not know if this is objectively true, but for me it was- it seemed very difficult to get into, to find it and then be invited to it. I think probably [...] and this is 1990, maybe two, and so, the early '90s and so even in that day and age down there, you just don't do that in the south. And now it's in 2010, 2011, even my hometown now has- they have- it is a new age shop, you know, it is run by some woman who has the angel things. But if you ask her she has the [...] stuff underneath the counter, you know it is like the crystals and berries and shit like that. So- but there is not much discussion of earth reverent religions as a valid spiritual path. That changed when I moved to [State C] because this is, they call it paganistan, which is coined by the anthropologist that's part of our community. And she wrote her- I guess when you have a PhD it is your dissertation I guess that you write. So hers was about the pagan community and she is a nice lady, we all- you know. And we, they say that, that there is like 30,000, that this is the largest pagan community in the [Area G] outside of the bay area, but it seems like we all know each other [...] So you cannot, you know, at the

- Mayday parade that they have every year in [City H] which is run by a theater company, and it is not pagan overtly, but that is like our big get together, you know. And though pagans what we call that holiday, everybody else's Mayday. So here- all that world view changed considerably, when I moved here.
38. I: Okay and have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning?
39. N: Yeah (laughing) yeah I did, I had a terrific- you know, you cannot chase the divine too much, you know, maybe some people do, but they cannot hold jobs, you know, like you cannot chase that because it is destructive if you get too close to it. There is a reason why we are human and on this earth and in this life and not the divine or that close to the divine, because well, that is another answer. But in meditation I was in a coven, I think it was the [...] witch and you spent a year and a day in training with a particular group coven- usually it is the priest and priestess lead the group, and you have to train with them for a year and a day, which is a year and a day of once a week discussions, there is assigned readings, they had to write papers; it is...it is hard to get in to, easy to get out of is what they, you know, that is our joke, it's an anti-cult and so in a meditation during the outer court ritual I was again an initiate. I had an experience where I was one with everything, I mean it just was so brief, it could not have lasted more than a split second, but it was a divine, I do not know what level of connection there was, I do not know which divine it was, I do not know if I just was in its presence or if it was inside of me, it does not matter, I am sure. But in that moment I knew everything, you know. And it just was- it was like a lightning bolt flash, but I can remember being in that moment still and I felt my whole being expanded and contracted at the same time- I do not even-
- it sounds crazy but it was deeply meaningful for me. And I did not take anything away from it, it' not like I felt like I was [...], I felt the drive home, I felt the work that day- you know like nothing changed on the mundane level, but I just- it was moving.
40. I: Okay. And it changed your sense of life's meaning?
41. N: Yes, (laughing) I do not know how. I guess that because maybe I did not know, either I didn't know then; I probably did not know then, I was probably 30, you know, (laughing) so I did not know. Maybe I thought I did but I do not recall that I had like a very hardcore committed vision for my life or anyone's life, you know. I didn't- I was not- I had not strongly identified spiritually, politically, other than my roles as a parent, you know, my identity was not- and after that I had a sense of, well, whatever I did was not wrong, whatever that was, was okay. And if it happened again, that would sure be great and that made me know that there was some divinity, that it wasn't, it's not just crap, [...] the flowers, their hair, talking about being one with god, that is not bullshit, it was real. Yes, so- so it did change my worldview.
42. I: Okay. Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life?
43. N: Not really...
44. I: Have you experienced times when you felt profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning?
45. N: I am- I don't think I have ever been that low, that life had no meaning- to me I can't, that would- I don't think that I can live through that, that will be awful.
46. I: Right?
47. N: Yeah, but well, lots of people don't probably and I have not felt- I mean I have had crises, I've suffered, I feel you know, but I was in the world country, so you know my suffering and my crisis have been emotional or spiritual, and not, you know, physical as far as you don't have drinking

- water (laughing) like I don't- I hesitate, I just feel like a jerk saying yes, you know, things have been so hard when I have always had a roof over my head you know.
48. I: Right?
49. N: I have always had a [job?] if I wanted one you know, but yeah I mean, my crises that I have had when I was younger, they were often the outcome of my idiocy without me realizing it-
50. I: (Laughing)
51. N: And then I think, I was probably in my late 20's, when I realized oh (laughing) I quit thinking that, maybe things wouldn't have happen like you know- I matured in that way kind of late, but I don't know.
52. I: Okay, well moving on to relationships, focusing now on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them?
53. N: Well, they are dead, so I don't have a relationship with them.
54. I: Have there been any changes in your perception of your parents over the years, and if so what caused the change?
55. N: Their death changed my- my dad- I think my dad- I wasn't speaking to my dad when he died, and where you would- some people might think that would be [scaring?] and horrible and shameful, it wasn't for me, I was just kind of glad it was over. I'm sorry- and I felt sorry and sad that he had never quit being an asshole (laughing) you know like [...] ends that, he could, you know, like there's never a time in his life where- he never got old enough to look back on his life and say, 'well I shouldn't have done that.'
56. I: Right.
57. N: You know, maybe I could have been like that and so he never lived that long, but I don't- I don't know, I suppose it was after my mother's death that my extended family out East would tell me these things. Like they weren't telling me things about my parents- I mean they would tell me things that I hadn't known, I couldn't have known, but they were anecdotes, they won't like deep- let me tell you the big secrets of their life kind of thing, it wasn't like that. But it made me understand the role of addiction in their lives that had- and so I was able to just be sad for that, for them, for me, and recognize that there was no way things would have been different, you know like they tried, they did their best but they didn't like- I don't think either one of them were- I think they got married because that's what you did back then.
58. I: Right?
59. N: You know like they just got married because my dad was probably gay and maybe my mom was gay as well (laughing) but you don't know what to do with that in 195X.
60. I: Yeah,
61. N: You don't have, you know, have the thing for that and so they had a very distant marriage- they were both really self-absorbed people, and lived with a lot of shame and so that's why I think maybe no my dad was a cross dresser too. My mother was [...] cross dressers but I don't know. They didn't seem to be very affectionate, and they were very uptight about sex. So...
62. I: Are there any current relationships that are important to you?
63. N: Oh absolutely, my husband- I have a new husband; I'm married, very happy. He's upstairs with the grand kid, he is awesome, he is not even [...] my oldest child, I had my first child when I was 18, and so now that, she is 26 now, this is her son that we watch every Friday night and my husband, who was a 50 year old bachelor when we got married
64. I: (Laughing)
65. N: Never married, no kids, yeah like why would that guy would look at me and think [...] that. But I'm lucky, he is a good man and he- and he loves that kid [huh] that's...
66. I: Ooh that's great.
67. N: Well and it's beautiful to see him- you know he doesn't even have nieces or

- nephews, none of his friends had kids, and he grew up- I mean he grew up and spent his entire adult life without kids around. And it is just amazing to me to watch him; you know he gets up in the morning with the baby you know...
68. I: Oh (laughing)
69. N: He is just terrific, and so it's just- its- it's beautiful to get to relate to my husband in that way, that's a meaningful re- my husband it's a meaningful relationship to me. My brother and I have- my brother is odd but, and he lives in [an Asian country] which is awesome, and so we haven't talked on the phone for probably two months which is- I should call him, because sometimes we talk like once a week. And brother is terrific and brilliant and very influential, but he is also somebody I can't spend a whole lot of time with, soooo so I have his [...] students and so I will call him about my classes, what he thinks that I'm thinking about or what I'm writing right now and my brother who is a writer too, he's a professor, is so encouraging, because he is- it's not because he is my brother although that is about 50% of it, but because he is a teacher first and foremost and he can't not teach (laughing) [...] students is his sister. So we Skype- or email, he built me a website you know. He insists, don't get your master degree it's a waste of time, just get famous- and I'm like oh god why didn't I think of that- like every [masters] student [...] wants to strangle you right now so...
70. I: Alright (laughing).
71. N: (Laughing) right, my god that's what I should have done, yeah so- and so that relationship is significant. I have friendships; I have affection and fondness for my extended Irish Catholic family out East, but I didn't grow up with them, we know each other because when we all get in the same room, we all look alike and we talk [...], I have an accent but they have a super [East coast] accent, but like our humor is very much the same, so it's a little odd when I go out there, you know but those relationships are significant less so I don't have any daily interaction with him. And I have friends, those are important relationships to me. I make time to get together with my friends; my husband is not as social and so like on a Saturday night, I'll be just be gone and like-
72. I: (Laughing)
73. N: I'm hanging out with [Harriet], see you know- and he is cool with that.
74. I: That's good.
75. N: Yeah it [...] me?
76. I: Really good.
77. N: [...] to be me, so it's a good life.
78. I: Okay what groups, institutions or causes do you identify with and why are they important to you?
79. N: Well less and less now that I'm older, I think probably 10 years ago I would have very strongly identified as a [...] witch and the only reason why I would have really even talked to you about- I mean I still consider myself- I think once you're initiated that's the power of initiation, you are always there, you always have that connection with that group, that energy and the divine. But it's less often now and in fact I- it's one of the last things I tell people, you know, I tell- I normally would not, hey I'm a witch (laughing) like I don't ever - and if you me- if you saw me, you'll be, just be like oh no, because I'm just like this chunky middle-aged woman that lives in the suburbs and drives a minivan (laughing) completely, you would not. Like I don't have any tattoos or piercings or- I'm kind of square looking. And especially when I go to pagan stuff you know, like if I hadn't known all these people for the last like 12 years, even though I think I've known them for 15 years now. They love me but they all [look], you know it's a lot fat girls in broom stick skirts and guys with long hair even though they are bald on top and you know just google Pagan Festival and that's what we all look like the world over. And I don't

- look like- I mean I probably and I'll go to- we have our yearly gather once a year. I go to that every year, the only year I missed it was the summer I got married for the second time as we were taking our honeymoon and I never miss it, so I identify with that, that [...] group, but they irritate me at the same time. And I spend a lot of time- you know I spend time with friends and we talk and people come from the- we have people from Kentucky that come, Nebraska, a [...] because we are an oath bound initiatory tradition. When we are out in the larger pagan community we don't, there's things we can't talk about, like what we stuff- certain things that we do are a secret, well sacred to me. But- so the [...] tend to be a little bit clannish and that's, suits me just fine, because the Pagan community at large is irritating as hell and they are just this giant apologetic cultural [relativists?] relativists at this point and I don't know. So I don't, I would identify with the [...] if they were effective you know. I jokingly will call myself a socialist even though, you know I'm not really because I grew up in America you know, and so I don't, I was stronger in those convictions but the older I get the less important they are. So that's a crappy answer.
80. I: (Giggling) No okay, on the present values and commitments, do you feel that your life has meaning at present and what makes your life meaningful to you?
81. N: Oh, my life does have meaning, on a basic level all life has meaning to me, you know there's, there's not a human out there that shouldn't be here. You know they might be people that I could get a restraining order against (giggling) but they have a right to life and I do believe my life, my life meaning is- yeah my life has meaning and what makes my life meaningful is my family, my husband primarily, my children are irritating a lot.
82. I: (laughing).
83. N: There's, my youngest is 15, I have a 19 year old that still lives at home she's handicapped, so she's not going to move away from home for a while, and then that's stressful too for- because her handicap is not evident you know, she was missing a leg then that would be great because everybody can look at her and say oh you don't run you only have one leg. But it's not so when you have [a certain neurological disorder] and you know and she has, she had brain surgery that was deep to, when she was 11.
84. I: Oh wow.
85. N: So well, they took out her right frontal lobe, so good bye executive function, so it's you know and then people will say something horribly not helpful like oh yeah I forget everything too, oh shut up, no you don't.
86. I: (Laughing)
87. N: You know like, you know like, I don't look at your deaf kid and say, gee I'm so glad he can't hear this music you know (laughing), I'm like why the fuck would you say that? People are, aren't people awful though? I mean like they don't- they just- people mean well but they are just dumb, you know and I think as I get older I run the risk of becoming a cranky [...] woman. Because I just don't- I just get irritable with that kind of stuff and it's very much part of my character to say to somebody that was awful. You know here's why you shouldn't say that, you know and people don't appreciate that. Go figure my friends love it. But unless we are already friends you probably wouldn't like it so. Although I'm not awful and I'm successful at school, you know, like I don't alienate people everywhere I go, but- bit I, I'm often cranky in my head. To me- let's put it yeah that's a better way to put it. I'll be like, I'll help a student, I'm a writing tutor, and so I'll be helping a student and they just keep going on and on and on. You know about

- something I could just not [effing?] care about you know.
88. I: (laughing).
89. N: No, you can't write your title first and the paper will follow, it just doesn't work like that (laughing) and so I think I'm- one of the things that's meaningful to me is being that teacher- you know that kind of peer- I'm a peer tutor, but I'm old and I've been writing for a long time professionally. So I am- so I'm really, my advice is excellent you know (laughing) when we come to the writing centre my college and you meet with me.
90. I: Mhm.
91. N: You'll be getting excellent help on your paper and- and the choices that I've made have brought me to that position. I feel very strongly that I have something to impart and encouraging somebody who wants to write but is still really heavy in the clichés or (laughing) [...] or something or just, no here is the assignment but I really want to write this essay diatribe about evils of something. No, you know and so I do feel like I get a good response from students- I'm a popular tutor, people make appointments with me. So that and if I hadn't left my job to commit to being a fulltime student I wouldn't be doing that and I- sometimes I think, wow my life would be unhappy and different and I wouldn't be writing as much and so- just my- my commitment to education for my own self- I hope to just end up teaching college. Part of me [...] I like school so well I don't want to- I've already had jobs and they are really overrated.
92. I: Right.
93. N: You know I've done that and that's crap. And academia, right now I have a big fat crush on academia but I'm pretty sure in about two years if you are to call back I'd say fuck those people and they are stupid and I don't want to do it any more, I'm pretty sure that right now it's just a crush. So it's- those roles you know the- it's the things that I do that bring my life meaning and my relationship.
94. I: If you could change one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
95. N: I would never have smoked cigarettes. That's- I would never have smoked cigarettes- because it's been a- I'll probably die before I get to teach college you know (giggling) or something or you know but right before- I don't know something awesome happens, tenure or you know like whatever big projects and dreams that you can have as an academic I'll probably die like right before the letter comes into mail because of cigarettes and that sucks. And it's so hard to stop. Even if, I used to say if it were illegal- But I would do it even if it were illegal, I probably drive through a crap part of town at 2:00 in the morning and risk getting shot to buy a packet of cigarettes for 20 bucks. Because smoking is just that- that bad. What else would I change? I don't know, I don't think I would change much else because smoking- you know it's going to take my life and I wouldn't be a different person now if I had never smoked. I would still have my kids you know, like I don't think that it's- my smoking put me on some path to like not having a certain job or anything like that. Um, I hesitate to say even when I was getting divorced for my first husband I wish I'd never met him. Because then I wouldn't have had my kids and that's also denying the times that were pleasurable and happy and fulfilling.
96. I: Mhm.
97. N: And who wants to negate pleasure? I don't know, it just seems like you are asking for trouble.
98. I: Are there any beliefs, values or commitments that seem important to your life, right now?
99. N: Ah yeah, the more I study religion, the less religious, as if, I don't think you could ever call me religious. When people ask if I'm religious, I say yes, even though I am

- positive that what I mean isn't what they mean, but it shuts them up, you know.
100. I: Right.
101. N: And then they keep talking about their own shit (laughing) [...] I don't want to hear about your relationship with the lord Jesus Christ you know like- Although I am a huge fan of um, that's probably a cheeky way to put it, but of deeply religious people and I'm still fascinated by nuns. [...] and, I'm fascinated by nuns and I think I wanted- I came to college because I wanted to be chaplain, I felt very strongly um oh, are we, is that even the question? Sorry, I could just- I want, I want to- Yeah. Okay, my commitment to exploring religion is important to me, even though I'm now forbidden to major in religion by my husband who I (giggling) love and he- I understand his point. I wanted to go to college and major in religion and get a Masters in Divinity, there's a super hippie seminary right in the next town. I think it's hippie, it's probably not. But it's not Baptist, you know (giggling) or Lutheran or you know it's, and um I wanted to become a chaplain. Because I have always been attractive to people who seem to be hurting, I don't (laughing) seek some help, I don't, maybe I don't know what that means...but I will have people that I barely know, sometimes strangers, sometimes acquaintances tell me stuff that's deeply - deeply personal. And ask me what they should do and I don't know if it's just because I have that face that's says, you know, I have some answers for you or I can comfort you in this way, I don't know what it is. And so that's what lead me to - to be a chaplain because I thought why, I should, well I should learn how to do it right, and I really wanted to be an interface chaplain. My husband (...) up a \$60,000 masters degree to work as a chaplain where you can at best make 25 grand a year wasn't helpful, and he is right (laughing) you know like that.
102. I: Mhm.
103. N: Super depressing to me (laughing) but, supposing because it means that the culture at large doesn't value religion.
104. I: Mhm ...
105. N: But religion is super important to me and I think that it's important to find a language that we can all use to come to that consensus that it's okay for a religion to be important, I think right now... I don't know, I don't think I am answering the question, what was it again? So okay, so that's, religion is important to me - Honesty, every day of my life, truth is the biggest value, I think. If something is not honest it just drives me nuts, and I will get (hot?), I mean I will get angry, you know, like it causes huge feelings in me, when something is dishonest. So that, so that to me that feels like and I don't know how smart this is, but that feels like, well you should pay attention to that. If you are having this big reaction, look at it. What is it about? There is a reason why you are having it, you know. Maybe you need medication, maybe you don't, you know (laughing) maybe it's hormonal, but it still even if it is just hormonal, you should still look at it. Because and it's not like it interferes, I can still drive, I can attend classes, I have (...) or you know like - but it is - sometimes it keeps me up at night, when something is not honest, so honesty, the pursuit of meaning, what's in the Divine, outside of the Divine, that is important to me, helping my family stay stable, then that is a big commitment that's an everyday thing, that's important too.
106. I: When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
107. N: .Mhm, outside, especially camping.
108. I: Mhm.
109. N: Like I can't stress the importance of camping enough and I think everybody should camp, if everybody can't, I think people will just relax a lot more and I know camping upsets people, makes them, such

people make some tense. It is dirty but find a way to camp, go to a cabin, you know. It doesn't have to be a tent on a green not far from the boundary water you know, although if that's your gig then do that too. Summer time, (laughing) obviously it is a lot easier; I live in [State C] which is kind of a mistake. Although it does have four distinct seasons which I have, which I really appreciate. In [State A], there is just nothing like this, you don't have four seasons, and its, I mean it's too hot and everything is poisonous down there, and toxic and you can't sleep outside without risking your life, you know, here it's just, I mean we have our secure camp sites in [State C] (laughing,) you know and there is, you know, and a certain zip code every kid has got leukemia, I mean like that happens to you too, but if you drive six hours north here you can drink straight out of the lake, you know.

110. I: Mhm.

111. N: Yeah, so I mean and I think that kind of thing, if people could connect to the land and maybe if they connected to whatever they're at, I don't want everybody coming up here necessarily (laughing), but you know people could just connect to the land that they are connected to for whatever reason. Maybe we could make this planet a little more sustain - you know like we would take better care of it, and smoking pot still, sometimes it is super helpful - I am- about once a year, I will get a gram, which I do, did sell it in gram size in high school, but you did make like the okay symbol, with your fingers -

112. I: Mhm.

113. N: That's about what a gram is, because it is like a little (...) the key thing, of marijuana- and is not much better now than it was when I was in high school, and I didn't smoke pot for a long-long-long time, and then I had a boyfriend after I got divorced, he was a big pot head and I would smoke sometimes and then I would go and meditate, and it is a different kick and I don't

know what marijuana is like for everybody, but for me it will get me out of my - I tend to be too housebound, on occasion you know and I don't, it can be a nice, lift up to the mystical. When I- when I want to do that, like you can't do that in the morning and drive to work now, that's not mystical, that's not the point.

114. I: (laughing) no.

115. N: Not okay, you know, like that's not, then you are going to stay high you know, like that's not okay, but- my year (...)we all go to this very remote state park, it's a group camp. In a state park and it is like 20 miles off the trail. It's fabulous out there is no street light, there is no airplane, there is no cell phone reception, nothing, and they always bring a little bit of weed up to that, and I will get naked outside by myself and I do the bath ritual, I will have like my one little puff, I have like a little (grass?). We had a bad time, tell me what it is really called, I think a one hitter and it's about a packet full of enough weed, that just maybe covers your pinky finger nail and just like one hit of that, it's all that's fine and then you shower outside, and let the sun you know dry you off and the wind and you are all by yourself and you are on the blankets which is important to bring and I will meditate and I pray and sometimes it makes me cry, and it will last like, I will do that like on Friday night and the vibe will last all weekend and it's all been weird, but it's lovely.

116. I: Mhm.

117. N: You need to do it, I don't - I camp throughout the rest of the summer, and I don't get to do that, you know, like you are not going to do that as the state park (laughing)

118. I: (Laughing) No.

119. N: (...) pasty white naked body out, you know, on top of the camp, some shit like that, you got it's (laughing) that is just not attractive. and I am telling you this because this is the interview and this is what you want to know, I would never talk about that

- from the thing like with some classmates, they will say what you, are you doing, you're insane, I can only hung out me you know like, (laughing) dance around, there will be a lot of drums, you know like they would never, that's not important for them to know.
120. I: Right.
121. N: But that's some significant harmony with the universe, you are burying yourself like literary.
122. I: Mhm.
123. N: Come and get me, you know, come into me and you know, you got to open (throat?) to the Gods. You should probably do it more than I do, I can probably stand to have more of a relationship with the gods than I do now, with a lot of people I am still very busy, you know, there is, there is always something else, they can be doing but- in times of crises am still a bit of a Catholic somewhere down inside. Lots of pagan are Catholic, ex-Catholics, maybe it's all that chanting and incense, mass and rituals, but maybe it is just because there is so many damn Catholics but they are, there is a part of me that is still very drawn to want pray the Rosary, mostly of because that's (Mary's?) thing you know and a, I was a huge, huge, huge devotee of Mary when I was young, I loved Mary. Mary is a woman and she's the mother of God and...it's... he's not coming down here so... I mean Mary is the ultimate, right, (coughing) excuse me, so there were times whe- I have my mom's rosary, it's a beautiful cut glass one and...but I don't pull out the rosary and make a novena or even just pray the rosary because for the same reason why I don't; because I'm lazy. (Laughing) I have lots (...) where I feel like... I feel like (as witch) in the former Catholic and maybe I'm still a little Catholic, I have lots of tools at my disposal to connect with the divine to be in that harmony with God, but we take it for granted and (...) so there's ... that's really (answer) (coughing) excuse me, okay.
124. I: What is your image or model of mature faith, of a mature response to questions of existential meaning?
125. N: I may be saying I don't know ... (laughing) but then there might be... I feel like the older I get and the more I think about God and how people connect to God, how I connect to God, I feel like the (...) right now.
126. I: Mhm.
127. N: Sometimes the exploration of it takes away the mystery, and I love the mystery, so the mystery is that what I experience, that time in meditation, that's the mystery, you know it's this kind of thing that can't really be explained and has to be experienced and I don't know if I know very many spiritually mature people, maybe that's why I have this thing for nuns, even though they would probably right away, no I'm not, I don't know. You know, they might say, but maybe it's that being able to admit, I don't know, I keep guessing, I keep looking, that's probably the point of it all.
128. I: Mhm. When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it and can you give me an example?
129. N: I want to make a list, I'm very practical. I'm ...in the (witch) community they would say, because I'm a Capricorn.
130. I: Mhm.
131. N: So the (...) down and then it's the sixth cardinal earth time and (...) with me I try to be super practical, I ... if I had to make a decision, I'd think, what's the outcome that I want, what's the outcome that is likely (laughing) and I'll make the effort, it's very important to separate your will from your want, you know, its...if I want something, well why do I want it, what's it going to satisfy, I feel like I've had to come to know myself enough to know, "no that's just me being craven you know I don't really want that". But I make a list ...what I mean, pros on one side and the cons on the other, and (laughing) see which is longer of the co-

- and then I look at ...what, is that really a con, is that something that I could maybe... can money make it go away, you know like ...
132. I: Mhm.
133. N: I mean you have to weigh like how insurmountable is that barrier and that's how I decided to go to school. And it was probably the best decision I ever made, I left my job, I was making more than my husband, you know I had the big income and good benefits and it just...it became unhappy and unpleasant for me and dysfunctional. His manager didn't speak to me for a year after I quit yeah and so I mean it's not like I was just like, "fuck you guys I'm going to school," there was, like it was... I was making (...) money and they were letting me go to school part time and ... so, but I mean I sat down and said, "if I walk away from this job, what will happen?" you know. I had no guarantee of co- I did successfully (file) for unemployment and (so it was nice), they called it a hostile work environment. I had thought so...
134. I: Mhm.
135. N: But just didn't think anybody else would. And it opened the door to teaching, to tutoring, I have relationships with (these) instructors that are wonderful and so encouraging of students and it's so exciting and if I hadn't made that list, if I'd just like my husband would have liked, because my husband, if I'm a very earth bound person, as far as you know I'm very, "let's stay sane, let's be rational, let's not get crazy here," he's even worse I mean (laughing) he is... we're both Capricorns and sometimes we get very (...)into things and I just don't like... (I did) that every day, when I drove to work I cried, especially after I started school.
136. I: Mhm.
137. N: Because school was so rewarding and work was not.
138. I: Right.
139. N: And I made a list, and even though the cons like the money, like how could you walk away from money, I've a mortgage, I have children and...
140. I: Right.
141. N: You know, how can you do that, and I just fucking did it anyway and it was totally ...I've been so lucky, which and I don't know what luck plays in the world, when people say there is no luck, I tell you there is (laughing) and maybe it's all part of some divine plan, I don't believe tha- I don't know. I don't know what I believe about that but I've been lucky, we have savings, so it's not like, I didn't jeopardize anything, I wouldn't have done it, had I ... if I had no savings and was living hand to mouth, I wouldn't have done it obviously, but ... yeah I mean it was... I made that list and then I just kept thinking, "what if you don't do it, what if you just stay and you (...) this present shit everyday, he won't speak to you," and people sa- they made me... I felt like I was crazy and that's...it's like when you feel crazy that's when you got to look at getting rid of the things that make you feel crazy and then I talked to... and I went to a counselor. And I talked to her, you know, counselor at my daughter's counseling office, my daughter gets counseling all the time and I just, an appointment with this one woman who is super (...) and she (...) and we knew each other, it's just (hey) on the (...) and passing and I told her and she said, "Jesus, just quit, who cares what happened, just get out of there!" and I was like, "lucky I'm doing this," and you know I mean, that was helpful too, to have this third party you know say "you're not crazy". So I make a list and then I obsess, some people might call it praying, but I don't have... I don't direct that obsession to any particular deity.
142. I: So if you had a difficult problem to solve, is there anyone that you would look for, for guidance?
143. N: Any person?
144. I: Right, anyone or person?
145. N: Yeah, a person, yeah, sure I have friends, I have my husband, I have myself, I'm a

- smart pers- you know, I feel like I'm a smart enough person where, if I'd really difficult decision to make, I just try to find what... well since ... ever since I decided to go to school I mean, that decision was a landmark for me and what counted in its favor was that I was so inspired and it was somehow objective confirmation that I was indeed smart, I wasn't just faking. You know, like I didn't just have big vocabulary or som- I know I really I'm smart and I talk to friends and I ... like I want to move to [Country H in Europe] this summer.
146. I: (Laughing)
147. N: (Laughing) Which was kind of a ...yeah it wasn't terribly realistic, I didn't want to move this summer, but I wanted to travel to [Country H] and spend five weeks to see whether or not we should move there after I get my degree. And you know, I made a whole list, I did lots of research online, my husband is a citizen and he couldn't find a job here in US and so he, you know I'm like, "dude they have (...) healthcare, they have five weeks of vacation, why the fuck are you looking for a stupid job here you (...)" This is a non brainer, I was starting to have concerns, but we ended up ... I told him to get (...) and first to find a job or otherwise we were...I was buying those tickets and we're going to [Country H] and spending the money. Which he didn't want, the inevitable, he just didn't want to spend almost probably \$10,000, which is smart and reasonable and I recognized this, but I felt... I was super inspired by the idea that there's a culture that takes care of people, you know, like you can have the \$12 an hour job there but you don't have to suffer from healthca- you know like a medical bill won't bankrupt you, that you won't go hungry because you got cancer and now that I'm 44 and he's 55, I kind of think about these things so in the night and so I look at what inspires me. And I talk to myself.
148. I: (laughing)
149. N: That sounds super stupid but if you prob- have you ever had- when you're writing, say, somebody said you have to write a paper or something.
150. I: Mhm.
151. N: And you don't really know what it is you want to say like you think you know and you kind of think that it is a really hard to crack question like how would you solve, you know, the energy crisis (...)
152. I: (laughing) Right.
153. N: People are not around the clock and you want me to fucking write a paper about that? You know like this is your (...) and I know it is a critical thinking exercise but come on, give me something else and so the only way I can get to the answer is to write through it like free writing I guess you'd call it and so sometimes I just do the verbal equivalent of that. And I talk to myself out of stuff as often as I talk myself into stuff. So it seems that prob- to me that's objective. Now I do sound crazy. Okay, what's the next question?
154. I: (Laughing) No, you don't. Do you think that actions can be right or wrong? If so, what makes an action right in your opinion and what makes an action wrong?
155. N: Well, you got to look at harm. To me, if your action harms someone, but you feel good from that temporarily, then that's absolutely prob- you know, you made a wrong choice, and it's easy to rationalize actions by saying, "well, yes, it was harmful but he needed it to hear that." Now that's bullshit. You know there's a kinder way to go.
156. I: Mhm.
157. N: There's a prob- it's tough when you have like say - a relationship with somebody who is destructive, you know, when they are harming themselves, sometimes you have to prob- they've been cutting them off in my - opinion isn't harmful. You know, there's that fine line, but whether yes and yeah, actions can be wrong. And they can be right. Harm is the measure. Or whom does

- it serve? Who's being served by that action? That's another good question to ask.
158. I: Mhm. Are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances? And are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?
159. N: Well think there are moral opinions that everybody does agree on. I think, I think everybody agrees that murder is bad. You know, that (...) is good. Even pro death penalty people probably would rather the person not be on death row you know, like they are not just - even if people that are full of the death penalty probably wish that it wasn't necessary.
160. I: Mhm.
161. N: I think death penalty is wrong, it's all - think it's certainly wrong when the innocence of the person can't be ruled out. I'm not a big fan of the death penalty. In 1977, when I was 10, there was a huge, I got a (...) of the Gary Gilmore case. I don't know if you all remember that he was the first guy - Utah, he randomly just killed these guys just no reason, just murdered them.
162. I: Mhm.
163. N: And he...Utah brought the death penalty back for that, it was a (...) case for them and he said, "Okay, good. Do it. I've been in jail almost my whole entire adult life; I don't want to go back." It's been prob- for him it was the noise which told me I never want to go to jail because I can't stand that kind of you know, ...like he talked prob- I read some interview in a magazine that my parents had about the noise of jail and the lights and the constant, you know just the 24/7 stimulus, that's negative.
164. I: Mhm.
165. N: And he didn't want go (through?) any of that anymore and he said, "Well, if it's your law that you are going to kill me then let's do it." And I remember I had a scrap book about Gary Gilmore, my parents (laughing) thought I was so disturbed
166. I: (laughing)
167. N: It was true. It was fucked up really, but it was just, it was compelling, I mean it was on the news constantly, it was in the magazines, and he was famous - and then Norman Mailer wrote his killer book 'The Executioner's Song' which probably came out in 1980, I read it in high school, I still have my own (interesting) copy from high school... but I mean, even though I do believe the death penalty is wrong in that case, you know, hey, it's a bad law, but it, it is the law, he totally never denied it, he prob- you know he was absolutely guilty, so I was okay with the death penalty in that incident, and I suppose I would be - I'm glad my state doesn't have it, but I guess if I lived in Utah and the guy said, "Well, yep. I just blew his face off, no reason, just kill me" then I'd be like, "Okay," I got to...death can be prob- Utah has the Mormon thing about blood atonement it's really interesting too. That's what got me interested in Mormonism. And I was super interested in that for a while and I still am but I, that was probably what started getting me into religion. The whole idea of Mormons in Utah and they are blood atonement, but yeah, there's certain moral opinions that we all do agree on. You know. Nobody thinks hunger is okay prob-, you know famine is okay. You know, we do think that, you know that it's right to preserve life. Even people who opt for abortion wish that abortion weren't necessary, you know...so there is always a prob- I think there is. There is always. If you are preserving life - then you are doing the right thing. Even you know, even if - some selective abortions of a twin or something, then, you know, if you maintain the pregnancy, both babies die. If you abort one and one lives, well, let the one live it.
168. I: Right.
169. N: You know - it has a chance. And then let's nurture that life once it's here (...) some of these girls off to a homeless camp or something you know, I mean, that's part of my super liberal you know, I am a big

fan of social safety nets from the government because I think when you leave it to private churches, or private, or private individuals, then you get into an entitlement issue. Ironically, the word entitlement you know, but I know they all think, you know, but ...you know there are some prison programs here, Chaplain Prison programs here in [State C] where if the inmate, it must be inmate subscribed to this particular Christian program. They don't get any religious counseling or services or anything.

170. I: Mhm.
171. N: Yeah, It's been in the paper. It has been an issue. Yeah, so I mean if you left it up to churches or synagogues or mosques, they might turn around and say, "You know, we've already helped you twice. So we are not going to help you anymore," rather than finding out why is this kid coming back twice in a month like maybe he needs to learn to fish. Let's help him with that. And knowing that there are always going to be people in every society that cannot do for themselves you know, they are just crowded untreated mental illness, drug addiction, you know and everybody who's whole will provide for themselves and hopefully other people too. So when you see somebody who is chronically in the system you know, homeless or drug addicted or in and out of jail and stuff like that, they are not whole.
172. I: Mhm.
173. N: Something's wrong. That can probably be fixed or at least contained. Yeah. I have a strong, yeah. There's always a right and a wrong.
174. I: Okay, well, we'll finish up with religion and world view. Do you think that human life has a purpose, if so what is it?
175. N: Well, - I do, this sounds dumb but it certainly is the best thing that I've ever thought of is that the reason ...the point - of being alive, why we are here, is to enjoy and fully live as humans to enjoy being human. To love being human, and everything that that means I do think that -
- (whispering) my beliefs and inclinations are as muddled as you'd imagine any wrestlers would be but...But I think that - I think the gods want us to. They are not here. They can't be human. Maybe they once were, I don't know, but they are not here. And they want us to love being human. Being prob-life is a gift. You know, and if you don't love it then that's not the point. You should love being human and there is so much that we can do as humans that God cannot do. So we should do it on their behalf.
176. I: Is there a plan for our lives or are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
177. N: Well I don't know if it is beyond our control because I think that we can make choices very well, I think that if you- at the same time I cringe when I hear a politician say God wants me to run for office because I think that is an irresponsible way to put it.
178. I: Mhm.
179. N: If they do feel spiritually called to be a public servant then say that, yeah alright.
180. I: Mhm.
181. N: I can (...) already.
182. I: (Laughing)
183. N: They don't-but I do think that- I don't think that there is a grand predetermined plan for our lives. I am no Calvinist you know (laughing) like we are not abysmal bugs that are going to hell from the minute we are born and I don't believe in how, I don't believe in that but I think that- I think that the plan is that we have a life and you ought to do the best that you can for it. You can maybe cultivate relationship with the Gods but if you do that to a point where you are not having a life. Like I don't get a (...) like I don't get the (slang) I mean like not, like the ones that stop bathing and cutting hair and don't step on bugs and you know.
184. I: (Laughing)
185. N: I mean like that-I think it is okay for some people to be extreme, I certainly don't think that all of us should strive for these higher extremes. You know God gave me a

- body if you want to say that. Know even- you know I have a body, I am human, I am a woman, I should enjoy sex. (Laughing) that is not radical to me.
186. I: Mhm.
187. N: No it's not the purpose of my body to go and meet the fleet, you know and then get passed around and that kind of sex, no. I mean like that is destructive and (harmful?). So maybe the plan for our live is to realize human potential within our limits. Don't get extreme.
188. I: What does death mean to you, what happens to us when we die?
189. N: Mhm, well should (...) that. I am- I - part of being a chaplain was working in- was wanting to work in hospitals because with my mom's final illness and her death I was moved by a lot of that but I hope it happens. I don't say- I don't think anybody can say this is what happens when you die, I think that's- you just asking for trouble with statement about the afterlife but certainly what I hope happens is that we can continue with our- we can continue maybe the work of our life if we have a higher calling in our life but we can continue that work without the hindrance of the body, but the souls or the spirit or the mind potential remains and you can add to this collective pool of energy and idea and inspiration and thought if you made it through your life without like say you only got half way there. Maybe you get to do some of that for a while and then you get to come back, do it again. It is kind of what I hope happens.
190. I: Do you consider yourself a religious spiritual or faithful person?
191. N: I guess. (Laughing)
192. I: (Laughing)
193. N: No that I have told you everything.
194. I: I know. (Laughing)
195. N: (Laughing) not that question first.
196. I: I know (Laughing) I guess maybe I just want to re-enforce the answers.
197. N: First to the books and make that question first but I mean I do consider certainly spiritual, I don't like a lot of the kind of McDonalds kind of spiritually. You know I can just take this pill or say this prayer. You know if I- I have pagan friends that are adamant that immunizations are evil, all western medicine is bad and if we could just go out and lick toads we'll all be great and that is fucked up.
198. I: Mhm.
199. N: Like you know, like if you have masters in science how do you think that, you know like oh my god.
200. I: Mhm.
201. N: You know and these are intelligent people or at least educated, I don't know and I think I am- but they will say, "oh I am certainly more spiritual than religious" but I think certain religio- I think that there needs to be some formed spirituality so that is why I say I am religious. I mean I practice it like it's so (amazing?) but I believe it is important to have a form. I like the idea of rote prayers, I think that there is power in words that have been used by millions of people for hundreds of years. I think that-that words and things gain power from that. You know that collective devotion of people, people add to that, when you say the Saint Francis prayer you feel something, your body and that is because A) it's a beautiful prayer, B) is asking for the right things of the gods. You can't just- you can't ask god for crap that you can get yourself. In the Craft we say, where are the hands of the gods? At the end of your own arms. Meaning if you want the gods to do something you have to meet them more than halfway.
202. I: Mhm.
203. N: Don't just lay around and pray for a job and then never fucking go on an interview, so that surprises me you know, that is the wrong habit. But I believe in form, one of the things that I like about being a Gardnerian is that we have the same ritual that we do every month on a full moon and I know that every Saturday before the full moon, most of the people that I know are

worshiping and I know the words they are saying because I have said them myself, because the ritual doesn't change. It hasn't changed since Gardner wrote it in the 50s. It is based on the universal symbols that each can- but each is affected in his or her own way. It is not to say that we are group, mind that we all think the same thing. But I think there is a lot of beauty and a lot of power and structure and you can move beyond, I know which is that write a new ritual every formula and I spend more time writing it than doing it. And doing it since that is not (Laughing) why would you do that. You know like that is such a waste of energy, you never get beyond the form, maybe the form is the energy. I don't know but to me if you have to reinvent the wheel every time you are just spinning wheels, so.

204. I: Mhm.

205. N: Anyway, yeah I am religious; I don't know what my religion is.

206. I: (Laughing) And our next question, I know you have talked about rituals, but are there any religious spiritual or other ideas or symbols that are important to you or have been important to you?

207. N: Oh yeah at times I am totally- I love ritual and I love mojo and gris-gris in [State A] they call it hoodoo. I love the tools and the atmosphere, you could do without all of that and in fact the witches, is not her tool. Everything that you need is already inside of you, tools and pictures and statues and art they help create atmosphere that makes it easy to step out of the world for a little while. I think that kind of stuff is important. I think prayer and meditation is important. I prayed and prayed and prayed for my husband to get a job even though I knew it would mean that we weren't going to go to- you know I'd rather him have a job and after that he went for five weeks and spend \$10,000.

208. I: Mhm.

209. N: Which would mean I have to- like so far I have been able to go to school, the option

was I am, just taking from savings and I knew that 10,000 might make an impact in a couple of years you know.

210. I: Mhm.

211. N: So I prayed and prayed. But that was just because sometimes you get desperate and it just feels good to unload and god's shoulders are big and they don't actually, I don't know, but she did anything. Like (laughing) I don't know that she actually was like, okay let's get together and get this to do the job. I am pretty sure that didn't happen but because it wasn't me looking for the job, it was him and I couldn't make you know- like you are just helpless and that, yeah I pray. Have you noticed unlike a lot of people you pray when you are desperate- I pray when I- I only say thank you when I am happy though. I try to make a big point of saying thank you as a pray- you know praying a prayer of thanks so that I am not human and greedy and a lot of sense (laughing) not like everybody. So yap, I do.

212. I: Okay well, that is the next question. So again, do you pray meditate or perform any other spiritual discipline?

213. N: Yeah pray, I pray. I mean, I don't have a formal prayer per se, I am still very attracted to, I keep thinking about praying the Rosary and what would that be like. I am interested in some of the Catholicism, some of the things of Catholicism, they just have too many, I don't think they'd let me in. You know like (laughing).

214. I: (Laughing)

215. N: (...) I got to be the first Catholic that, I am pretty sure that I am too far gone but it is that part of me that thinks if my husband dies and I am old and my children are grown, why can't I go to a convent the way women used to like in the middle ages. Like that's what you did when you became a nun and the whole idea of a life devoted to prayer and meditation is very attractive. Not practical in the list but-but so yeah. To be in that community of- I know some former nuns and they don't agree. You know

- (laughing) I have a very romantic vision of living in a religious (commune?).
216. I: Mhm.
217. N: Which I won't probably ever do, but yeah. So I mean I do- but I don't think it's - I don't think it's blasphemy for me to pray the Rosary- I went to a funeral, Catholic mass and I took communion even though that is a sin to them. They think that is very-very bad, there is no witness (...) I do so, like alarm that goes off when you walk in church where it, "says this person had a communion," but technically by the rule for the Catholic church, I cannot take communion, but I did, and it was beautiful and so I was kind of cheeky and blasphemous in that way.
218. I: (Laughing) What is sin to your understanding?
219. N: Sin is- I don't know I don't really- to my understanding I will say that is a sin partly because that is my mum and my grandmother talk like that. It's just a- I will say Jesus Mary and Joseph. (Laughing) I think my friends will be like, "What did you just say?" and I am like, it is a Catholic thing you know, my mom. But it's, you know what my mom would have said to my grandmother..."sin is an act that takes you away from God." I know as a child I learnt it puts a black mark on your soul and maybe that is a handy way to kind of explain it. Sin is something- sin is an act for which you must atone. So penance- you have to be sorry I know that there is a list of sin but I think any- basically any action that is craven, that is purely feeding the will of a person- the want of a person and not the will, an act that causes you or someone else, that causes you or someone else to become separated from the divine.
220. I: And how do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
221. N: Well, I don't even know if I - yeah I guess I believe in evil I don't believe in the devil. I don't believe evil in that Christian way, however we say it and we live in a Christian world so you have to use those terms. I- there is evil in the world because there are people in the world (Laughing) you know, like there are simply not enough- there are people who are -... (Laughing) okay.
222. I: Thank you for staying up late with me I know-
223. N: (Laughing) No problem.
224. I: Poor thing (Laughing).
225. N: This is the latest he's ever stayed up.
226. I: Aww.
227. N: Yeah, he is just, I don't know what the deal is but anyway I think- what was the question again?
228. M: How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
229. N: Because there are people in the world and that people are what make evil...people are what makes things evil. It's actions, it's the Holocaust, it's - it's the desire for prophets for people that's evil. If you are willing to hurt or step on a person to further your own gain. For just to gain, to further your own ego, that is evil. There are of course degrees of evil; like the (...) there is without darkness we wouldn't have anything to measure light by. There is evil, the father of the stupid kid in my town that likes to smoke up all the kids and get them high because he wants to be the king of the 12 year old to be cool.
230. I: Mhm.
231. N: That is evil, it's not as evil as killing six million Jews, you know it's (laughing) in the grand scheme of things, but the wanting or knowing acts of harm. Rape as a tactic of war. Yeah it's evil because it is people and people until they- and because nobody stops it. That's the big secret I think. Nobody says hey "you can't take those Jews out of my town" (Laughing).
232. I: Mhm.
233. N: Nobody says you can't rape these women anymore and we have guns, we are going to make you stop. You know, nobody does that and the reason why people don't

- do that it is because, who cares, it is just a bunch of poor African villagers and there is no you know - - they live on Asbestos Island or something you know. Like nobody wants to go there, there is nothing that we can take. You know there is.
234. M: Mhm.
235. N: I don't know but I think that is better, but yeah if we are talking about evil, I guess I can get better.
236. I: Mhm (laughing), if people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?
237. N: Well, I think that you've got to have a common language and that's to say even in the same tongue we still won't have common language. Like I told you I am religious but I am pretty sure Pat Robertson will clutch his chest and deny that I am religious.
238. I: (Laughing)
239. N: You know I mean that's because there's - because we can't - it's egoism. People are terr- I think it's fear. That's really, this is fear, people are afraid that if they recognize, you don't have to agree with some of these practices. You don't have to say I want to do that or you don't even have to say it's valid. But if it is not harming anybody, is kind of like the gay marriage argument you know. It is not going to fucking destroy (laughing) you know. When - because people - because people (posture?) because they feel like they have too much to lose if they back down or say. Okay, we'll let this Mormon guy be president and we won't have a (debate?) about him being a Mormon...or I don't think we had a freak about Kennedy and he was just a Catholic. People used to really hate on Catholic and think they were (...) devoted to the Pope and if there is a Catholic (...) I guess. I mean that he would do anything the Pope said and it's just it is also fear driven and I think that if we could - if people could just maybe have a personal experience (...) how I don't know. Lots of people have a personal experience of Jesus and they just seem to be crazy. And so you know like they hate gay marriage (...) or whatever. I just, I am not sure I - I think maybe the first thing we ought to do is have a common way of speaking. And find those moral sayings that we can all agree on that life is sacred or actions consider- what harm our actions might do. If everybody like fought in the war while (...) we should still have conflicts. There are freaking pagans that can't be in the same room together.
240. I: (Laughing)
241. N: I don't know because three generations ago your priest said this and I think you are all stupid, you know, it's childishness. So a common language would be a good start. Or just language, I don't know, not a common language and people get afraid that their religious things don't mean the same to them. That's yeah, okay; I just talked myself out of that answer. So - if we can look at another practice and say they are forming life, like polygamy. Look at like (laughing) like that is an extreme thing in our country, is probably, is more common in other countries but if it's not coercion. If there is no, you know, we are not talking about children.
242. I: Right.
243. N: If we are talking about adults who want to come together and be together and they all love each other and they love their children and they are good in their community, then we can say they are forming life. They are creating more life, you know, I don't know. Find the things that you can identify with.
244. I: Okay, well. And that concludes our interview.
245. N: Okay.

B.9 Faith Development Interview with Brian C.

1. I: [Brian] with your permission, I'd like to go ahead and record this call and do you give consent for us to continue with the interview?
2. N: I do.
3. I: Okay, starting out we're going to kind of start out with a little bit of history and move your way up to your values and commitments. Did I send you a copy of the questions?
4. N: Probably so, but it's been a while.
5. I: Okay. I know I've been sending them to everybody but I couldn't remember if I had with you or not. If anything throws you for a loop, we can go back through it at any time.
6. N: Okay.
7. I: The first part asks about your life.
8. N: Okay.
9. I: So reflecting on your life thus far, identify its major chapters. If your life were a book, how would you name the different chapters?
10. N: Oh wow, um, that's very metaphorical. Um, if my life were a book... Gee, I don't—I mean, um, I probably can't do this in any kind of chronological order so I'm gonna have to—
11. I: That's okay.
12. N: [...] Okay. Well, um... I guess. I mean, childhood, adolescence, um, undergrad. This—This period between undergrad and grad school, and, um, grad school I suppose. Still in grad school.
13. I: Mhm. What marker events stand out as especially important?
14. N: Marker events in my whole life? Wow. Um, I—Well I'm gonna work backwards. I got married recently. So that's a big one.
15. I: Oh. Congratulations.
16. N: Um. Thank you. Um, hang on a second. [...] you take a card? Oh, no, you don't take a card, you take cash. Um. Sorry about that.
17. I: It's all right.
18. N: We're in the car. Um. Markers [...] um. (laughing) Anyway s-so I got married recently. That was a big deal. Before that, um... Ahh, I mean I-I've kind of been in a period of professional development lately so, um I've been, you know, um, —I started grad school in [200X]. I've got four more years to go. Um, so you know th-that in of itself was a big marker event but also, um, you know, beginning to practice psychotherapy, um, with live clients, so that was a big marker event. Um, was a big identity thing in some ways. And—And sort of a test. Um. I guess going back to—you know, my, my, you know, my childhood was pretty, I think, typical in most ways. Um, my parents divorced when I was nine and that was kind of traumatic, um, you know, not in a clinical sense of trauma, but it was, it was, um, eventful and it involved a change in my world view. Um. I kind of went through sort of a typical adolescence identity crisis. Um, you know, trying to figure out [—I don't that?] there was only one particular moment there that I could use as a marker event, but you know, um, there was that whole process of trying to figure out who I was, and kind of trying on, you know, different sort of identities and roles and that sort of classical Eriksonian sense I guess.
19. I: Mhm.
20. N: Um, went to— went to college, um. Initially didn't do so great. I was in computer science and then ended up—found out really fast that I despise it. Failed a bunch of computer classes. So that was kind of a marker event too (laughing). Um, you know, um, and-and I-I got, [you know?], got through on Psychology. Um, grades weren't great. I had—I had some kind of, you know, crappy job, but I had my first mental health job, that was a big deal. Um...You know and then, um, I-I-I, I probably you know, the next thing would be, um, getting-getting close to my wife now, and then, um, starting grad school.

- I guess that pretty much covers it. And somewhere in there, um, which is funny that I didn't mention this initially, since this is the focus of this whole thing. I guess I didn't remember exactly what year it was, I think, 2000 or so. Um. I'm kind of running this in a parallel timeline.
21. I: It's okay.
22. N: I know that this is confusing. In 2007 I guess I started, not actually practicing Buddhism but, um, learning about it. Um, and I really actually, uh, committed to practice with my teacher and I want to say 2005 or six, maybe five. It's hard—I can't—I'd have to—I-I don't know exactly when it was.
23. I: That's okay. It doesn't have to be that specific if you don't want it to be. (laughing) You're kind of getting into some of things that I'm going to ask about later. So keep that thought in mind. 'Cause you've mentioned a couple of things, and I'm like, "I'm going to ask him about that." Are there past relationships that have been important to your development as a person?
24. N: Um. Past relationships? Um. Yeah of course. I mean, you know, um, you know all the families relationships [...]. Um. You know, I—I had, you know, about two really, two really serious, um, romantic relationships [...], um, my wife and both of those are important and actually friends with both of them right now, it's, um, abnormal, (laughing) I guess, [as that is?] [...] [friends of mine?]. Um, those are important. Those are formative. Um. But, yeah, I'd say, you know, um, I'd say, you know 'course there's friendships here and there, and of course we've already touched on it, you know, and my relationship with, um, my Zen teacher as well.
25. I: Do you recall any changes in relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or way of thinking about things?
26. N: Um. Not, not specifically. I mean, you know, relationships do change and that's—
- um, the nature of them but I don't think there's ever, you know, [...of any one?]
27. I: You kind of mentioned at one point about your world view changing. How has your world view changed across your life's chapters?
28. N: Oh well in a lot of ways. Um. I mean, you know, my—my life has changed a couple of times. My family is, um, my family is great, but they're, they're, um, for the most part, fairly politically and socially conservative. Um, you know, I mean, and-and-and they range in kind of a particular specifics of their views. But like in my mom's family, we has some like, um, total Jerry-Falwell kind of people, um, you know, on one end and then, you know, [...] my mom who is kind of a mainstream Presbyterian, um, on the other. But, you know, they're all kind of, more or less Republican voting, um, you know, very kind of Anglo-American. I guess specifically German-American people. Um, so you know, there was—and, I didn't question that for a long time. Um, so I've already mentioned that when my parents divorced that was kind of one of those major, um, world-view changing things. 'Cause the nature, kind of institution of your life when you're young, um, I think, is-is your—you know, your nuclear family, and all of a sudden that was changing.
29. I: Mhm.
30. N: Um. I guess I can't think of a particular moment that was, you know, maybe this belief system I've been taught, um, not correct or not-not appropriate for me or whatever you want to say, but it certainly happened, um, at some point in there. Um, you know? And, um, so there's-there's kind of a-a-a experience there where I started to, um, you know, move away from that world view. Um, [...] and to question it. And, um, you know for a while I guess in, um, college or-or whatever, you know, I was-I was a...I...I faced experimenting with

- ideologies. That sounds silly at first, you know. (exaggerated voice) “This [kid] is experimenting with our ideology.” (laughing) Um, I was thinking about different ways of-of-of different philosophies, different ways of thinking. Things like that. You know. So there was kind of a-a transitional period I suppose.
31. I: How has this affected your image of God or the divine? What does it mean to you now?
32. N: How does m-my what?
33. I: Your image of God or the divine. Wh—
34. N: Well, as a Buddhist I don’t believe in God or-or anything like that so I don’t really know how to answer that. I guess when I grew up I-I was told that there was such a thing and I wanted very much to believe in it, but I don’t think I ever really did on a core level. That really hasn’t changed. Um, I guess I thought it was like something I had to believe in before or, you know, bad things would happen. And, um, now I don’t think that.
35. I: Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have confirmed or changed your sense of life’s meaning?
36. N: Um. Have I [...] experiences of intense joy? Um, wow. Um, sure. Um, [...] doesn’t everybody? Um, I mean, you know, [...] and if it doesn’t happen then, um... just kind of... you know, in certain... personal moments. Um, I’m not sure [how to?] answer that question entirely... I’m sorry.
37. I: No that’s okay. No, not at all. It goes on to say, “What are they and how have they done so?” And I think it’s—I mean, I can’t really interpret it for you. But I think that it’s up to you as about how much you really want to go into it, like if you—
38. N: Okay. Well there-there are two ways I can interpret that question: One, is, you know, have there been really good moments in my life? Yes, of course there have. (laughing) And, um you know, have those affected, um, the way that I... do things after the fact? Um, well, I think they’re a way of letting me know things are important, you know. Like when-when you—when-when someone’s company makes you intensely happy of course, that probably tells you that [...] pursuit. On the other hand, I-I think you might be asking, about what we might call “peak experiences,” um, if you’re familiar with that term.
39. I: Mhm.
40. N: Um. You know, and, um, sure, I’ve had some-some peak experiences. Um. Meditation produces those occasionally but, um, not really the focus, and, you know they—you know, you might be-be sitting, you know, you’re-you all of a sudden you feel strange and you’re in an altered state of consciousness. Um, but, you know, it’s transitory, and goes away and it doesn’t especially mean anything. Um, and you know, I think any-any decent meditation teacher will tell you, “You know, those things aren’t really verified effective practice. They’re not-they’re not the goal.” Um, So I [...] when I was younger, um, you know, I was taking Psychology and I was curious about these things, so, um, you know, I tried a couple of different psychedelic drugs and those definitely good at producing peak experiences. Um, and it was, you know, and- and of course at the time I really wanted to attribute meaning to those things, um, but, I—you know, I don’t think they were especially meaningful. They were fun, um, but you know I don’t think they were, you know, um, some kind of—I wanted to believe that they were producing some kind of mystical insight or something like that. I think that was—(laughing) probably very wishful thinking. And, you know, the problem with the experience is, I suppose, is that, you know, you have a peak experience that’s really wonderful, but really you have to kind of come down from the peak experience and-and back to, you know, normal life. You can-you can have a peak experience

- where you feel you're receiving some kind of, um, you know, special cosmic experience, but then you still have to do the laundry, you know? That can be depressing if someone is attached to those peak experiences or seeking them out. So, you know [...].
41. I: Have experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life?
42. N: Well, yeah, um (laughing). I-I apologize if I'm sounding kind of, um, incredulous, but these questions are kind of about universal human experiences. I think, "Sure, crisis and suffering. Yeah you know." Um, Things don't go the way we want them to sometimes. In undergrad when I, um, you know, didn't, um... there were things that worked out for me with my major, I was at a strange college with nobody that I knew, far away from everybody that I knew. I was pretty depressed, I think, for a little bit. I'm not sure I would have actually met diagnostic criteria for depression but it was pretty bad. And at other times, you know, and, um, things didn't go the way I wanted them to. When relationships ended or when important people or animals died, I mean, those were frightening. Those were times of significant suffering. Sure.
43. I: It goes on to ask, "Have you experienced times when you felt profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning?"
44. N: (sighing) Um. Um, disillusionment, yeah, I mean, you know, I-I've been disillusioned with a number of things, you know, um, my-my family and-and the educational system, and you know, relationships with people that I—you know, I don't know, I guess I thought they were more, um, I don't know. I've been-I've been disappointed by people I suppose. Um, but did they make me feel life had no meaning? Um, geez, um, I don't really, I mean, I've never been concerned with that question. Um, I've-I've always, at least as far as I can remember thinking about those questions, been pretty comfortable, um,
- with the idea that, you know, meaning is, um, constructive. You know? Like [kind of?] in the existential sense so I've never said, (exaggerated voice), "Oh, life has no meaning!" I never felt that [...].
45. I: Focusing on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them?
46. N: Um, my relationship with my parents is pretty good. Um, it's better than it was for many years. Um, you know, um, we-we-we—I think we kind of, um, I-I think many years kind of our friction, um, was-was caused by, you know, they didn't know what I was gonna do with my life. They didn't know how I was going to turn out and they were understandably concerned for me and, um, they responded to that concern in the way many parents do, you know, by being maybe a little overbearing, um, for the kind of, you know, um, showing disapproval and things like that. Um, but I think they've seen, you know, um, by mid-twenties that I was, you know, kind of, um, capable of being a serious person and looking forward to my future and things that. Especially since I started, um, working towards grad school and things like that, you know. I think that instilled in them a lot of comfort. Um, we also know that there are certain (laughing) topics we just shouldn't talk about, you know? Um, politics and religion and stuff like that. So, they [...] about those things and I don't talk about them, you know? It's, um, and that works for us...
47. I: Have there been—
48. N: For the most part.
49. I: I'm sorry. Go ahead.
50. N: I said, "For the most part." That works.
51. I: Have there been any changes in your perception of your parents over the years? If so, what caused that change?
52. N: Um, that's a question where I would think that everybody has that experience. And when you're, you know, [if you?] think your parents seem infallible and

- perfect. Um, you know, and-and-and for me, I think the-the change there came kind of early when they got divorced cause that was kind of unexpected for me and kind of, um, you know, a big-a big crisis. “Oh, okay, my parents are not, um, doing what they’re supposed to,” you know? Um. I guess, um, you know and, y-you know, like I started to see at that point that my parents are fallible and stuff like that. ‘Course they are. Um, and so I think, you know. And-and I also went through the typical, “Oh my parents don’t know anything,” um, kind of phase, you know? Um, but, you know, after that, with our, around the same time that our relationship began to improve, [...] and maybe having, you know, several hours between us, um, physically, helps with that as well. Um, you know, we were able to talk about other things and-and, you know, I can-I have a more, um, realistic and three-dimensional view of my parents, um, than I use to.
53. I: Are there other current relationships that are important to you?
54. N: Well my marriage is pretty important to me.
55. I: (laughing) That’s a good thing (laughing).
56. N: (laughing) Yeah. So that one. Um, you know and I-I, um, I have, you know, a-a-a sm-, um, fairly small group of friends but, um, you know, they’re all really important.
57. I: What groups, institutions, or causes do you identify with, and why are they important?
58. N: These are very general questions, aren’t they?
59. I: (laughing)
60. N: Um, groups, institutions, or causes do I identify with? Let’s talk about groups. Do I identify with any groups? Um... Let me think on that one. Um. Groups, institutions or causes. Well, intuitions, that’s easy, you know; academic institution of course. Um, the (laughing) American Psychological Association—no I don’t really identify with them, but I’m a member. So I wouldn’t say that’s an active part of my core identity or anything. Um, let’s see like, um, and I guess the other institution that I belong to in a sense. Um, you know, are you familiar with the concept of lineage in Buddhism?
61. I: Mhm.
62. N: Okay, so my lineage which is the White Plum Asanga, um, you know, it’s—lineage is sort of like a family in many ways, and um, you know through my-my, you know, my teacher, and other people that I practice with, I’m connected to this-this bigger organization, this, you know, lots of, um, lots of, you know, teachers and monks and nuns and priests and [...] from all their students and all the practitioners. And this is a-this is a United States-based group. Um, but of course each one goes back to Japan and China and stuff like that too. So. Um, you know, there’s a sense of connection there [...]. Um, groups, institutions, or causes, right?
63. I: Mhm.
64. N: Um, I guess I’m... political liberal. Um, I wouldn’t call myself really a big fan of the Democratic Party at this point in time. Um, I tend to vote for them ‘cause they tend to be a, you know, kind of less terrifying than the Republicans are.
65. I: (laughing)
66. N: Um, but, like, they’re not exactly, you know, I-I-I wouldn’t—I-wouldn’t, like, wear that label with any kind of comfort so I wouldn’t say that I’m, you know, (exaggerated tone) Democrat. Um, you know, um. (Sighing) causes—you know (I believe in a lot of?), causes. Um. You know, um, I guess I, well, number one because of-because of, you know, my [education specialty ...?] isn’t really a cause in the sense that most people think that the promotion of mental health, um, it’s really important to me I think that, you know, our-our society in general is doing kind of a bad job of-of-of understanding and promoting mental health treatment. It’s kind of important to me. Um, also I guess. I’m not,

- you know, obviously I don't remember how it began, but I do, um, animal welfare is pretty important to me. Um, you know, I've, been a vegetarian for the most part for the last ten years. Eleven years, um, and it's not something that, you know, I'm-I'm actively out, um, trying to promote to others, but it's something that does matter to me a lot.
67. I: Do you want to elaborate a little bit more on why some of these other groups are important to you; these other institutions and causes?
68. N: Um, like, which one? ... Sorry.
69. I: Just in general. I mean any of them that you feel you want to talk a little bit more about. Why—
70. N: I think I covered it.
71. I: (laughing)
72. N: I'm sorry.
73. I: No. No. That's okay. I just wanted to give you an opportunity to expand where you feel comfortable and just say, "No. I think I've covered this sufficiently." where you don't... If you could change one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
74. N: Oh, wow. Um.
75. I: (laughing) The genie in the bottle question (laughing).
76. N: Yeah, um... I guess, um...I guess I would like to just have more... more power, motivations, things like that. Um, you know, I tend to -I tend to-I-I-I-I, you know, do a lot. I get a lot of balls in the air, all the time, um, so I tend to get wiped out (laughing), and, you know, and ignore things that are important, but not, you know, pressing. Like sometimes in meditation practice. I think I just reflected a much bigger pattern, you know. I feel like... (laughing) if I'm more motivated, um, you know, I get a lot more done. A more important thing for me.
77. I: You might feel like you've kind of covered this already because you did touch on it a little bit, but I don't want to make any assumptions.
78. N: Okay.
79. I: Are there any beliefs, values, or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
80. N: Beliefs, values, and commitments... Um... I-I, hmmm. Well I mean I guess the only way I can say this that-that would really make sense is, um, you know, in, in, um, Mahayana Buddhism in particular, you know, there's this, um, there's this concept of-of, um, and in traditional we've heard the concept of not knowing, um, which isn't the same as—which isn't the opposite of knowing something. Um, it doesn't mean ignorance, it means, um, I guess in one sense we could interpret it as, um, not presuming to know more than we do. Um, I think it's also, you know, um, in many ways a-a guiding, um, scientific principle as well, so, I know it's kind of non-answer to your question. But, um, it's-it's really, you know, how I feel I don't, um, I-I-I try of course, you know, I-I tend to get attached to ideas or-or-or beliefs or values or whatever, but, um, you know I try to not be, um, — I try not to believe that I have the, um (sighing), the-the comple—you know, the completely right and true answer about that.
81. I: (laughing) I'm going to jump ahead but we're going to come back to the next part because you're kind of touching on something else that I was going to ask about.
82. N: All right.
83. I: Are there certain actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances?
84. N: No I don't think any action is always right or always wrong under any circumstances. You can say that certain actions are-are, you know, right or wrong most of the time, but there is an exception to every rule, right? I mean you could, for example, okay, like I-I-I think what we could talk about here, very briefly, would be the

- Buddhist precepts. Um, you know, I mean the first precept is, um, is-is “not killing.” And when you actually—if you actually take the precepts in a formal ceremony, um—which I haven’t done because we don’t really—we don’t really do a whole lot of ceremonial stuff, but if you actually take the precepts in a, um, um, ceremonial sense, the first precept is, “I vow not to kill but to cherish all life.” And, um, you know, that doesn’t mean, I mean—okay so, that sounds pretty straightforward. You know, killing’s bad, right? But, um, you know of course chances are you’re going to break that precept. I mean walking down the street you’re going to step on a bug or something. So, first off, you know, there’s, um—i-it’s impossible to keep that precept, absolutely. It’s the same case for almost all of them, really. Um, and secondly, you know I’m-I’m pretty sure we can invent, um, you know, a hypothetical situation in which killing is the-is the correct thing to do. It prevents the most suffering. You know? Um, if you, if you could go back in time and kill Hitler, you know? I don’t know (laughing), um a lot of these become very, very, you know, hypothetical and stuff like that, but certainly, we can, you know, we can think of a circumstance in which, um, killing somebody to save others would be the correct thing to do. But, you know, for the most part ki—yeah, yes, it’s-it’s not correct to, it’s not, um, ethically correct to kill, you know?
85. I: Kind of along the same lines; are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?
86. N: Are there certain moral opinions that everyone should agree on? Well I w-I wish everybody would agree on—I-I would like everyone to agree on the notion that, you know, no moral rule is completely inflex—completely inflexible because I think we get ourselves in trouble when we do that. Um, you know I-I mentioned my interest in animal welfare and I really do, um, you know, wish that people would acknowledge that, that, you know non-human animals are also sentient, and also, um, have cognition and experience, pain and things like that. Um, and should be treated accordingly, you know, I mean, if we look at-at primates their-their consciousness is very nearly, very close to our own so we, you know, doing something like medical experiments [or whatever?] you know, and to me that’s pretty much unthinkable. Um, so do I wish everybody would agree on that? Yes. Do I expect them to? No. I don’t. Um, but yeah like I said generally I-I-I would like for people to not see any kind of, um, moral imperative that’s absolute or inflexible ‘cause when we do that we tend to get ourselves into a lot of trouble.
87. I: I’m gonna try to back up here because I jumped us ahead a little bit so bear with me for one minute. I probably should’ve asked you before I asked you this last one. Do you think that an action can be right or wrong?
88. N: Do I think that an action can be right or wrong? Okay, so, um, right or wrong a—and, you know, if we have to ask what that really means, um, like, you know, um, I guess- I guess, like in a theistic [...] for people to believe in God or whatever, thinks that there’s some kind of [...] standard and there’s a cosmic judge of some kind. I mean, “This is good. This is not good.” And, um, “You know, you should go to church. You should not, um, kill people. And, um, eat bacon, or whatever.” I don’t know. Um, but like, I-I don’t think-I don’t think that’s the case. I don’t think that they’re right and wrong in that sense. I think some actions are smart and some actions are dumb and in Buddhism we use the terms “skillful” and “unskillful,” um, and actions that-that create suffering are dumb actions. They’re unskillful actions. They create more problems. Um, I think it’s also important to recognize that actions have consequences and in-in Buddhism that’s the concept of karma. Now, um, the

- popular understanding of karma in our culture, as I'm sure you're aware is, it's like some kind of, you know, mystical force, and if I, you know, and—I cut somebody off in traffic today then, you know, I'm going to be reborn as a cockroach or something. Um, but that's not what it means. It's just a—you know karma is a Sanskrit word means "action," and actually it's a traditional Buddhist philosophy of [...] it pairs with, with, it's-it's paired with, um, vipaka which means, um, "fruition," so actions have consequences. All actions have consequences. And, um, that's unavoidable. We can't—we can't, you know, you can't do something and not have a consequence. Um, whether it's—you know, whether it's a consequence you want or a consequence you don't want, um, every action you undertake will-will-will change the world in some way. Um, and the change of causality can be very, very complex. Um, often more complex than we're capable of perceiving. Um, but you know, um, can a action bring about a lot of undesirable consequences, and a lot of bad, you know, suffering and things like that? Sure. Or, um, you know, I mean, or the reverse that can have the opposite effect. So if that's what you mean by right and wrong, then yes.
89. I: So backing up just a little bit more it. What is your image or model of a mature faith, of a mature response to questions of existential meaning?
90. N: My model of a mature what?
91. I: Mature faith of a mature res—
92. N: Faith, I—
93. I: Go ahead.
94. N: I—okay. Wow. Um, I don't know what that means. Um, and I'm not trying to be a smart ass. Um—
95. I: No, no. I'm not taking you that way at all.
96. N: But like, like, like, "Faith" to me indicates to an extent, um, a belief in something you don't have a reason to believe, okay? Um (laughing), and that's not something that I—that's something I try not to practice [out of respect?]. Um, and that's actually one of those kind of forced concepts in Buddhism, "nothing and seeing yourself." Um, once again, also part of the scientific method. [...] compatible. Um, so, I-I suppose that, um, maturity to me, um, has more to do with, um, questioning, and, um, seeking knowledge, than it does, you know, just believing in something. Um, and that includes, you know, being open to questioning our own-our own beliefs, our own values, and our, um, again, the things that we hold true. I think that we should always be okay with questioning this. Um, and it's not always a pleasant or comfortable experience, but, um, I-I think that it's a necessary one. Um, you know and so I-I-I guess that's my response to question about faith. I'm not sure if I answered your question or not.
97. I: No you did, so what would your image or model of mature response be for questions of existential meaning?
98. N: (Sighing) A mature response to questions of existential meaning. Um. Well like I said I me—I-I when you ask the question of meaning I think the meaning is constructive, I think that we, you know, we-we decide what our own, meaning is in this life or, whatever, I don't think, you know, there's some-some external meaning out there for us to find. Um, so, you know I think part of maturity is recognizing that. Um, and then I think it's, you know, it's-it's-it's, um, choosing-choosing carefully, thinking about, um, the consequences of our choices like I discussed earlier in the question about right and wrong and-and really, you know, I mean we can't predict the future. It's pos—it's not possible. Um, the future is really impenetrable but, um, we can- we can attempt at least at-at—to make our-our most educated, reasonable, guess about what our decisions will bring about... Is that an answer?

99. I: That's a good answer (laughing).
100. N: (laughing) Okay. I wasn't sure. I [didn't really like that one?].
101. I: (laughing) No it's a good answer. When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it, and can you give me an example?
102. N: Um (sighing). Okay. So, um, an important decision. You know, um... I think that people make decisions in different ways. And I'm-I'm somebody who, um, tends to make decisions, um, logically, at first, at least, and then, and then I see how I feel about them. I try not to do it the other way around. Where I noticed how I feel, this is what I want, and try to come up with a justification for that. I try not to do that. [...] succeed. Um, I try to reason it out first and then see how I feel about it. And then of course, you know, I would, um, like, you know, look for feedback from the appropriate people, um, if it's an important enough decision. So, like, you know...Um, deciding to start the-the-the doctoral program, you know, I, um, you know, once I got my acceptance letters and stuff. I, um, you know, I-I-I, of course I wanted to go from the very beginning, but I-I had some thoughts and feeling about it, 'cause, um, my-my wife is working three hours away, stuff like that so of course—
103. I: Wow.
104. N: —So, you know, I-I, at first, you know, thought about it you know, rationaly and decided, “Yeah, this is what I need to do at this point. I'm not gonna have a better opportunity for it,” and I determined that I felt okay about that, and then I talked about it with-with her because she is the most, um, you know, first off, the person who needed to have input. Um, and you know, and I think I talked a little bit with some other people who made decisions about, you know, education and stuff like that as well.
105. I: That actually kind of—
106. N: [...]
107. I: Sorry.
108. N: Go ahead.
109. I: That actually sort of leads me into what I was going to ask you next, which was: When you have a particularly difficult problem to solve, to whom or what would you look to for guidance?
110. N: ...Yeah I think I've already answered that.
111. I: (laughing)
112. N: Um, you know—
113. I: That's okay—
114. N: I-I try to get input from people whose knowledge is relevant, you know. Um, which will be different people depending on the situation. Um, but yeah. That's-that's pretty much it.
115. I: We have to back up just a little bit more then I'll move us forward. When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
116. N: ... I don't even know how to answer that question. Um. I-I-I-I-I think that's because I think that this notion that we're separate somehow from the universe being everything else there is an artificial distinction. Um, you know, like, um, like, like, “The world is out there and I'm in here, and those two things are-are separate from each other. I don't— you know, I-I know we have a tendency to feel that way, but I think it's, um, it's artificial, it's constructed, and it's, you know, part of it is language. I think part of it is just kind of our psychological [consistency?]. So, I may not be answering your question, but I think that the whole point of the practice of meditation—not the whole point but a point of the practice of meditation, is to break down that separation or that-that-that feeling of separation between, you know, the self and everything else because, um, you know, like as a I-I-I don't think there really is a separation there. I really am separate from the universe. The atoms in my body are, you know, made of the same stuff as the atoms of, you know, the chair that I'm sitting in. It just happens

- to be in different configurations right now, but there's really no dividing lines between them, um, and-and similarly, you know, events that I'm not separate from events that happening in the universe and, you know, the things I do aren't separate, but, you know, they-they extend beyond, you know, my, my physical body, my consciousness, or whatever.
117. I: That's a good answer. I mean one of the things I didn't say at the beginning and I probably should have is that I'm not looking for specific responses from you. It helps me better to understand how you see things. When you tell me, when you say things like, you know, "I don't understand that question," or, "I don't see it that way at all," because that tells me how everything is shaped by your experiences. So anything you tell me is a —
118. N: All right—
119. I: —valid answer. Even if you don't necessarily think that it's going to make sense to somebody else; it helps me to understand where you're coming from. So everything —
120. N: Okay. I-I-I—
121. I: — You've been telling me is great at helping with that (laughing).
122. N: That will work. [...] I don't know how your study is working exactly but it sounds like here that the way these questions are worded is-is-is, um, they were either written by or intended for somebody who is kind of like a traditional, Western, theistic, sort of a, sort of world view.
123. I: And I was going to talk to you probably a little bit more about it towards the end, but we do get a lot of very different responses because everybody kind of sees this in a different way, and it helps because everybody's experiences kind of helps them in different ways to understand, like, different portions of it too. Like for you—
124. N: Okay.
125. I: —so far. For you, you told me about like how your growing up has kind of influenced everything and how your own personal belief kind of shape the way the world works. And—
126. N: True.
127. I: —Some of these questions don't seem as valid to you because you don't think of them in that way, but for some other people it might—it might be completely different, like they might put a lot different stock in it because they've-they've gone down a completely different path. So—
128. N: Sure.
129. I: —It really helps. It's telling me a lot, and it's been —
130. N: Okay.
131. I: —Very great input.
132. N: Okay.
133. I: I've got a few more things that I need—I wanted to ask you, and then I'll (laughing) let you focus on getting on with your family trip. Do you think that human life has a purpose?
134. N: Um. Um, no again, because I don't. You know, um, I believe that would require there—um, for there to be somebody to-to be, you know...I-I-I think that—ye- no I don't think so. I don't think that human life has a purpose. I think that, well I guess that everybody kind of decided what their own purpose is. Um... The-the-this is the human life, um, which-which is kind of sounds like what you're asking about, I think, is kind of a very, um, (laughing) very explainable, you know, by biology and things like that, um, but, you know, I think it's very individual; people decide what their own purpose is and what they're going to do and why they're going to do it.
135. I: Do you think that we're affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
136. N: I-I-I—Power or powers beyond our control. Well things happen to us that we can't control, you know. An airplane could

- fall on my house tomorrow and that's a power I can't control. Um, do I believe there's a supernatural force influencing me? No. I don't. I don't-I don't see any reason to.
137. I: What does death mean to you?
138. N: What does death mean to me? Um, you know, um. Hooo, um, okay so it's a, you know, um. I mean, I could be a smart ass and it means not being alive anymore.
139. I: (laughing)
140. N: And that would cover a lot of the way I feel about it, but that, um, really wouldn't be an answer to your question. Um, you know, I—everything is, everything is impermanent and everything is, always changing. Um, right and in Buddhism there's no concept of a soul. Um, because I think a soul denotes that there's some unchanging internal thing at your core that goes on after you die and, um, prior to, to, um, the development of Buddhism, you know, the Hindus in India believed very much in, like, a soul that—with-with, you know, go through different incarnations and try on different bodies like a person changing clothes and, um, you know, um, Gautama Buddha was very adamant that that was not the case and that, um, there was—you know, there's no such thing, um, and anybody can conceptualize, um, a human being as a, as a... temporary condition arising from the coming together of certain elements. And, um, you heard of elements as skandhas which is a Sanskrit word which means, like, "a pile of stuff." Um, and you know, in traditional Buddhist philosophy skandhas are like form and consciousness and things like that. But, you know, we don't have to take those literally. It's just, um, you know, at-at this very moment in time, um, conditions have happened in such a way, that, you know, there's a living organism, um, with consciousness that calls itself human being. And as time goes on those conditions will change and that thing will no longer be there. Okay?
141. I: Mhm.
142. N: Um. I don't know what happens to consciousness after we die. Um. I don't think anybody knows that. I think that anyone that tells you what's going to happen to consciousness after you die is really kind of trying to sell you something. Um, you know there's the-the kind of classic joke that somebody goes to their Zen teacher and he goes, "Teacher, what happens to me after I die?" And the teacher goes, "I don't know." And the student goes, "Well aren't you a Zen master?" And the teacher goes, "Yes, but not a dead one."
143. I: (laughing)
144. N: Um, so you know. Um, it's a joke but I think it's got some-some-some-some truth to it. We don't know (sighing). Um, I don't think consciousness just goes away. I don't think, you know, it's like turning off a switch and there's no light there anymore. I think that it, you know, that it-it-it's taking a different form of sorts. Um, you know, things—no-nothing ever really stops existing, it just changes form. It's elements come apart and they go to other places. And the atoms, after you die, the atoms in your body will go on to do other things. You know, they'll be a different object or whatever. Um, so you know, um, but e-e-e kind of in the same way, you know, I think that our sense of identity is maybe more stable than, um (laughing) than they have a right to be, but, um, I'm saying that kind of jokingly—but I don't really believe it has a right or not, um, but, you know, I mean, like so I can say that, you know, I have-I have a picture of me at home from when I was twenty years old. That was eleven years ago. And I go, "Well that was me, and—but, I'm-I'm not that person anymore. I can't show you that person. I can't, you know, no-no one can-can- touch that person or talk to that person. That person doesn't exist. Um, I'm not the same person now that I was then. I have—I-I look different. I feel different. I think differently. I have different

- thoughts, I have different feelings.” Um, you know, and there’s this connection between that person and you, you know, due to—due to memory, um, but you know, we’re always changing. We’re always changing a lot and will continue to change and death is part of that change.
145. I: Do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual or faithful person?... And this one of those, it could be any, none, or all of the above.
146. N: Yeah, okay.
147. I: (laughing).
148. N: So, so I do think I’m a religious person, but I don’t think that means the same thing. Um, as maybe when some other people say that. I mean a different thing like that. I mean that there’s a, a system of practice that sort of a guiding principle for me in life. And you know, that guiding—in-in-in Buddhism we have, you know, some very religious kind of looking things that we do. We, um, get together at certain times. And we, um, have certain rituals that we follow. And, you know, there are people who might wear funny clothes as part of this, and um, you know, whatever. It looks very religious and it’s got that kind of religious aspect of, of ritual tradition and so forth. Um. You know, I-I, but on the other hand, you know, I, I don’t believe in—[...] Buddhism doesn’t concern itself with— [...] Buddhism says, there’s no such thing as God, okay?
149. I: Mhm.
150. N: And, um, and it doesn’t concern itself with how the universe began. Um, not really an important question in Buddhism. Or how the universe will end. Um, it’s not really relevant to our practice, so we don’t really concern ourselves with it. Um, and what happens after we die? Well, we’re going to find out ‘cause we’re gonna die, um, so you know, there’s—the speculation about it would be fairly pointless. Um, so those are questions that are traditionally part of religion, and they’re not part of my practice. So that’s why I say that it means something different than what most people say, “Oh, I’m religious.” But I-I do have this kind of system of, of philosophical [disseminism?] from a practice which does, um, ...guide me.
151. I: Are there any religious, spiritual, or other ideas, symbols, or rituals that are important to you, or have been?
152. N: Well yeah, I mean everything that’s [...] I mean the Buddhist tradition and all that it entails is important to me. Um, you know, and—and we do certainly have, you know, rituals, traditions, things like that. Um, you know, we have, we—you know, we-we chant some sutras, stuff like that, um, and I think that it’s important to recognize—and of course there’s actually a very rich mythology Buddhism, you know, there’s um, these stories about Gautama Buddha, which are, not-not that—I’m pretty sure everyone understands are not factually true. Um, and there are, you know, the-the-the symbols or the system of symbols of the kind of the, you know, um, the Buddhism, the Bodhisattvas and these other kind of mythical Buddhist figures who I don’t think represent, you know, real beings that are sitting in some pure land or some heaven realm, somewhere, um, you know, ‘cause I don’t think it works that way. Um, I don’t have any reason to believe that it does. But there’s some [...] importance, symbolic value. Um, you have to feel a connection to the Buddhist tradition, people who have been doing the same practice that I have for-for 2500 years and I believe that, you know, um, you know, some-some-some traditions are worth keeping and some are not. Um, but for the most part, you know, they develop these things ‘cause they were valuable to them and they supported them and [...] in their practice, so I respect those things even though I don’t always completely understand them.

153. I: Now you've mentioned meditation a few times, as we've been talking. Do you pray or perform any other spiritual discipline?
154. N: I don't pray because there's nobody to pray to, okay? So, you know, um, prayer to me, is like—in a way, you know, I-I-I apologize if this is, um, blunt, but the way I understand prayer as theistic people do it is, you know, um, asking, you know, cosmic daddy in the sky for a pony. Um, or whate—that's-that's-that's being glib. I apologize.
155. I: Mhm. You don't have to apologize at all.
156. N: But, you know, you're-you-you but I am being glib, okay. I know it's not just like that. But you know you're asking for stuff from somebody. Well there's no one to ask. So, there's no point in asking. Um, we do, you know, we do some, there's some liturgy that's important, um, in-in my tradition. My individual, um, sect of Buddhism. Um, those aren't directed at anyone. They're there to- they're to remind us of our motivation. Um, they're to inspire us. They're to, um..., you know, remind us why we're doing this. You know and so there are vows. Um, there are precepts, and there are, are, you know, scriptures that we chant, and things like that, and some of that I do pretty regularly. Um, I guess-I guess, you know, I mean attached to—now of course, different sects of Buddhism have other practices too. And in the Zen tradition, you know, there—when you lose a primacy of meditation over other practices. Other-other types of it see it this way. Um, but in-in the Zen tradition meditation is absolutely number one, so that's kind of a big focus of it. But you know there are some other things that [...] of it too. When the sangha gets together or-or—you know, we-we-we sit and we might chant and there's also um, teachings given by a teacher, you know? Um, it's like a talk. Not exactly like a sermon. It's kind of a different thing. Um, I a-a-attend in Japanese Zen [...] everyone one of those and, um, that's, you know, important. Um. We also have, you know, um, retreats. And they go on for a day and they go on for a weekend or longer. And then you know, those are kind of a big part of the tradition too. And so, you know, you can spend a particular weekend, um, inside looking at a wall 'cause it's part of the tradition, but, you know, um, it's-it's important. Um (laughing). I think that—I think that covers it pretty much.
157. I: What is "sin" to your understanding?
158. N: What is what?
159. I: "Sin." S-I-N.
160. N: S-I-N, sin? I don't believe in sin. Um, in fact my-my discussion of right and wrong, you know. There are smart actions and dumb actions. Dumb actions are unskillful as we say in Buddhism. Um, they create more suffering. Um, and you know, in some translations of, of Buddhist texts they use the word "sin" but it's really a Western concept. You know, um. I think they translated that way, but, but a word we're used to, but I don't—you know. I don't believe there some kind of intrinsic force of badness that, and habits, certain behaviors. I just think that, you know, certain choices help, and certain choices hurt. And if the you want to call the ones that hurt, if you want to call them 'sinful' that's-that's fine but it's kind of unnecessary.
161. I: You were kind of touching on the idea of people being intrinsically bad. How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
162. N: Um. Okay so again I don't believe that evil is some sort of, you know, force. I mean, you know I think this is comforting for us to believe in evil a lot of the time, you know, um, because believing evil, um, to an extent alleviates personal responsibility, okay? There's like a force out there called "evil" and it's in some people and it's not in others, okay? You know? Wouldn't that be-wouldn't that be nice to believe? But I-I really think that under the right conditions all of us are capable of horrible things. Um, if you're familiar with social psychology,

- I'm-I'm-I'm think you know about the Milgram Experiment, right?
163. I: Yeah.
164. N: Okay. Yeah, see anybody under the right conditions will-will do pretty bad stuff. If we—if one of us is-is, you know, even if the-the-the, you know, nicest, shiniest, most well-behaved person were raised in the right circumstances, you know, in a war zone, or as a victim of terrible abuse and brain washing, or whatever, you know, they'd be capable of doing bad things too. Um, but instead, if you don't want to face that, we can-we can make up this myth of this force called "evil," we might even, we might even personalize it as a red guy with a pitchfork and a tail, um, and say, "Ooo, that's," you know, "there's that evil thing out there that's not in me and I sure am, I-I sure am glad to not have evil in me." But that's... That's dumb. (laughing) That's--that's-that's delusional. It's a, it's a very foolish thing to believe, and that's to understand our own capabilities or, um, you know, doing good or bad.
165. I: My last question for you. If people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved?
166. N: Well (sighing). Okay. Um, [...]. I'd like to refer to, um, okay, we talked about lineage earlier. Um, my-my-my teacher's teacher, who and sometimes we call, "My Dharma grandfather" as a, as a [...] teacher and Bob Kennedy, okay. And the title is "Roshi" which means like a senior teacher. Um, but Roshi Kennedy is also, um, he happens to be Jesuit, um, so a priest, but he's— actually what happened he was studying in Japan in the '50s and he ended up studying Zen there; becoming a Zen teacher as well and you know, he says that these two things really—and they did a lot of interfaith work, I guess is what I should be explaining here because of the unique position and what he kind of says is these, you know, these different, um, ways of seeing the world, you know they're not really reconcilable. And, you know, um, Buddhists and Christians, or Christians and Muslims, or, you know, Atheists and Scientologists just or whatever, um, you know, we're-we-we there are certain things we're just not going to agree on, you know? I mean, um, you know whether there is a God or not, whether there's one or three, or whether he's his own son, or whether it's okay to, um, you know, eat pigs or whatever. Um, you know. Whether it's bad to, um, you know, let women drive a car, whether it's okay to touch yourself. I don't know. I mean these things are gonna be like not agreed upon by people, um, for a wide variety of reasons. I think what we can agree upon is we kind of everyone tends to have these sort of basic values. I think the-the real, um, the real gift that's a given to the world by what we call, you know, the secular humanist tradition is recognizing that there are some universal values, not a lot. A lot of things aren't universal, but there are some, you know? I mean it's kind of like respect for dignity, respect for human life, you know, respect for things like that. I mean, you know, those things are kind of universal and, um, I think we can always point to [...] um, when we-when we disagree about these things.
167. I: I feel like—
168. N: You know, -everybody, everybody wants to, everybody wants to, to, to be healthy and happy. That's kind of just part of being a human being.
169. I: Yeah.
170. N: Everybody. Everybody generally prefers peace to violence, you know. It's how we are.
171. I: I feel like I've thrown a lot at you (laughing) in the last hour.
172. N: Okay.
173. I: Is there anything that you—that we kind of touched on, or talked about that you kind of wanted to say more or anything that you

- wanted to add to everything that we've talked about [...]?
174. N: No, I—
175. I: I think I'm getting a good understanding of how you see things. I feel like I've given you so much in such a short period of time, that you know, maybe that anything that might have been confusing to you, I might need to elaborate on, or anything that you want me to clarify on for you.
176. N: Um, you know. I think I've covered it.
177. I: (laughing) Well I appreciate you taking the time. I know you're in the process of traveling and I appreciate that you took some time out to sit down and talk with me even though some of the questions you weren't feeling as comfortable like, "Why is she asking me that?"
178. N: (laughing). No, I [...] feel comfortable. You know, I'm not sure how to a—you know, some of the concepts I have to kind, um... modify to answer them appropriately.
179. I: That's okay.—
180. N: So, hey is this study is it being published at some point?
181. I: We hope to have some publications by the fall. I'm not exactly sure when, as far as what conferences yet. Um, it's still in the process of talking with some of the heads for the project as to when we're planning on doing things like this.
182. N: Okay.
183. I: We have a little bit of a—
184. N: Well is there anyway, anyway you can let me know when it's gets published?
185. I: Oh absolutely.
186. N: 'Caused I'd like to—
187. I: Absolutely. You're at the University, correct?
188. N: Yeah.
189. I: Um, you can always stop in at the Psych office too and ask for Dr. Hood or Chris Silver. And they're both—
190. N: No wait a minute. I'm-I'm at-I'm at [University B] in [State A in the Northeast of the USA].
191. I: Oh, you're at [University B]?
192. N: Sorry, I at a university, I'm not at your university. Not at a university in Tennessee, no.
193. I: Okay, I'm sorry. That was my assumption. You had mentioned being in a Psychology department, so I had assumed that maybe you had heard about it through our psych department. But—
194. N: I don't even remember where I heard about it honestly. It was a long time ago. It was a survey.
195. I: I can send a follow up with you. If you also want to e-mail me, like if anything comes up, if you have any questions or if you feel like I haven't gotten back to you in a while because sometimes the interview process, it takes a little while to catch up with people's schedules, like we've seen the last few months, we've both tried to find a time that works. It's taken a bit longer to get with some of the busier people, so things have moved a little bit slowly and if you feel like I've been too long in contacting you can always send me an e-mail and just say, "Hey... Have you heard anything yet?"
196. N: All right.
197. I: And I'll gladly respond as well as any questions that come up later. Where you start thinking about the interview and you wanted some clarification I'll be more than happy to fill that for you.
198. N: That sounds good.
199. I: I'm gonna—
200. N: So, yeah, [...] you can- you can notify me when this is going to publication?
201. I: I can do that.
202. N: That'd be awesome.

B.10 Faith Development Interview with Isabella I.

1. I: Okay.
2. N: Okay.

3. I: We should be good. Just so you know, like I said before, anything that you say is gonna remain anonymous and you don't have to answer all of the questions if there are any that strike you as being something that you're not comfortable with. But, you know, feel free to go as far in depth as you'd like to.
4. N: Sure. I'm pretty open so—
5. I: So, good, I am too, so this should be fun. The first part of this is called "life review".
6. N: Mhm.
7. I: And this is just to kind of get an idea of your background. The first question is, reflecting on your life thus far, identify its major chapters. If your life were a book, how would you name the different chapters?
8. N: Right. Like [...] when you sent them to me.
9. I: Mhm.
10. N: Some of them are toughies.
11. I: (laughing)
12. N: Um, so, I mean I guess I'd probably split them up chronologically. Um, I have had a pretty boring, normal life. So, nothing all that exciting. I guess, um, early childhood, um, then, I guess late childhood, adolescence, college, adulthood.
13. I: Were there any markers that stood out as especially important and from those?
14. N: Um, I guess not really. I kind of break my life up by, like, school. So like elementary, middle, high, college.
15. I: Mhm.
16. N: So, I guess I kind of, like, went through phases like everyone else.
17. I: Mhm.
18. N: So I don't think any of them were particularly amazingly important.
19. I: There wasn't anything that necessarily happened to you that you kind of- you look back and that it was something that, "Wow, that's something I'll remember for the rest my life?"
20. N: Yeah, well, I mean it's not like my life didn't have like any of those, but...
21. I: (laughing)
22. N: I mean, I think my-my choice of high school because I ended up going to a magnet school which meant it drew from the entire county and it had specific programs, so I went to school that was actually all centered around arts and technology and-one moment please-
23. I: Mhm.
24. N: And so because my school was only a magnet school, you had to apply to get in and so everyone wanted to be there which I hear is completely different from every other high school, basically because were there because had to be.
25. I: Mhm.
26. N: So everyone really wanted to be about my school and was enthusiastic. So it was like a really different atmosphere than standard, I think, and-oh, there goes my alarm for making sure I log on to Skype.
27. I: (laughing)
28. N: Okay, um, and so, um, I mean, I think if I'd gone to a more standard high school I would've turned out differently. Probably more bitter. (laughing)
29. I: (laughing) Were there any past relationships that are important to your development as a person?
30. N: Um, I mean my parents, obviously. And I'm... I guess I was going to say my friends at school, but I think if I had a completely different set of friends, I don't know if I really would've turned out that different.
31. I: Mhm.
32. N: Um, but I mean, I guess definitely my parents because that's pretty obvious. I mean like how you parents bring you up sets the foundation for absolutely(?) everything, and so I think, um, my parents really like set a high bar and expected a lot, but also enabled me to reach it by like- like being involved in school.
33. I: Right.
34. N: Which, is like, so, so important, um.
35. I: Mhm.
36. N: And, um, just having time for me. Everything from like reading to me as a kid,

- um, setting good examples, all of that sorts of things that parents really should do.
37. I: That's wonderful.
38. N: Mhm.
39. I: Do you recall any changes in relationships that have made a significant impact on your life or way of thinking about things?
40. N: Hmm. I think, okay, um, so in high school I finally started to date. I was never really big on dating. And, I like, I only considered my first that "real boyfriend" be, like, at the very end of my senior year. I mean before that I'd had, like two or three more, like, you know that weird, like, semi-boyfriend area where it's like, "Are we dating?" I guess. Maybe. We've gone some places."
41. I: Yeah. (laughing)
42. N: But, um (laughing), but usually I didn't have a boyfriend and I know, I think that really, um, caused me to rely myself and be fine on my own, because I'm- also related to my being an introvert, um. I'm fine my own. And I know so many people who go from relationship to relationship to relationship and need a boyfriend to define themselves and having that sort of distance to look at my relationships. I don't need a boyfriend. I mean, I'm married now, but not because I need to be, but because I wanted to be. And I think, um, that had a huge impact on- on my life because to say-did I say "I could rely on myself" already?
43. I: (laughing)
44. N: Because I could already rely on myself and, um, be self-sufficient, um, for instance I had one boyfriend basically all throughout college and then, um, somewhere towards like the spring of our last year, we decided to break up not because of any sort of argument or something. It was amicable, but because we had lost the spark.
45. I: Mhm.
46. N: And so from the time, like, towards the end of my senior year until I had, like, come home, found a job, set myself in an apartment- so it was like basically a year and a half, two years and I was finally, like, "Okay. Now I feel ready to date again." And I went out and actually ended up finding my husband. (laughing)
47. I: (laughing)
48. N: And so, um, I think having that time to myself to really get my life in order and knowing that I could do it myself really was a significant impact. Okay. The end.
49. I: (laughing) I'm not trying to purposely be silent and not say anything. It's just-I'm just trying to give you an opportunity to expand as much as you can, so.
50. N: Yeah, I totally understand. And I'm like not normally a very talkative person, so I'm really trying to, like, ramble as much as possible. (laughing)
51. I: (laughing) Well you're doing a wonderful job of rambling. (laughing)
52. N: (laughing)
53. I: And I mean that in a very positive way.
54. N: (laughing) I know.
55. I: (laughing) [I thank you for assembling it all?] I like how, how well you're explaining things. It's very helpful to me to understand. Have you-do you feel that your world view has changed across your life chapters, and like how so?
56. N: Mhm. Um. I actually don't think so really, um, because I don't know, looking back to it, I've always been basically the same person, and I haven't had, like, big epiphanies like, (gasps) "Oh, I've been getting it wrong this whole time."
57. I: (laughing)
58. N: I think, um. I mean just with age and maturity, of course, my world view changes, and incorporates a broader view, and, but that's hopefully just what everyone does.
59. I: Okay. Do you think that, because, you said it hasn't really changed, have you had any change and does your image of God or the Divine, as far as, even though you're saying other things haven't changed, has your image of God or the Divine been affected now?

60. N: In general no. Um, so, I am an atheist, so I don't believe in any particularly personal god. And my mom did raise me. She's a Lutheran and pretty staunch and so I'm growing up. She made me go to church every Sunday. It's not like she forced me to, but...
61. I: Mhm.
62. N: But you know, like parents do, she made me go to church every Sunday. And I was so jealous of the other kids who were just allowed to go to Sunday school while their parents were in church. No, I had to go to Sunday School and then to the church service as well. You know, I mean, like, looking back on, it's not like, "Oh my God." But it was like (sighing) an hour of Sunday School and an hour of church. It wasn't like, the eight-hour long, like, 'Southern Baptists be in church all day'-thing.
63. I: Mhm.
64. N: Uh. So, what was I saying? So I did have, uh, a Christian background but it never, kind of like, caught on. Like, and my view was always kind of like, [would?] all of these adults around me believe whatever. I'm just here because I have to be.
65. I: Mhm.
66. N: And I even remember, um, specifically, one summer they had this like summer of camp for kids called "Whale of a Wednesday." It was on Wednesdays, and my mom made me attend some year and I really didn't want to, 'cause, you know, summer was the time for like not doing stupid church things.
67. I: (laughing)
68. N: Um, one craft they had us do was make, um, these suns with, like tissue paper in the middle so you could, like, hang them up in a window or something and then with like, the cardboard-not cardboard- construction paper [corona cutouts?] and they'd have you write "I love Jesus" in the middle. And I don't remember how old I was at the time, maybe around like eight to ten and I refused to write "I love Jesus." And I don't know if I was just at this point, I really- I honestly can't say because I was just bitter about having to go or because at that point I knew it was a lie and I didn't want to put that down. but I wrote "I love myself" on mine and I brought it home and hung it 'cause, you know, you can't argue with a kid that says, "I love myself" and you can't say, (exaggerated voice) "No, you're not allowed to love yourself!"
69. I: Right. (laughing)
70. N: Um, so I think even back then I kind of had this idea of like, this just doesn't make sense to me. And I'm fairly active in my atheist community. So I go to monthly atheist meet-up. And so the topic inevitably comes up of, like, "When did you turn atheist?" And it's usually couched in those terms. Like (exaggerated voice) "When did you turn atheist?" Because usually, unless kids are raised atheist, whatever religion they're raised in is they adhere to until they figure out for themselves and convert.
71. I: Mhm.
72. N: And, um, so I've heard a lot of stories about like, usually in adolescence or adulthood, people are kind of like start really critically thinking about it and go, "Hey, this doesn't make sense." I'm really one of the few ones who, that although I was raised in a church community. I was just-never bought it.
73. I: Right.
74. N: And so, um, there was no one moment where I was like, "Oh I'm an atheist." It was just thing that's, like when I learned the word "atheist," it was like, "Oh, okay."
75. I: It made sense?
76. N: Yeah.
77. I: (laughing) Okay, for the sake of full disclosure, you're in good company, I am as well.
78. N: (laughing) Oh good, 'cause I wouldn't wanna like be talking about this with a super religious person, and have them, be like, (exaggerated voice) "Argh [this durn?] heathen!"

79. I: No. I figure it would probably be of some comfort for you to know that-that we share a view. And it would be good to talk about I think.
80. N: Hmm.
81. I: (laughing) Have you had any moments of intense joy or break through experiences that have changed your sense of life's meaning?
82. N: Um. Well this is going to sound kind of copy cat, I think, but you know that scene in- What movie was it? I think it was *American Beauty* where, like the kid is like filming this bag floating through the air.
83. I: Yeah.
84. N: Okay, and so, it's-it's, I think I've had a lot of small moments like that and even like bag floating through the air, I've seen the same thing and thought, "That is beautiful." Not 'cause the bag is inherently beautiful, but just like the basic underlying physics of the universe and how it expresses itself in even everyday motion of bags through the air being a visible sign of air vectors and turbulence is beautiful. And so that, um I kind of find that life-affirming to me because when you're an atheist you have this problem of, like, "Oh shit, what happens when you die? Nothing has meaning." Well, nothing has to have meaning. It can just be the universe is just inherently beautiful on its own.
85. I: Right.
86. N: And it doesn't need to [care a shit?] about humans ultimately, but if the universe is beautiful, we're part of that beauty.
87. I: [...]
88. N: Yeah, I think another moment is, I'd always wanted a cat, growing up, but my parents were allergic, and so when I got my first apartment in 200X, I finally got to adopt a cat. And I was so excited about this. So I adopted a cat in 200X, and about a few years later I realized I have a cat- I'm, of course I knew I had a cat, but I really realized deep down- and if you've read *Stranger in a Strange Land*, the word "grokked."
89. I: Mhm.
90. N: That, like, I had a cat. This living, intricate, biological organism, like it would have been like even more boring to own a robot, 'cause okay we totally understand robots because we make them, but to have this like amazing biological, real organism here, with me was just like amazing to me that intricacy and complexity of life was like all just in this cat all of a sudden. And I hope that makes sense.
91. I: Actually it makes a lot of sense. As a mom, I found that same thing with my son.
92. N: Mhm.
93. I: So I completely understand.
94. N: Yeah, well I didn't have to carry it in my uterus for nine months first.
95. I: (laughing) That's an advantage.
96. N: (laughing)
97. I: Um, have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life?
98. N: Um, luckily not really. Um certainly nothing major. Um, I mean, like, the normal adolescent turbulence, but certainly got through it. Um, so I guess I'm going to have to say a pretty basic "no" to that, which I am certainly thankful for.
99. I: It kind of leads into that-the previous question: have you had times when you experienced times of profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning?
100. N: Oh, yes, certainly, and I touched on this before and that moments of beauty answer that, um, as an atheist, no one hands you a book that says, here's the meaning of life.
101. I: Mhm,
102. N: You kind of have to figure it out for yourself which is probably a theme I'm going to touch on again. Um, and so I think definitely one of the philosophical questions that humans have been dealing with, this, they learned to think was, "What's the meaning of life? Why are we here?" And I really think that there is absolutely not any inherent meaning. I mean, we're kind of a universal accident, but we can certainly make up a meaning ourselves and go with

- that. And so, um, I mean, it's certainly not an answer to everything. Sometimes I do certainly feel the ennui of, "Crap. Why even bother?"
103. I: Mhm.
104. N: Actually, when I realized I was going to die. Again, like, really, deeply realized, "Oh no, that applies to me too." Like of course I understood people die. But to apply it to yourself, "I am going to die," it was actually, I remember the actual moment when it struck me, 'cause I was sleeping in bed with my then boyfriend. Like about to fall asleep and I realized I was going to die, like it was total non-sequitur. And of course the first thought was, "but I don't want to." And I actually, like, stayed up and cried for a few minutes, um, because it was the realization of my own mortality. And I was, like, twenty-two at the time. And I realized I'm going to die and that's really going to suck. Since then I really haven't found any real way to deal with that. Mostly I just try to not think about it.
105. I: Mhm.
106. N: Because that really ties into, if everyone is going to die, and no one is going to remember me. I mean, just 'cause I'm an average person. Unless I, like, solve world peace tomorrow, no one's going to remember me. And even if people do remember me, that's not the same as actually being alive. Like once I'm dead it won't matter if people remember me or not, because I'll be dead and I won't be able to experience being remembered and...what was I saying? Oh, right. So if we're all going to die, so nothing's going to happen 'cause I won't be around to experience it, if that's part of life just having no inherent meaning. And so it's definitely something I continually struggle with. I mean it's not like I sit around philosophizing every moment, but it's just-just one of the things you kind of have to answer for yourself. And so I think my view on the meaning of life is moderate hedonism. That's how I encapsulated to myself. The idea that, well, if it doesn't matter, I'll just try and have a good time. I'm not gonna go crazy and I'm not going to hurt anyone on the way. 'cause I think that's wrong. But I'll enjoy it while it lasts and when it's over, I-well, I won't know. (Laughing). So. Moderate hedonism...Okay.
107. I: Um. Sorry. I—I'm really getting into this. You're giving me so much information. It's so good. There's so much I want to play back but-
108. N: I know. You have to be the disinterested interviewer.
109. I: Um. I'm not trying to be disinterested.
110. N: Mhm.
111. I: But I'm try to make sure that I don't...I don't get us off track because I could probably make us a little more [...] than I intend to.
112. N: (laughing)
113. I: So I'm trying to stick with our format here a little bit, at least a little bit.
114. N: Well, I mean we can get through the questions, and then if there is more time we can certainly go more free form.
115. I: Okay. I'd like that. Focusing on the present, how would you describe your parents and your current relationship to them?
116. N: Okay, so, um, I grew up in [Town A], [State B in the Northeast of the USA] which is just north of [City C].
117. I: Mhm.
118. N: So I grew up with my parents and then I went to school. College, I mean, at [School D] in [City E], [State F in the Southeast of the USA].
119. I: Mhm.
120. N: So that was like, a really huge move. But again, already my earlier talk about my self reliance. I mean, I was fine with it, I know a lot of students, um, had like huge home sickness issues. Like, "I don't want to go far away," but I loved it. Um, anyway, so after that I came, after I graduated I came back to [City C] because, part of that was because I

- did want to be close to my parents. And it's not like we talked everyday, but I know if I ever have a problem, they're definitely there, and they were there to organize holidays, and we still, like, we do talk, I'm just, I don't remember to call people and say, "Hi," and stuff. And um, so definitely I think part-part of my reason for coming back was definitely to be close to them, and um...Let me think, so yeah, we're really close. I feel like I could tell them anything. As a rule I don't because like definitely TMI level, like the bar is way lower for parents.
121. I: Mhm.
122. N: But if there were something really important I could. And I know in high school when I first started like going over to friends' houses and overnights and stuff, my mom said, told me blatantly, like, um, "Look, if you're ever in real trouble, and you have to call me at like two a.m. to get a ride from anywhere because you are in a non-safe situation, just do it, because, like, my primary goal is for you to be safe."
123. I:Mhm.
124. N: Like, I won't be mad at you, just, like call me and I'll get you anywhere, anytime. And of course, I mean I was never in that sort of situation, but it was good to know that that was my mom's view: "I want you to be safe. And if you are in an unsafe situation, I won't be mad at you for getting out." And so I think just having that made me feel very secure in our relationship and I know definitely to this day, if I had to call her at three a.m. and be like, "I'm in a bad spot, can you come get me?" She absolutely would, and my dad too. I mean he's just not as, like, lovey dovey. So he never said it, but I know he would.
125. I: Mhm. So-
126. N: Oh, yes?
127. I: Go ahead.
128. N: Oh okay, um, and so, that's part of- so that's part of why I'd call us close even though I'm not the, like call her everyday which I know some people are. Like I said earlier I'm not especially chatty, and actually the last time I called my mom, like, we had been playing phone tag for a bit, and, well, I say, "phone tag," but like she called me and left me a message and said, "Hey, I was just wanting to chat. Call me," and it took me a week to remember to call her back.
129. I: Mhm.
130. N: Um, so what I finally did, we talked for like twenty minutes and then we're like, "Well, I'm out of news." (laughing)
131. I: (laughing)
132. N: So I mean, it was fun to catch up, but we don't have the like hours long talk that I know she has with her mom (laughing) [...] so...yes. I think that's it.
133. I: Do you think there have been any changes to your perception of your parents over the years?
134. N: Um, there's a really good quote. Let me see if I can find it. Wow, I'll just have to paraphrase it. Um, something along the lines of when you're fourteen, you think your parents are just the most ignorant people in the world, and then when you turn twenty-one, you're amazed at how much they've learned over the past seven years. (laughing)
135. I: (laughing)
136. N: I think I definitely fell into that. Just basically like any teenager of course, um, even in my school, which I loved, as I mentioned previously. I had, um, some of the normal teenage angst like, "You don't get me. You don't understand." And then my mom would be like, "You know, I went to high school too." And I'd be like, "Yeah, but that was like thirty years ago. Things have changed so much since then." And, like, nowadays I couldn't imagine myself like telling some kid, like, "Oh, don't worry. Blah, blah, blah. Like, you know I went through this too," and I could just imagine getting that exact, like, verbatim response back. "Oh, you totally don't

- understand, it was so different.” “But no, kid, it totally isn’t; you’re just dumb.”
137. I: Mhm.
138. N: And so I recognized that, yeah, I was dumb too. And actually a friend told me um, and she summed it up, that um, “Dude, I remember back when I was fifteen, I like threw a shit storm over having to load the dishwasher. Like it was, like the worst thing in the world to have...for them to ask me to do, and now looking back it just seems like the most ridiculous thing ever.” It’s like yeah, it totally is cause when you’re a teen, you are your entire world. And so um, of course I went through that too, I never really had a “Oh, I hate you” phase. Like, I still loved them even when I hated them. You know like, not really hate, it was annoying. And again with just maturity and time, I realized, “Wait, they were just doing to best they could. I was just a stupid teenager.” And so, like, now I look back and I’m so positive about how they raised me and everything...The end.
139. I: (laughing) I’m sorry, part of the problem is that I’m sitting here and acknowledging you, but I’m doing it by nodding my head, not remembering that we can’t see each other, because we don’t have the video on Skype. (laughing)
140. N: Yeah, that’s fine. Um, part of my pause is just like, “Okay, is there anything else for me to mention? No, I think that’s it.” And then I say, “Okay, I’m done,” so that you know that I’m done and not just pausing. (laughing)
141. I: No, I’m just sit here acknowledging you. And I’m sorry if I get really quiet because I realize... I just realized that I’ve been sitting here shaking my head in acknowledgment.
142. N: (laughing)
143. I: The thing that I’m doing. So- (laughing) so it helps, at least know that I’m silently there egging you on. (laughing)
144. N: (laughing) I’ve also got my bobble head going.
145. I: (laughing) Oh, I think I kind of feel like a bobble head. It’s been-it’s definitely, it’s-it’s really interesting. I’m-I’m enjoying this conversation with you. So...
146. N: Mhm.
147. I: Please, if I get too silent, just let me know.
148. N: Okay.
149. I: I’m not intentionally trying to do that. I’m just letting you know that I’ve never done this via Skype before so-
150. N: (laughing)
151. I: Um, are there any current relationships that are important to you?
152. N: Um yes, I mean definitely. Um, my husband obviously because I love him and everything. Um, but I’d say I’ve gotten a lot closer to my sister. Um, I have an older brother and a younger sister and we’re each five years apart, I’m in the middle. And so five years is really an awkward distance between us because it’s like far away enough that you’re never in the same school, but like close enough that you still have to live with each other.
153. I: Mhm.
154. N: And so I always had this really annoying little sister, and it didn’t help that we were basically opposites. I’m an, on Myers-Briggs, ISTP?
155. I: Mhm.
156. N: Yeah, I’m just making sure that’s right. ISTP. Sorry, no, ISTJ. ISTJ, definitely. And she would definitely be an ENFP. Like she is like all over the place. Can schmooze up anyone, always has, like drama going on, And I’m like the complete opposite, like, totally introverted, try to keep everything to a minimum. Um, and so growing up together, it was always like she was everywhere and took over everything, and um. Like, we just didn’t get along growing up, and then since-it helped that I moved out. Definitely absence makes the heart grow fonder, but also I think she did her own growing up in the meantime too. Um, and so we’re actually a lot closer too now. We actually, like,

- can stand to do things together, and have done things together voluntarily which was like unheard of. Like, we've gone and seen movies together and gone out for dinner. So I think if I were still like eighteen and she were thirteen we'd never would have done that. But now that I'm-, what am I now? Now that I'm twenty-seven and she's twenty-two, we definitely have like a lot more healthy, closer relationship going on. Um, so what was the question? So she is important to me too. Um not specifically related to [...] or anything but in general. Um, and my cats. I love them. And, um, I think all of the people who um, supported me during my first "real job." Um, so when I moved back to [City C], in [Spring], 200X, 'cause it was after graduating of college. I moved back and moved in with my parents until I found a job which it took me until [Winter] 200X to get that lined up and start and that was at [University G] as a research coordinator for a longitudinal [orthopedic] study and so um...so I was like fresh out of college, never had a real job before. I'd had like jobs, but not like a real job. And so everyone in that office was just so supportive of me and I think I proved myself to be a good employee. And when I actually had to leave the division just [four years later], they actually bought me this clock from the university gift store and it has this like little embossed name plate with my name and everything, 'cause 's like one of those desk clocks.
157. I: Mhm.
158. N: With a gold pen holder and gold pen and it was just so professional and it actually meant so much to me because, um, um, like they... it let me know that I meant as much to them as they have been to me. That they really enjoyed working with me as I did with them. And so having that sort of like real memento. It gives me some self confidence. So I started a new job in a different department at [University G] in the Fall of [201X] and I'm still there and they love me and everything, but I look at that clock and I'm like, "oh, yeah. I'm so professional." Like, "I can do this." (laughing)
159. I: (laughing)
160. N: And, um, what was the question? Oh, yeah. Current relationships. Um, my friends. I certainly have definitely a lot of friends. Um I have a lot of gamer friends. I mean I play like [role-playing games] with them, table top games and so, um, having people to-who are basically like equal nerds who we can have these like ongoing imaginary spaces with is like really important to me and I really enjoy their company and parents, siblings, husband, friends, coworkers. I think that covers it. Yep.
161. I: Now you've kind of talked about a little bit about the atheist group you are involved with.
162. N: Mhm.
163. I: It sort of ties into the next question: groups or institutions or causes that you identify with and why it's important? Do you want to tell little bit more about that group [maybe others?].
164. N: Yeah, so it's more of a social group. Basically once a month we get together and chat. Then actually atheism isn't necessarily our main topic. Actually a lot of it is about Sci-Fi. [I: (laughing)]
165. N: (laughing) 'cause it's just like also an interest that also a lot of us are into. Um, and so I identify with that group because one of the members actually is starting a group called the [name of group] because he said when he grew up in his church and there was really a lot of fellowship that he really enjoyed. The way he looks back on is his church time and still really enjoys is the youth groups and outings and fairs, and all of the things that a church organizes that aren't necessarily religiously related, but just like day trips and just being in a community and he really misses that. And so he's trying to start an atheist community to where he can have that again. So that's a really interesting point that atheist kind of

- lack that pillar to gather around. Because it's hard to gather around something that you don't believe in.
166. I: Mhm.
167. N: So other than atheism, a lot of the same people are in the local chapter of the Separation of Church and State, which is a chapter of the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State.
168. I: Mhm.
169. N: So I like that as well. So otherwise I identify with science and feminism. I like feminism. Um, causes? Animal welfare, that's because I identify with-I got both my cats from the SPCA. Um, groups, institutions or causes? I think- I think that's it in general.
170. I: We kind of talked a little bit about being able to relate. To-as far as having somebody to relate to. Because what you were saying, with atheism it's hard to relate to.
171. N: Mhm.
172. I: Find groups that can get together around something you can agree on to don't do harm. With these other groups and institutions or causes, is there anything in particular that stands out that makes them just as important to you that you want to share with me?
173. N: Um, well I'm not directly involved, with specifically with any feminist groups, but I definitely support them and, um, pro-choice. Um, the pro-choice movement, I guess. And they're important to me, although I haven't like specifically acted on them. Like, I've heard of people who are like escorts outside of Planned Parenthood, that are basically anti-protesters to like help women in without having protesters getting in their face. And that's certainly something I'd like to do, but I don't think it's actually necessarily around here. I have never felt like [I'd drive by Planned Parenthood or anything?]
174. I: Mhm.
175. N: But I haven't seen like big groups of protesters like that. Um, so, there aren't that many other groups that I'm specifically involved with. And even the atheist group I go to is a social group. I mean we don't, um, like lobby or anything, it's just like kidding around with people you can talk in front of.
176. I: Mhm.
177. N: And you don't have to, don't have to watch what you say for fear of offending some religious person when you say, like, "Oh that Jesus guy. What's up with that?" (laughing)
178. I: We're fairly active in my- we have a very active group here in Chattanooga and they're very much the same way. It's not really an activism group, so I understand that where you can get together and try and be yourself and-
179. N: Mhm. You must really need that out there in Tennessee because I mean, I guess around here, it's definitely majority Christian, but I don't think it's ever like, I don't ever feel like I would be in like physical danger if people found out I was atheist. Like I know definitely some parts of bible land, like it's actually like people might beat you up or just shun you. I've never had like any sort of bad or extreme reaction and I'm fairly out. I remember-this is actually an amusing anecdote. I was speaking to one of the people in my prior job and we were just sitting around and lunch talking about like, somehow like what denomination are you and it came up because she's Greek Orthodox and so like one of my other co-workers said like "Oh, I'm Methodist" or whatever and another said, "Oh, I'm Baptist" or whatever and it got around me and I was like, "Oh, I'm an atheist. I'm not actually Christian." And she was like, "Oh what does that mean?" Like she had not heard the term 'atheist.' And so I said, "Oh it means I don't believe in God." She said, "You-you wha-you-you don't believe in God?" Like this was mind boggling, like the very idea had not crossed her mind that there might be people who actually don't

- believe in God. Like, okay maybe people are like Jewish or something. But that just, you know, like kind of God, you know. Basically the same thing. And even like Muslims believe in God. But for someone to not believe in any god at all whatsoever was just like completely crazy and so she says, “Well what do you believe in?” And that actually would have been a really interesting discussion but another co-worker answered for me saying like, “Oh it means she believes in like evolution and stuff.” And I try to say it, like rephrase that as recast it, as saying, “Well, evolution isn’t really needed to believe in. It’s there, whether you believe it or not.” But then she was like, “What’s evolution?” (laughing)
180. I: Oh.
181. N: Wow. Like I wasn’t even going to like touch that. So. But, um, what was I saying? And like that was the weirdest reaction I got when I came out to someone, was just like... and it wasn’t even like malicious or angry or anything, it was just like complete flabbergastedness that this option even existed.
182. I: Right. That’s actually very impressive. You don’t see that in the South (laughing) very much.
183. N: (laughing)
184. I: It’s-it’s- I’m from the North so where normally people tend to keep to themselves, up north it’s not as common to have those kind of conversations. And it’s much more common down here.
185. N: Mhm.
186. I: So, you know, I don’t know. I-I’ve never really said anything about myself personally a [little bit about myself?] I’d never actually had spoken to anybody up North about being an atheist. When I was living there. But I think it would not be that big of a deal in the north. You don’t seem to have any problems with people harassing the group or anything like that. Are you personally being open about being an atheist?
187. N: Yeah, I mean I definitely don’t hide it. I mean, it’s not like I go around saying, “I’m an atheist. Look at me.”
188. I: [...]
189. N: But like, if it comes up, I mention it and, um... yeah, I mean that’s like that strongest reaction I’ve ever gotten when I mention it.
190. I: Wow. That’s interesting.
191. N: Mhm. Otherwise it’s like kind of a non-issue to some people. I think I know a few people who are like basically atheist, but they don’t say, “Oh, I’m atheist,” they say like, “Oh, I’m Jewish,” but not really, like more culturally Jewish, you know.
192. I: Mhm.
193. N: Which means like basically the same as atheism, only they don’t want to say ‘atheist,’ or they really haven’t thought about it.
194. I: (laughing)
195. N: So I know a couple of people who are culturally Jewish.
196. I: Is the fact that more of them [...] I don’t know what the right word is...
197. N: Mhm.
198. I: You know what I’m saying.
199. N: Like the doubt-belief, yeah.
200. I: That with any ingrained sense.
201. N: Mhm.
202. I: You fell a little more into the present. You’re talking about the past a lot, you had said that you’ve had that experience where there was profound disillusionment for you. Do you feel that life has meaning at the present?
203. N: Yeah, I mean like, definitely [not?] in the sense that I’m like gonna go out and slit my wrists, but like I said before, it’s, like a meaning I had to construct myself, and even then it’s kind of like paper thin. And so like, there’s definitely some sort of meaning, but it um, not one that’s inherent to the cosmos. So, um, I think I covered it pretty well earlier, I think.
204. I: Did you want to elaborate on anything else as far as what makes life meaningful

- for you on top of what we already talked about?
205. N: Uh, specifically what makes life meaningful for me? Um, I mean it's not like any specific thing. It's just, um, being comfortable and content with how my life is going, um, which I definitely am. I think I'm pretty high on Maslow's hierarchy, so I can definitely talk about the meaning of life, spirituality sort of stuff. There's not any specific thing I can point to. I can't say if one thing was missing, life would be meaningless, but I think if I weren't married, life wouldn't be meaningless, if I didn't have a house, life wouldn't be meaningless and if I didn't have a job, life wouldn't be meaningless, but those all certainly help. Um... So I think that's it.
206. I: (laughing) If you could (coughing). I just have a frog in my throat.
207. N: Mhm.
208. I: (coughing) Sorry. That was bad timing.
209. N: (laughing)
210. I: If you could just change one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
211. N: Um. I'd like to be a multimillionaire.
212. I: (laughing)
213. N: (laughing) Um... Yeah, I mean... Okay-okay, so if I had like a genie, and it had to be something about my life. Huh... Yeah I might have stuck with multimillionaire. Because I am certainly very comfortable and well off by any consideration. Like I don't have anything to complain about certainly, but um, but I'm in a state that, like middle-class state where like I have to work not 'cause I want to and I certainly enjoy the job I have right now, but I still have to like um, so and my husband has to support us as well. So if I did get this like amazing hobby, like I wanted to spend my entire life doing, I couldn't necessarily. And so if I think I were a multimillionaire I could certainly be lot more lazy, play more video games. That's what I'd like to do. It's like in the movie *Office Space*.
214. I: (laughing)
215. N: Where he plays that game, not game, but like, question like, if you could do anything in the world what would it be? And he says, "Wow, that's meant to be like, figure out what you really love to do and go do that as your job. Like I really want to go organize shelves, go be stock boy, or something." But he says, "I'd like to do nothing."
216. I: (Laughing)
217. N: I mean that's kind of how I feel like. Not that I'd like to do nothing in the way that he means it, 'cause he means actually like sit around and not do anything. I mean, just do fun stuff that wouldn't ever be lucrative in any fashion. Like I'd sit around and play video games. And sure, I might get bored of that after a while and go like volunteer and stuff but nothing I could make a living doing. And so I really identified with that answer in the movie. Because I completely understood where it was coming from. So unless I win the lottery though, which I don't even ever buy tickets for because it's stupid. I know that's not going to happen. (laughing) But if I had a genie, I think that's what I'd go with.
218. I: Are there any beliefs, values or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
219. N: Um, commitments certainly. Obviously, it's my husband. I've committed to him. And, um, values, I definitely try and follow the Golden Rule. Because I think it's just an inherently good idea. I'm, um, there's not really any specific belief in particular. Just the values of try to be nice to people. That basically sums it up. (laughing)
220. I: (laughing) When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
221. N: Um, I don't think really anywhere specific, because I think, like I mentioned earlier, bags floating in the wind moments can happen anywhere. Like it's just, like when one particular phenomenon really catches you and that can happen absolutely

- anywhere. I've been amazed at like the way the building I work in shakes when trucks go by and so not anywhere specific but just whenever those little things happen.
222. I: What is your image or model of mature faith, of a mature response to questions of existential meaning?
223. N: Mmm.
224. I: You kind of touched on this a little bit earlier, I think, with the discussion with the lady who didn't know what atheism was, but if you wouldn't...
225. N: Mhm.
226. I: If you wouldn't mind a little bit more.
227. N: Yeah, um, definitely I don't think. She definitely had a strong faith but I don't know that I'd call a mature faith because it was completely unquestioned. I think any faith you are, you definitely need to look at it and decide for yourself that it's the right one. Like that [...] quote about an unexamined life, you really have to look at what you believe and decide that there is a real basis for it. And of course the one that I think, that I think is the right way, but that's what everyone thinks.
228. I: When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it?
229. N: Mhm.
230. I: And could you give me an example.
231. N: Okay, um, I think two specific examples come to mind. Well, first in general, I'm actually like a very general, point-by-point, like pros and cons person. So I really sit down and think about every facet of the decision. How it will affect me now. How will it affect me later? What are the costs? What are the benefits? And I'm not necessarily one of those people who makes a list and then ranks it, but it does definitely depend on the complexity. I might do that, and I think I have done that in some situations. So my first example is when we bought our house. We bought our house even before we actually got married. So definitely the pros and cons of even just the monetary cost. A: Can we afford it? B: Is it better than renting? If it's not better than renting, is it at least equal? If it's equal... If it's not equal, is it worse? If it's worse, how much worse is it? Um, can we afford it now? Can we afford it later? What are we getting ourselves into? Is there a house we can agree on? What's important? What are important features for us to look at? What timeline do we want to buy this house on? Do we want to before we get married? Do we trust each other that much? If we end up breaking up, is there a way to get out of the house amicably? And so there were just a lot of questions both on-, um, involved with house buying that, I mean, as there definitely are with anyone. So I think that both deciding this for myself and pondering them with my then boyfriend to make sure we were on the same page and agreed. So that was one example. Another example is, I actually proposed to him. Because I decided that I think, my line of reasoning was basically this: At that point we had slept together. And I don't mean sex. I mean like actually sleeping in the same bed at night. Slept together hundreds of times. And I figured if I've enjoyed it the last almost 1000 times, then I think I'm going to enjoy it from now on. So I may as well marry him. (laughing)
232. I: (laughing)
233. N: And so I mean that wasn't my entire reasoning, but it was like basically what made me- how I framed it for myself because I'm very-I don't want to say 'commitment shy,' but like 'forever commitment shy.' For instance I don't get tattoos because I think even no matter how awesome I think any particular design might be now, I've no idea how I'm going to like it in fifty years, I might hate it. I might hate it in like two years. There are like so many things I've done and think back and thought later, "Eh." Not necessarily regret it, but even thought, "Eh." That I don't want to make forever

commitments. And part of-so I mentioned that we bought our house before we got married, part of why I was okay with that is because I figured, “Well, that’s not forever.” I mean statistically buying a house breaks even with renting in three to five years.

234. I: Mhm.

235. N: I think definitely at that point I could see us definitely being there three to five years. A house isn’t a forever commitment. But when I proposed to him, I knew that that was a forever commitment. And so, um, definitely I had to do a lot of soul-searching and that and this was even harder because I didn’t want to be like a surprise. I knew that, I mean I basically knew that he would say, ‘yes.’ But I admit it made me really like have a lot more appreciation for how guys must feel when they do it. ‘Cause like, damn, I knew he was going to say, ‘yes,’ but even then, I almost chickened out.

236. I: (laughing)

237. N: Anyway a lot of soul-searching that I had to answer for myself that I didn’t discuss it with him before hand. I mean, we had like vague, like-I mean, when I have discussed stuff like that previously, I always did it in the vague that like, ‘If I get married someday’ terms. Like “If I get some, married someday, I would definitely always want to have a cat,” and if he didn’t say like, “Eww, cats,” then like, I knew that was okay. (laughing). So I didn’t even want to make him feel like (exaggerated voice) “I’m definitely marrying you.” You know, I was trying to be like not making it sound like I was [quomping?] on him or something. I mean I don’t know how to put it. But, um-what was I saying? So when I decided to propose to him, there was a lot of—Oh, I know how to say it. I didn’t want to be like one of those stupid, clingy people (exaggerated voice) “Oh I definitely want to get married.” You just have to say yes.” And so when I proposed to him, I had a lot of like definite pro and con weighing, and I’m even

like, “Is this the right thing to do? Even if it is, is this the right time to do it?” And this and that. And specifically related to atheism, I also had to think to decipher me, what does being married mean for me. Because like I said earlier, as an atheist you don’t have, you have a book that says ‘the meaning of life,’ you don’t have a book that is ‘the meaning of marriage.’ You have to decide, why would I want to be monogamous? What does that mean? If there is no like big person in the sky saying you have to be monogamous, then do I have to be monogamous? And then I decided yeah, just based on societal expectations that seems like an easy enough thing for me to agree to. So what does marriage mean to me, specifically? It can’t just be like, “What does marriage mean to the Catholic church?” And then I go along with. It’s, what does marriage mean to me? Why would I want to get married? What does a commitment mean? So that was a big decision for all of those factors, and um, looking at the next question. When I have difficult problems to solve, um, definitely like on the house I did like talk with my parents- is totally not really, reality check me. “Is this a crazy thing?” And they’re like, “Well, no.” Like, “You could do it.” They weren’t like, “Oh, yeah, like definitely. You need to.” - “Well, no, that’s reasonable.” And I think I have enough reliance on me that I know I can make a good decision, so I just like to have reality check people (laughing) so I could definitely go to my parents. I know in my marriage example, I just got through, spoke with a coworker who recently himself had gotten engaged. I know he had very previously gone through the whole—hey, no, get of that... Sorry. My cats love it when I have glasses of water out. So I know he’d just previously gone through the very same feelings that I’m sure I was going through at the same time, so he was a really good resource in that too and putting things in

- perspective. Um. And now I would definitely discuss things with my husband. Because I trust him and think he has good decision-making skills. Um. Oh, yeah, and my friends. (laughing)
238. I: (laughing)
239. N: Forgot them. They're there. I just haven't had any big decisions I've needed their input on.
240. I: It seems like you have pretty good structure built up to comfortably go through that process.
241. N: Mhm.
242. I: I think that with like what you've been saying, is that you know if there's something you really can't go in one direction, with, like you going to your mom about, your husband and your friends.
243. N: Mhm.
244. I: I think-I think that's really good. Do you think that actions can be right or wrong?
245. N: Yes, which is I know is too [...] of a philosophy too. But basically I think they can be. And I think, like I said earlier, the Golden Rule is great um, and just be nice to people is great and I try and follow those at all times. And so I think if you always act in good faith and try not to hurt people-yes, sometimes you do accidentally, but if that wasn't your intent and you took all the steps you could to avoid it, and it still happened anyway, well that's not wrong, I mean that was something with some bad consequences, and it's definitely possible to do actions that are right that still have bad consequences and actions that are wrong that still have perfectly fine consequences and so I define basically right or wrong as harmful.
246. I: So what you define as making an action wrong would be something that would be harmful to another—
247. N: Yeah, if it harms another through intent, malice, or negligence.
248. I: Do you believe that there are any actions or types of actions that are always right under any circumstances, like universal truth?
249. N: Um, I haven't necessarily thought about that. Um... I guess like pure, pure self-sacrifice would be under that because I mean if the only person you're harming is yourself and it's helping others, it's hard to say that's wrong. I don't know if there is anything else that is always right. Specifically any action that is always right. Um. Certainly there are motives that can be right, but I don't know that there's definitely any action that is always right because actions can have the wrong motives and still be the right action or the wrong action. Yeah, so much of it is situational.
250. I: That kind of leads a little bit into the next question, is, what moral opinions do you think everyone should agree on?
251. N: Um. Again the Golden Rule appears in so many different religions and philosophies that it does seem like something very basic in human cognition, that everyone kind of does agree on it and should agree on. Um, I think there should be more recognition in self-efficacy, um, that people need to be able to think for themselves and decide for themselves and do things- Where am I going with this? Um, 'moral opinions.'... I think that's basically it.
252. I: Okay. Do you think that human life has a purpose?
253. N: Again with the purpose. Um, yeah, basically no. Um, like, again, I think I called us a 'cosmic accident' before and yeah, certainly life just happens. There's no purpose. There's no direction. I think, but it's not like, human life doesn't have a purpose anymore than ants don't have a purpose, that doesn't mean that we don't have a spot to be in or don't deserve to live. [Answer?] can be very helpful to the ecology and humans could be too.
254. I: Mhm.
255. N: I mean not just ecology but, what am I saying? I mean that just because we don't have a purpose doesn't mean that like we all should go kill ourselves. Like not having a purpose is fine. It's just as fine as having a

- purpose, and it's just up to us how we act and what we do with our lives.
256. I: So do you say that you feel that we have any kind of plans for our lives or that we're affected by a power beyond our control?
257. N: Yeah, absolutely not. Um, no higher purpose. No specific plan, I think what annoys me the most is when Christian people say, "Oh, God has a plan." Again, I remember one specific anecdote where I was talking with some coworkers and I knew they were both Catholic and they were discussing some news story where a car had like flown off the road and hit some pedestrian and killed her and it was like a child or something. It was a really tragic accident. And one of them told the other saying, "Well, God has a plan." And it took all of my, like, "I- have- to- work-with-these-people-don't-offend-them" will power to say like, "No. Shit just happens. Like there's no big plan, and just saying that to other people is just a way to make you feel better about shit happening." I think humans are really, really scared of not being in control, and they don't want to say, "Oh, shit happens and we can't affect it whatsoever." They want to believe that, "Oh, the 2004 tsunami was caused by gay people," because then that means, "Oh. There's a way to fix it, just get rid of the gay people." (laughing) So and they can't recognize that bad stuff happens, but people want to believe that bad stuff has a reason, and there really isn't.
258. I: So in terms of that and you did kind of talk about this earlier a little bit, but what does death mean to you?
259. N: Right. Um, I think, again there's another great quote. I'm bringing up all these like quotes and analogies. The quote is, "Can you remember what it was like before you were born? Death is a lot like that."
260. I: Mhm.
261. N: And I actually find that comforting because like I said, that I'm frankly scared about dying. I don't want it to happen.
- And I really hope they get this whole immortality thing down before I die, but that's not really looking very good, so I just have to remember. It's not even oblivion. Like what's beyond the universe? Like it's not even nothing. That's what death is. It's not even nothing. So I won't even know that I'm dead because there won't be a me to know that.
262. I: Mhm.
263. N: So I don't remember what it was like before I was born, obviously. Um, so that's what death means to me. Not even nothingness.
264. I: And you've already claimed that you're not religious. Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual or faithful person?
265. N: Um, no, 'cause I don't even understand what the difference in spirituality is. I think spirituality is just people who say, "I want to believe in something, but I don't know what. I just want to believe that there is something." That's what I kind of get from spiritual people who say that they are spiritual, but not religious. It's like I see that as religion-lite. So, no, I think of myself as a pretty strict rationalist. I try and really understand what's going on and not use just a blind belief to say, "Oh it's something spiritual." 'Cause I think that's a failing and thinking through things and analyzing them. You just say, "Oh, it's religion," and then stop. "Oh, God did it. The end."
266. I: So are there any ideas or symbols from the religious or spiritual community that are important to you? Or that have been important to you?
267. N: Um, I think actually kind of in a way, yes. Um. Not anything in particular, but the sense of ritual that religions have is very, very deep seated in the human psyche. And that's definitely something I kind of miss from not being religious, is not having rituals, because it's very comforting to do things in a particular way. Um. Like the, I remember going to church. It was a Lutheran church. Lutherans follow a strict

- liturgy and so it was comforting having this liturgy, this back and forth in the same way every week. It was kind of neat, and so I kind of miss that. Like there's no-I don't even know if 'ritual' is even in the question.
268. I: (laughing)
269. N: Sorry, just ritual in general is very comforting, like a pacifier and just like it's hard to get an atheist community together 'cause it's hard to get people to gather around not belief, it's hard to have rituals when you don't have anything to pin them to.
270. I: Mhm. So is there anything that you said—you said you missed the ritual, is there anything that you do, prayer, mediation, or any other spiritual discipline that you come back to? Like, you know, on a daily basis or once a month or anything like that for comfort?
271. N: Um. No, not really. Um. My brain doesn't shut off, so I can't meditate (laughing), um... so not really, and I don't really feel like I need it.
272. I: Um—
273. N: Oh.
274. I: [...]
275. N: Go ahead.
276. I: No, sorry, please, uh.
277. N: Um, no, I was done.
278. I: There was actually another question I was going to ask you to kind of lead from that.
279. N: Mhm.
280. I: But I don't remember what it is. (laughing)
281. N: (laughing)
282. I: It wasn't on the paper. It was one that just came into my mind as you were talking. As I went to say it, it left.
283. N: Oh, I hate it when that happens...
284. I: (laughing) So what is 'sin' to your understanding?
285. N: So I don't believe in sin because sin is defined as something that is against what God has set down. It's the rules, that he says, "Do this and not that." And so if you do this and not that then it's not sin, but I don't have the Ten Commandments in stone to have to follow. So, I'm sinless.
286. I: (laughing)
287. N: (laughing)
288. I: Then how would you explain the presence of evil in the world?
289. N: Uh, yeah, it's that people suck. I mean that I'm a humanist, and that I believe that people can be good. But that doesn't mean that people are always good. Certainly there are people who trample on other's health and well-being for their own gain, and that's what evil is. And certainly it's very basic to say, "Oh, I want that, so I'm taking it because I can." And that's evil. And basically some people will always be evil, it's just part of humanity.
290. I: When we have disagreements about world view of religion how do you think those conflicts can be resolved?
291. N: Well, killing each other has been the historic way, and certainly that is a way they can be resolved. Certainly not how I think they should be resolved, but the question is can? Certainly killing each other has been very popular. But if the question is, should we solve? Um. I don't know because I have this outside view of religion. I think they're all wrong. (laughing) So they should all be solved by converting to atheism and that would fix everything.
292. I: (laughing)
293. N: Of course, I'm biased and of course everyone thinks that everyone should just see the light and convert to whatever they believe in. Um. So I mean I think the really practical method is just for people to butt out of what's not their business. That if other people want to live their lives in certain ways, let them. Of course, that doesn't correspond with some people's religious beliefs. If you're in a religion that says everyone needs to be your religion, then you can't just butt out of people's lives and let them live like that. So I think inherently some conflicts can not ever be resolved.

And hence all of the killing people that's been done.

294. I: Mhm. Well thank you for going through this list of questions with me. I'm going to go ahead and stop the recorder. Unless, well, is there anything else that any of these stuck out, like before I even do that, any of these questions that stuck out to you as we've been talking that you wanted to add anything to? You felt that maybe went back to something else? Like, "Oh, I wanted to say this?"
295. N: No, I can't think of anything. I mean, did you say you had more questions for me? I mean we can-I don't know if you wanted to record them or not. But either way is fine with me.
296. I: We've gotten everything on here as far as what they wanted to follow.
297. N: Mhm.
298. I: For my own purposes I've really enjoyed talking to you. I'm going to go ahead and stop the recorder, so I don't drive the poor transcriber crazy.
299. N: Okay (laughing)

B.11 Faith Development Interview with Nancy T.

1. I: [Nancy], with your permission I'm going to go ahead and record this and you give consent to go ahead with the interview?
2. N: Yes I do.
3. I: Okay. We are going to start out with a little bit of background about you and I want you tell me a little bit, anything that strikes you in any of these questions from your past and then we are going to move a little bit more into like your relationships and then on into your religious and values and commitments.
4. N: Okay.
5. I: So it's pretty laid back like I said earlier, if something doesn't really particularly strike you is something that you really feel like answering you don't have to, but if you want to go back at any point too because later on I've said something and it reminds you something from a previous question it's okay to go back and say, when you asked me this I didn't want to say anything but I've got this on my mind and all this stays anonymous.
6. N: Okay.
7. I: Reflecting on your life thus far, can you identify its major chapters; if your life were a book, how would you name the chapters?
8. N: (Laughing) I guess the beginning... the beginning, the awareness, the growth, the darkness, the real.
9. I: What marker events stand out as important to you?
10. N: Okay there is quite... you mean like in my life or in my spiritual life?
11. I: It can be both, it can be one or the other that's kind of determined by you.
12. N: Okay.
13. I: I don't think they are mutually exclusive. (Laughing).
14. N: What was the question again?
15. I: What marker events stand out as especially important in those times?
16. N: I would have to probably say the first marker event in my life was when I was a child and my brother was killed. He was a child also and he was hit and killed by a car and died and that kind of set the stage for the family dynamics, so that's an important aspect of the... my life. That would probably be, probably the first big marker. The second big marker would probably be my first mystical experience. When I was in the process of going through a bad marriage and I actually had the first complete experience. The other markers in my life is I think question.
17. I: Yeah.
18. N: I guess I pretty much marked my life by my religious, my spiritual experiences...
19. I: You are okay to talk about that?
20. N: I know it just strikes me strange because it's like I don't think about graduating from

- college or anything (laughing), that's a big moment, is like I think the first time here at [University B] I took... I have a degree in religion and philosophy [...] [University B]. The first time that I read the Bhagavad Gita and got to the end of it and Krishna says you are getting on biggest... on greatest mystery. The first time I saw Shiva, I marked my life by an experience I had in [city C in the Southern States] in [Spring] of [200X]. This I mean...
21. I: That's good, like, that's good (laughing). I mean if you can think of other things you know...
22. N: I mean I do... obviously getting married was a big life experience, but I mean, really, when I think of my life and I think of the experiences in my life, they are kind of divided between the extreme pain and then the spirituality and I think the marker was a pain which I have come through and don't really... at one time I did tie myself to those markers but I don't really now anymore other than again what I said about my brother because I think there was a dynamic that affected the whole family for a long time.
23. I: I can understand that and I'm sorry about your loss. I lost my brother too so I [CROSSTALK]
24. N: Really?
25. I: Yeah. He died from a drunk driving accident, made the mistake of getting behind the wheel after having a few many drinks.
26. N: [...] is hard it's...
27. I: I understand.
28. N: Yeah well thank you, well thank you.
29. I: You have a very sympathetic ear.
30. N: Thank you. So when I look back on the markers in my life, I really do think of, again, like I said, the first time the Bhagavad Gita, the first time I saw Shiva, an experience that happened to me in [city C] is like, is the hard core marker now and I really at this point don't want to discuss that other than to say it was so profound it felt so... it was so intense that it just stays with me to this day even though it was seven years ago so.
31. I: Is there anything about the other two that stand out to you as far as, like you have mentioned the other two experiences as being big markers, did you want to expound on it, there is all...
32. N: I've done a lot of introspection on my spiritual life and I think the first one, reading the Bhagavad Gita, we were in class we got to the end of it and Shiva, I mean Krishna says 'here again my greatest mystery, I love you dearly' and I'll never forget I read it and I looked up at the class and I said 'do you all... did you all understand this, do you all get this?' And I could... everybody was looking back at me like, well yeah, and I was like, wait a minute, you are not getting it and I looked at the professor and her name was Dr. [Smith], she was excellent and she saw what I was seeing or hearing and what it was, is just this, yeah sounds easy, but it was very personal as if I was actually being told this personally and it was this experience of, it's hard to describe, just reading his words, but I wasn't reading them, I was hearing them, hearing as if someone was saying this to me and I knew it. And I mean, first time I ever saw Shiva (laughing) which is another story actually, I was in [city A] for this Krishna retreat and family there had this different pictures of different Hindu gods and there was a picture of Shiva and at then, that point on it was like I was lo- I mean I was just it sounds so crazy and (laughing)
33. I: No not at all.
34. N: But it's just, I saw this picture and I just knew that it was like, again there was no looking like a picture, it was like I knew that he was looking at me and I was looking at him and I knew there was a connection and since then whenever I look... want to bring the divine into a personal aspect that is the aspect I use, Shiva, that is how I relate to the divine, I don't go Jesus sort of Christian, I go Shiva.

35. I: That doesn't sound crazy, go on (laughing) that doesn't even [...] sound crazy.
36. N: Okay, good.
37. I: Are there any past relationships that you felt are important to your development as a person?
38. N: Well other than all of them, but you know...
39. I: That's a good answer too.
40. N: (laughing) I mean, like one in particular that stands out like, oh if it wasn't for him or her... are you talking about relationships with living people or does it matter.
41. I: It doesn't matter.
42. N: Okay I guess the main relationship that I've kind of had with somebody who really influenced me a lot was a Hindu saint named Siva Rama Krishna and he really is a big influence in my life and finding his teachings and his, really set me on a course, so I would have almost said that was other than everybody (laughing) that's been around that would be... that was a big influence on me.
43. I: You don't recall any changes and relationships that have had a significant impact on your life or way of thinking about things?
44. N: Well I mean here again, (laughing) I mean any- any changes are going to make a change within you or changes so...
45. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION].
46. I: Do you recall any changes and relationships that have a significant impact on your life or way of thinking about things?
47. N: I guess for that one I would have to answer really... it's two things I can think of. My relationship with my father changed and that eventually, he's really changed my life in a lot of ways and in my relationship with my husband has changed the way I look at things and see things in a really different ways.
48. I: Did you want to get into that or...
49. N: Okay (laughing).
50. I: It's up to you. If you don't want to...
51. N: Tell me again that question, repeat it one more time.
52. I: Do you recall any changes and relationships that have had a significant impact on your life?
53. N: Okay. To start with, like I had mentioned earlier I had a brother who died and when he died my parents both went and it was a very bad depression, especially my father went to very severe depression and as a young girl I... as a child I couldn't understand that and it took a long time to finally learn what that was all about and accepted as an adult and go pass the feelings of a child who... it's very easy in your child, but it's stuck in those feelings as a child. So it took a long time for me to go through those steps of, I'm not a child but I got to acknowledge my feelings as a child, I've got to acknowledge... my father was a person, he's not just my father and I have to come to understand why all this means, so going from a point of total hatred with my father I eventually turned it totally around to where in the last years of his life I was his care taker and actually on the day he died, even though I was not physically with him, we communicated and I had an experience of him passing over and I feel like I know what I saw, what he saw when he passed over and I know what that is so that's pretty profound [chuckling] going from wanting to... at one point in my childhood literary wanting to murder him, I hated him so badly, to finally finding myself so close to him and so with him, that when on his death he was talking to me and I was helping him pass over into the death. Now with my husband it started out, (laughing) I think it was different, the opposite was an intense attraction, I almost felt like he was like Shiva in person and just an intense attraction to my husband. We went through difficulties, especially in the years taking care of both my parents who were very elderly and [...] and it caused some differences in

- our marriage to say the least. But I think it helped me in ways I'm just now coming out and beginning to understand and make changes and grow in my spirituality and only now I'm beginning to mesh through that, so. Do I talk too much?
54. I: No-no, this is great. I mean not... you understand I'm saying, not great but...
55. N: I'm not talking too much okay.
56. I: No not at all. How would you... how has your world view changed across the life's chapters and, you've kind of talked about that a little bit but...
57. N: Okay, when you say world view, the first thing that comes into my mind is literary the world view, how I view the world, the earth, the people and those kinds of things and when I was first growing up, I was very politically active and really into politics and then to the crusader rabbit and willing to take on the challenges and all these kind of things and since... within the last couple of years going through what I consider a dark night and now coming out of it, I view the world now more as a place of a lot of beauty, a lot of spirituality, but a hell of a lot of pain and it's very painful to see how people don't know how loved they are and they don't understand their divinity and this is something that is painful to me and so when I look at the world now, I try to be more understanding of it, I try to let it just be what it needs to be and realize my role and is just to try to give it the compassion and the love it needs when it asks for, when it requires it. I don't feel the need to be crusader rabbit, it's not my role anymore, I don't see the world as a place that is in control of itself, but I see it as a place that the divine is in control, whether we realize that we are gone and I just see it as a place that now needs a great deal of love and compassion.
58. I: That's... does, this kind of ties into that a little bit, how is this affecting your image of God or the divine, like what does that mean to you now in your [...].
59. N: It hasn't affected it honestly at all, is like my idea of God has pretty much stayed in place now for a long time, it-it just kind of it's like-it's like getting in... it really hasn't changed my idea about god at all, I think it's changed... I've changed, I think I'm changed because I feel like I'm getting closer and I don't even say that that's not right. I feel like there is more awareness than there was maybe before, more knowledge, more awareness. But the idea of God or the divine has pretty much stayed the same, it's me that's growing into it, it hasn't changed. I've changed and I'm growing more into it.
60. I: Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or [...] (laughing).
61. N: Oh yeah baby. Oh yeah, they are good (laughing).
62. I: It's a good thing.
63. N: It's a real good thing. Yeah like I said, I mentioned early, just reading the Bhagavad Gita, that one statement that it was buried like what! You know I mean it was very intense. Again seeing Shiva, it's just like even though it is a picture, he's not looking... he's looking at you, it's not a picture, you are not looking at a picture, this dude is looking at you. And it's just, think about you meet somebody you like them, their heart and it's [...] degree because you are talking, so again the mystical experiences the first time I ever had a real mystical experience, it was just... it was the most unusual thing I've ever had because it was an experience of where also everything just disapp-. The differences were there, but everything was one and I don't know how to explain it other than everything was just one and you knew it was one and there was no sense of oh I'm that and that's me because there wasn't... there couldn't be, it was just all one but even though you could see that things are different, so those, all those kind of experiences have always moved me onward and charged me up and... the question again.

64. I: Moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences?
65. N: Oh moments of intense joy. Oh yeah, okay, well, a moment or a breakthrough, a breakthrough is like I have just said what I was talking about when you hear those... moments of intense joy there is been one moment of intense joy. Again, it was a situation that happened in [city C] in 200X and I really don't want to go into it because it is that deeply personal, but the experience was so intense, again, I'm still just, I get up everyday, I think of this experience and... to me it was divine, I don't know how else to describe it, it was just a chance meeting between me and another person, we didn't even speak to each other, I can't describe the energy that went between us, we had no contact with each other but obviously something happened because I'm still talking about seven years later and it has affected me so deeply. This is... that's all I will say.
66. I: You don't have to get into anything you don't want to get into and if you decide later that you do now that I'm completely [non judgmental] that I love learning from other people's experiences, so I will take everything that you say as this in confidence and without judgment.
67. N: Okay that's the intense joy, I don't know how... that's the intense joy, then the mystical experiences and the other experiences that again all build up and lead to things, but that was one of just incredibly intense joy that I can't define. I mean it's so obviously I still talk about [...]. (laughing)
68. I: This next part kind of goes into the opposite direction and you talked a little bit about the loss of your brother, but have you ever had times of crisis or suffering in your life?
69. N: Oh yeah. Yeah I've seen the blues real well. Yeah I've had three suicidal attempts in my life, I've had a nervous breakdown, I've had periods of just feeling... going through the pains of the person living with

and found out he was cheating on, then have a baby that was cheating on me. I've been fired from the job unfairly, I've had the person I trust just stab me in the back. There have been some really bad times when you hit low, when you just, you just don't think (chuckling) you are going to make it through, you really don't and you think next day will change and it doesn't change, is just like the day before and you just don't quite know how you keep going sometimes and there have been times I didn't want to go on, I couldn't go on. The first time I tried to kill myself was in when I was 14 and I think a lot of that just came out again because I had grown up in such a depressive home and such a, just a happy home and puberty is not a good time to start with anyway. And then the second time was when I was 21 and I was in a very bad marriage and something very bad had happened and I just thought I can't take it and then the last time, again I was in a bad relationship and I just couldn't take it. And this time the guy got me to the hospital and of course they put me in the psych ward, but something very interesting happened to me in the psych ward. I was in the psych ward and it was like 4:00 in the morning and the guy next to me, in the room next to me screaming and yelling and I'm in a locked room and the room is slanted and I'm thinking, oh dear Jesus, God, I've hit the bottoms now and I just thought what I'm I going to do, I'm lost and I'm really truly-truly lost and I was sitting, I just heard this voice, not outside of myself, but it was in my voice, but I just heard this voice, a very soft [not very] softly, but just a voice that said you are loved. And I met him and I turned around and I thought I'm going to get out of here, it's going to be okay, I'm going to make it, I'll make it. So I just slowly started acting like, okay don't want to act crazy, I want to act like really calm about everything and within two or three... two days or so they didn't send me to the

[bin], they were like, okay you just had this thing with your boyfriend, so get the hell out of here and get some counseling (laughing). But yeah, forgot about that but that just kind of really turned after that point I just started feeling like it's okay, I am well [...] and I can start moving forward and I think that was probably before the Bhagavad Gita incident, yeah I think that was before that, then after that came the Bhagavad Gita incidence, so it just kind of reaffirmed, yes not only are you loved, but I love you, so.

70. I: Have you ever, and this is kind of on the same lines, but have you ever felt... had times where you felt profound disillusionment, [...] no meaning?
71. N: Oh yes, oh yes, I think it's normal, I think you have to go through that. I'm a... I believe in the mystic, the classic kind of mystic path, I mean I don't mean to say it's hard core set but I do think they are the dark nights of the soul where you do go through, kind of like you were so close to me and you were my lover and you tell me all this stuff, now suddenly where are you. I'm in [...] where are you. And I can say the last few years really proved, about the last seven years I've had to take care of my elderly parents until my father died, my mother is now in a nursing home, still deal with her business and things, but I think at that time for some whatever reason it became... it's very difficult to do this and it's hard to see your parents get old and it's hard to see them waste away and it's hard to see them lose their mind and they are still feeling they are young and yet they know they are not and it's a difficult process and somewhere in all of this I think it started getting more stressful and as it became more stressful, it became darker and I couldn't keep my spirituality in. I think at the same time though I was going through a dark night because it was, I couldn't... it was like the biggest of them all, I mean I have gone through other ones where it was time, I mean like I can't get in

touch with you, I just can't get in touch with you, but this one seemed like it was, sometimes almost it was like I was abandoned and it was like I don't get it, I really don't get it. And so I had gone through periods of just this profound emptiness and just nothingness and it really makes you question and it really makes you question, is I'm I believing this because I just want to feel like I'm loved or is this truly really happening or what is going on here and, but it's always been my experience that no matter the suffering we always kind of like compensated, you always come out of it somehow with something stronger and better and I don't quite know how that quite works. And I think that's one of the things I'm going through right now, is just kind of like I have gone through a profound darkness and I'm beginning to come back into the lightness, but they discuss the darkness also as saying is not that God's there, is just that, that reality is so overwhelming you can't quite see it so, but I have been there and I think it's something you have to go through, otherwise I think you are trapped in a concept of your own idea of God and I think when you go through the darkness you become humble and you... there is a virtual of [con-] the descent of an honor, or an honor goes down into the underworld and as she goes through the underworld she has to take off her jewelry and her clothes until she finally, she is naked in front of the lord of the underworld and I think this kind of what it is, you have to take off all those things so that you lust in their naked, so that whatever it truly is will come to you and again I think that's how deep do you want to go too, I mean I'm sure there is a lot of people don't want to go that deep and I can't blame them for it, so. Yeah there have been times and I think there have to be times you have to question that otherwise you are just, you are in a kids' game.

72. I: Yeah it's understandable. I'm now apologizing, this is kind of a rough transition to go from those really in-depth stuff, but what

- kind of... (laughing) it's hard to make a transition when you talk about things like (laughing) this, so there is no really easy to do it.
73. N: Can't wait to hear.
74. I: We've talked about your dad a little bit like going kind of away from your general life experiences and relationships how ha-you've talked about your dad a little bit, like how your relationships with your parents changed over the years?
75. N: Mostly with my dad, my mother I was always very-very close to and kind of when after my brother died, I mean, I had all these sisters so I mean I was still like at that point her baby and so I've always been very close to my mother and that's never really changed that much and she's still... but it was my father then where I had the most profound change experience in, so.
76. I: This is actually, the next couple of questions are exactly that, so are there any current relationships other than your parents that are important to you?
77. N: Oh all my relationsh... well I... shouldn't say all of my, can say all those schmucks at work but (laughing)
78. I: Just joking, it stays confidential, nothing leaves this room.
79. N: [...] (laughing)
80. I: You never said it.
81. N: Obviously my husband, I mean that's a really important relationship to me, my husband was probably the first man that really I felt free enough to talk about my spirituality and my spiritual experiences and he seemed to accept it and understand and felt free, really free to talk to him about my friends. I'm very close to all my friends and they are close to me and not for him, my family, I mean my sisters, I'm still very close to my sisters and what was the question?
82. I: Current relationships that are important to you besides the schmucks at work?
83. N: (Laughing) No, I mean, I would have to say those are the... I mean my husband, my family which is my husband and my dog and my friends and my birth family, my sisters those they are, extended family, cousins and things, those are the relationships that are important to me, those yeah, all those.
84. I: Are there... what groups, institutions or courses do you identify with?
85. N: Not really any to be honest, I mean (laughing).
86. I: That's okay, that's a good answer.
87. N: Yeah not really anymore, it's like I said, I used to be kind of into it all and now I just don't want to... it's not that... I just... it's just not the way anymore for me and I don't really identify. That was the question, identify, I don't identify at all with any religion, I don't identify with political groups. I try... to me right now I identify with just this-this earth and this planet and here is how we all are together in this boat, that's kind of what I identify with now.
88. I: Well we are all stuck in this together. (Laughing). Do you feel that life has meaning at present?
89. N: That's a good question. You know because... I don't know that life really does have a meaning (laughing). I mean I think to kind of say that life has a meaning, it kind of like does it really, (laughing) does this [hell] have a meaning, but I think there is a reason. In Hinduism they say God created it all just for enjoyment, for play and the classic 'I became like you so you could become like me' and I guess that's about the meaning of life is that I became like you so you could become like me.
90. I: So what makes life meaningful for you then?
91. N: Getting... growing closer to God and I use the term here, God, which I don't as a real use but just knowing that just growing in that, just growing in that is just the most important thing, is just such a pleasure, I can't even tell you what a pleasure it is, not like I said there have been times I've been living hell but ultimately it's just, it's an

- inexplicable thing, I guess is like loving someone is kind of harder to find and it just-just, for me it's just living and knowing that, that's what it's all about it's just opening myself up broader letting me come in more and more so that I'm opened up more and more and more.
92. I: You are saying don't like use the phrase God, how do you usually describe that, like what-what it depends?
93. N: I used to say divine or divine reality that if I'm talking about something... it depends on who I'm talking to, I'll make sure if I'm talking to a Christian most of the time, I'll say God. If I'm talking like to my friends or things, I mean if I'm talking to my weekend friends, I'll say goddess if I'm talking to just people in general. For my own self I say divine or divine reality but I know that if I want to get a thought across (laughing) I have to use terminology.
94. I: That others...
95. N: That you will understand. So a lot of times I just I use the terms God or Jesus if I'm ta- if somebody is talking to me about Christianity I will discuss Jesus and saints or I will say God, depending on, just depending on who I'm talking to and what we are talking about.
96. I: Is a way of making it relatable, or?
97. N: Mhm way of making it relatable.
98. I: That makes sense. I just thought it was interesting personally that you... normally you don't, but you were with me so I was curious why all of a sudden you felt that you [need to define it].
99. N: (Laughing) [...] had I been using the term properly, I didn't realize it.
100. I: You've been using it but that was the first time you actually said I don't usually use that word, so I was like, well okay, so I need to know.
101. N: I guess because I'm trying to talk... I'm trying... I guess I'm thinking this is the easiest way, I don't know your level, I don't mean level, I'm sorry I don't mean it that way, I apologize, I don't mean that, I guess
- I mean, I don't know, that's such a common word that we all mostly use to define...
102. I: A lot of people use it to define.
103. N: Yeah so just that's kind of the common word I was using. I was using other.
104. I: No that's just okay, it just...
105. N: But I don't...
106. I: You can use whatever terminology works with you.
107. N: I don't as a rule use that term.
108. I: I'm pretty outspoken to so many different people and personally just to give you an idea how [...] with me, so you can feel more comfortable. I've spoken to so many people with such different walks of life, I have learned so many different ways people view God and I learned so much from them. Personally on how to identify differently so you can use any terminology and that helps me to know how you see things too.
109. N: Okay that works and...
110. I: Because then maybe I'll learn something about a way I want to define that.
111. N: Okay that works.
112. I: So you are helping me grow personally and as well helping out with the study, (laughing) but if you wanted to continue on the path before I get in the, (laughing) get you on a tangent, if you could change one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
113. N: Oh I would change one thing about myself, but then at the same time I can pretty much change a lot of things about myself, so let me think about that for a second. One thing, if I could change one thing about myself or one thing about... I'd have to come back to that, I feel like I can change pretty much anything in my life so and then one thing about my... about myself and about my life, what the hell that's happened now, so there is no point going back, I just move on forward (laughing). I really don't know.
114. I: So if like a genie in a bottle came to you and said anything, good or bad, doesn't matter, it's sometimes that is good that you

- want to be better, that's something bad you want to be changed for good, what would you?
115. N: I guess the main thing is I would ask if the one thing I would want probably to come and change is my temper, I have a bad temper (laughing), so maybe.
116. I: (Whispering) you are in good company.
117. N: (Laughing) Maybe work on my temper, I try to work on that, I try to, that's something I work hard on, but maybe if that could be changed, it wouldn't have to be such an effort (laughing).
118. I: Or make it a point not to make you that mad during the interview. (Laughing)
119. N: No I'm easy as you, I want to give my husband hell when I get home (laughing).
120. I: I'll keep that in mind for his sake. Are there any beliefs, values or commitments that seem important to your life now as a person?
121. N: The most important belief is that we all are... I think in what I just said, I became like you so you could become like me, the oneness that we have with the divine, the oneness that we have with the divine, the fact that we are seeds of the divine and it is... that's what we are here for is to grow into that and those are the things that pretty much are my base, that's my baseline, then kind of, that's my baseline then from that I believe strongly that all religions are just past to the one, that they all teach the same thing and there is no, really no difference. Beyond that I find, I find the teachings, the Golden Rule is the best thing to remember on a moral basis, there is no need for a lot of crazy rules, just got one, you got to remember now, I'll teach it, so that's easy. And then when it does get down to more practical like incidents I find that Jesus' teachings are really good, practical teachings, I mean he really gives good advice how to deal with things on a day-to-day basis and at the same time be spiritual or grow in that spirituality, so those are my, pretty much my hard core beliefs, is just the oneness that we all are and that we should be growing into and that the pasts are all the same, they just take us to the one, I mean they are different view points but they all go to the same place and just practice the Golden Rule, those are the three things and then you can get a little finer with little finer points but those are the three main points I really try to work with.
122. I: When or where do you find yourself most in communion or harmony with the universe?
123. N: Probably when I'm in nature, when I'm out in nature away from craziness and really anytime anywhere, but it's usually when I'm in nature and there is no one around and it's quiet or I'm working in the garden and touching the earth, those kind of things, that's when the communion is the easiest.
124. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
125. I: This is a really tricky question and I'm only saying this because it's [...] parts, so we can break it down if we need to.
126. N: Which we probably will (laughing).
127. I: I've had to do this with everybody, to break it down just because it asks for a lot and it's really intense question but what is your image or model of mature faith. Of a mature response to questions of existential meaning?
128. N: Okay you said one, the first part or was that the whole thing.
129. I: That's the whole thing.
130. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
131. N: I think, model of mature faith, of a model of response to questions of existential meaning is one that's open. It doesn't... it's not set in stone, it's one that's willing to shift and see what, yeah this sounds like the right answer today, but is it truly the right answer and it's willing to be open and allow, maybe allow a change to commune, what's your image of a model of mature... Mature faith is one that's opened, it's not set in stone, that is open and is, understands that things aren't always... it's not about black and white, it's about colors. A mature

- response to questions that, existential meaning, again a mature response is open, it doesn't say, this is the answer, it's a mature... it says perhaps this is the answer, does it work best, does it work for you, does it work for me. A mature response to questioning is questioning.
132. I: That's a god answer (laughing), it's probably one of the best I've heard so far. (Laughing)
133. N: Okay.
134. I: When you have an important decision to make, how do you generally go about making it, if you want to do that by giving me an example?
135. N: Well I would say usually I come up with a couple of options, then I will discuss it with somebody, usually my husband and my sister or something like that, depending on what it is. I'm responding in a very practical manner if I've got something that I've got to make a decision about, I'll come up with options or maybe we discuss it with someone and then I'll usually go with what seem to be the best response. What seems to be the best practical option for that. What was the question, I mean...
136. I: You answered it.
137. N: Okay.
138. I: Unless you feel you wanted to expound on that, just...
139. N: You just wanted to know how do I... when I have to make decisions was that the cor- okay.
140. I: How do you go about doing it?
141. N: Again it depends on... and that's pretty much if I'm having to make a very intense decision about something, as a rule I'm really good at just kind of action, so it's not hard enough for me sometimes to just take a course of action, but so it depends on the situation kind of what I will do.
142. I: So if you have a particularly difficult problem to solve, like to who or what would you go for guidance?
143. N: If it was particularly difficult, I would pray, I would say give me guidance, let me see, help me, find the way, let me... help me, show me, I don't always feel like I know what the right answer is even when I ask that but and then again I would probably go to a friend, go to my husband, go to my sister and say, you know, I'm struggling with this, what do you think.
144. I: We sort of talked about this a little bit already, but do you think an action can be right or wrong?
145. N: Yeah yes, I do, I mean, I understand lot of actions are relative, I mean it's obvious.
146. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
147. I: So what... talking about actions being right or wrong.
148. N: Right. I understand actions are relative, you can't say, oh this is right or this is wrong but I do think there are some things that are just wrong, like starting war, that's wrong, I'm sorry, that's wrong. I mean you could say murder but then that's relative too, so I think there are some things that are wrong but I understand that most, I'd say probably most actions are relative in a lot of ways. Again I think you have to fall back again on the [...] on the [...] is this how I would want to be treated, is this what I want, is this what I would want to have happened with me, so here again starting a war is just not right (laughing).
149. I: What-what would you say makes an action right in your opinion?
150. N: I think an action is right when it shows compassion, when it shows caring, when it shows, makes someone else feel positive and good, when it shows. I think an action is right when it feels, it works for you and feels like you've done it right and the person who you've acted upon or what... maybe the [...] or something you've acted upon there is no negativity there, is just... there is no negativity there, there is a feeling of rightness, that it's, I don't know, that I can say this is right or this is wrong. I think a right action brings forth right fruit, get a little biblical. But it seems to bring out something right and [...] goes on an

elevator with a woman and she called me by another person's name and I just kind of laughed and I said oh no you are confusing me again, I'm like blah blah blah. And a week later she sent me a little thank you card and it said thank you for not making me feel embarrassed that I had called you by the wrong name.

151. I: Wow!

152. N: I felt yeah, that's what I felt, wow, and so that was a right action, I don't know what I did I just kind of laughed with her and made it a joke and t- but obviously it was the right action because it made her feel comfortable and good and accepted or whatever it made her feel, I'm not sure, obviously made her feel something positive, so I guess those are the right actions and then who's treating yourself the right way, right actions to your own self, I mean...

153. I: You can go (laughing). What makes an action wrong?

154. N: Again I think an action is wrong when, and I hate to say again it can be relative, but when it hurts you or it hurts another person and doesn't, and I understand there is a lot of fear that can be involved in there when someone does something that hurts you, a lot of times is deep screwed up emotions from childhood or just fear, but things that can make it wrong is when you hurt another person or when you hurt yourself and you don't show that respect, I mean it's a kind of a funky little line to walk because I know I'm saying it's relative and then I'm saying it's not (chuckling), I understand I'm saying both here kind of so I think you really, again you got to fall back on kind of like how do I want to be treated, how... what would I want to experience and that's what makes an action right or wrong maybe.

155. I: So what do you say that there are certain types of actions that are always right under any circumstance?

156. N: Yeah (laughing) yeah, giving love to someone, showing someone love and compassion is always right, it's always right

to make someone feel that they are accepted, that they are good, that there is nothing wrong with them, that they are loved, that they are worthwhile, that's always good. That's always going to be right. I take it your next question is probably are they always wrong ones. (Laughing)

157. I: No actually. [Are there] certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?

158. N: Moral opinions, can you define that?

159. I: Well I really can't define it because if you see something as being a moral opinion, I might view it differently but if you want an example that you've already used, you've kind of talked about the Golden Rule as being the moral standard for all religions, so.

160. N: The question again is, are there certain moral...

161. I: Are there opinions that everyone should agree on in [...].

162. N: Well I mean here again. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION] Okay moral opinions that everyone should agree on, yeah see, here again you kind of get to an absolute situation and it would be really nice if everyone like would agree to say yeah, let's all treat each other like we want to be treated and that's really nice, but then I kind of have to wonder why we are here in the first place and everybody seems to have different lessons, they are here to learn, so I-I think there is a standard and again the standard would be the Golden Rule but where everybody else... where everybody is in their own path, that's kind of, maybe they will, maybe they won't buy into that, so I mean I hate to say yes, that's it, that's the one which we should all believe because I mean it's the best standard but you have to take into consideration not everybody is ready to hear that or understand that in this world.

163. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]

164. I: So moving on and see religion and world view, do you think that human life has a purpose?

165. N: Yes I think the human purpose for life is to grow into the divinity, again, like I have said earlier, I became like you so you could become like me, we are seeds of the divine and the purpose of this life is to realize that and grow into it and unfortunately we don't really teach that in this world or is not taught, especially in American society but, or Western society and probably not a lot in Eastern, but I think that's the whole point being here. There is others I think, this is a learning ground that souls just come here to advance and but yeah. I think that the point here is to learn to be and to discover you or recover your divinity.
166. I: Is there a plan for our lives or are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
167. N: I'm not sure there is a plan per se and it sounds like fate to me and I've always gotten the impression there is a lot of free will and a lot of, you choose what you want and you get to decide what you want because I think that... I think that's what leads you to go out, I mean if you can't choose, the joy is in choosing, there is a lot of joy in being chosen and choosing God and I think if it was set up or point or a purpose kind of this is what I don't know, I think there is a path and maybe there is a reason why but I think there is a lot of freedom on that path for you to choose what you need and what you want.
168. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
169. I: What does death mean to you?
170. N: Death is just... death is just transition, it's just leaving the physical body and moving into another spiritual, into a spiritual realm.
171. I: I know... what happens to us when we die?
172. N: What was the question?
173. I: What happens to us when we die?
174. N: It depends, it depends to me, it depends on how you've lived your life, if you've lived your life trying to be spiritual or understanding spiritual or living in that I think when you transition over you find a peace and a joy because that's what the other side consist of. If you haven't, if your emphasis is been in the material world and not particularly an emphasis on the spiritual or wanting to know and then you transition into that world, it will seem like a hell because you don't... you are not aware of it. If you are not aware of it in this world, it's going to seem like hell on that world. Maybe not that it necessarily is hell but it's just, you never thought to think about that pla- or that reality. So when you are put in that reality, it's uncomfortable and therefore it seems like a hell. But if you've thought about it in this world and tried to live and feel it in this world, then it's not going to seem strange or unusual when you transition.
175. I: Do you consider yourself a religious, spiritual or faithful person?
176. N: Are those three different things? (Laughing)
177. I: Are they? (Laughing) That's up to you, do you see them all differently or do you see them all as being the same thing?
178. N: I see myself as a spiritual person. A religious person, I guess I would define a religious person as one who is very, bound up more in their religion and what their religion teaches and what their religion, is very attached to their religion, to sp- to me it's spiritual, is the essence that we all are. Religion again is just a path to that spirituality, so a religious person is really involved in their path that's not quite right but they are really maybe dealing with that physical reality and that's not quite right either, but spiritual is people who are not necessarily religiously bound in some way to a form and faithful, that could be anything, faithful to your religious teachings, faithful to God, I guess in some ways I'm faithful, it just...
179. I: That's a good answer. Are there any religious, spiritual or other ideas, symbols or rituals that are important to you or have been important to you?

180. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION]
181. N: Pretty much what I have discussed, the only other one that I really haven't discussed as far as ritual what would be the Wiccan circle, the full moon and there really is something just so magical about the full moon and it's always very important even if I don't do circle, I like to just go out and under the moon and commune with the moon and just talk, feel that, just that energy that comes in, so the moon is a very important symbol, I would say religious symbol that I have not touched on maybe.
182. I: You started, talked about it a little bit, but do you pray and meditate or perform any other spiritual discipline?
183. N: To me I tried to get to the point, well I don't, haven't tried to get to the point, that sounds so arrogant. I have tried to take into consideration the teaching of pray constantly and what that really means, so I feel like in my life I don't have times when I pray, I try to pray... I try to commune with God all day, I just talk, we just talk. I don't really necessarily ask for something or say thank you for anything, I just may, just talk about what's going on in my day. I don't have a set meditation I do in the morning first thing when I wake up though, I do- I do pray and I say prayer and I say gratitude and I'll talk a little bit about what's going on in my head and what's going on, help me to whatever. But I don't have a set time that I necessarily meditate, I don't have a set time that I necessarily perform ritual or anything like that, no.
184. I: What is sin to your understanding?
185. N: Of sin? Can I go back to that last question?
186. I: Oh please go ahead. Do you pray and meditate or perform any other spiritual discipline?
187. N: Well here again, I mean let me go back to that spiritual bit, to me just trying to live is the spiritual discipline, different... there is different things, you can do different exercises, you can do, and I mean it's like when I first joined the coven, the high priest said Wiccan or witchcraft is not something we believe, it's something we live and so I think as far as spiritual disciplines, that's, living is a spiritual discipline. It's just, living each day is part of the spiritual discipline. I love to perform circle, I haven't performed in a while but I do try to like to go out and then like I said under the full moon and otherwise just living each day is the spiritual discipline.
188. I: I didn't know there was a Wiccan circle in [...].
189. N: There is probably a few covens around.
190. I: Really?
191. N: But see, in Wiccan you don't have to join a club or anything to be a solit- what's called a solitary, so yeah.
192. I: I have been solitary for quite a few years.
193. N: Really. (Laughing)
194. I: Well. (Laughing)
195. N: What a surprise okay.
196. I: I'm trying not to disclose too much, I don't want to bias you in one direction.
197. N: No you won't, don't worry.
198. I: So what is sin to your understanding?
199. N: Oh sin, bless his heart (laughing).
200. I: It's such a wonderful southern term.
201. N: Well I know, bless his heart. Sin is I think kind of what we were talking about earlier, is just those negative actions that hurt you or hurt other people. Again it... it's all kind of, can be relative so but I think it's in a way I almost want to say, I don't know what's... I don't know that there is... sin is when you are just not good to yourself or other people.
202. I: How do you explain the presence of evil in our world?
203. N: That's an interesting question. A couple of things obviously, the world is a dualistic tricky -tricky but it appears to be a dualistic world and it's set up in a dualism and so in some ways evil in the world is part of that dualism and also... I'm sorry [...] yeah.
204. I: That's okay, we are here.
205. N: Of evil in the world.

206. I: Mhm.
207. N: I mean I think Siva Rama Krishna has got a really good saying about that. He talks about its snake that's poisonous and he says the poison is in the snake but the snake isn't affected by the poison is there and I guess the presence of evil in the world, it's like this is the poison, it's a poison, but ultimately it has no effect on God or the divine reality or its goodness and wisdom and its realness, it's just this thing that's here in this world. Why this word was created to appear as a dualism I'm not really sure, some people think it's a spir- it's a learning place that we come here to advance spiritually by having this dichotomy, this confusion. Other people say this is a quarantined part of the universe (chuckling) and true and that's why there is evil in this place, is because really we are a sick-sick bunch of people (laughing) and it's...
208. I: We are quarantined.
209. N: Yeah and we are quarantined from the universe so we don't even realize how sick we are. We think it seems normal. That's to me, that's why there seems to be evil, that people, there is a dichotomy, people are giving choice and a lot of times they just don't make the right choices. I'm not sure about evil, I know that there are people, I think evil also is fear-based, I really do, I think it kind of breeds out of intense fear and pain and hurt and then it just hardness and becomes evil.
210. I: If people disagree about issues of world view or religion, how can such conflicts be resolved? We've already said, war is not the answer, so (laughing).
211. N: That's a good question, I'm not really sure that they can be or there is supposed to be. I think-I think for issues to be resolved it takes a lot of one rational thinking which doesn't seem to exist a lot, it takes people willing to say okay we've got a situation, what would be the best, let's talk about it. But doesn't seem to be happening. To me, the other situat- the other alternative is like
- make it so damn bad that at some point everybody is going to say we can't take this anymore and we all have to come to a consensus of, this isn't going to work, it's got to be this way because we are dying the other way. [OFF MIC CONVERSATION] How can such conflicts... I'm not sure they can be and I'm not sure they will be, I'm not sure that's what this point, that this place is. Again I think if they are to be resolved it takes coming together and realizing differences and it takes that maturity which I spoke of earlier, being open, not saying it's this way or that way but being open to the changes and the possibilities and willing to shift. And right now there doesn't seem to be a lot of that in the world, there seems to be a lot of structure and rigidity and again it may be that, that is what will ultimately make us all realize it's got to be this way because we are all dying this... the other way. I'm not sure there is an answer for that.
212. I: No that's a good answer too (laughing). They are all valid answers and that's the great thing because this is designed around what it means to you. We've covered a lot of ground. I mean I don't think it's easy to understand a person's entire life in just one meaning but, and all the things we talked about and then you kind of mentioned the moon, is something that you really didn't talk about, but do you want to talk to me any more about anything else that we discussed, that you came back and you thought well I should have mentioned more about this or she didn't ask this, but I'd like to talk about this.
213. N: Well let's get back into the Wiccan, I think I didn't mention that as a life changing incident but it truly-truly was. When I went to graduate school in [state D] at a school in [city E in state D] and really it was the first time I was presented to that and it just made a lot of sense and it felt right and it felt good and I liked the ritual and I liked being outside and I liked all the aspects to it

and I didn't really mention that before. But that was a major change to, sometimes it's kind of hard for me to (laughing) things, to be honest I know I had made notes here for (laughing) myself yeah, the Wiccan yeah I did mention goddess here, Shiva. Now I think in a lot... the only other thing... yeah here is something. Here is something I haven't really brought up that I mentioned but that was very important to me is that when I started reading about Buddhism on the first Noble Truth life is suffering and had I mentioned I had gone through painful times in my life and when I first read the first Noble Truth I was just blown away because here was somebody who is actually saying life sucks, yeah shit. And I really appreciated that in a religion that it would just stand up and say, here is the first truth, life is very painful and is suffering. And that was just a really profound change in me, it was like oh my God I don't have to fight to prove this to people, it was almost like in Christianity, it was like [...] but that, yes, but and this person was saying, no, your [fans] are but it's suffering and I really like that, so that was a really profound moment for me to the... forgot I had mentioned that as far as my religious views. I think looking back these are ways that I have, like there has been two aspects of my religious life or spiritual life, I'll say and that's the more logical thinking, aspects like life is suffering and Buddhism and I liked to bet in Buddhism a lot, I love to bet in Buddhism and those kind of knowledge and learning and then there is the Bhakti yoga side which is the devotional, I'm in love with Shiva, he is in love with me, those kinds of things which

are just the bliss side, so there is the awareness, the bliss, the knowledge. I think now again, like I said, I think I have come through a profound dark night and I'm only beginning to come out of it and, but I feel now in my life that there is just such a iden-not identity, but there is just a unity or a closeness that with God and others like almost no difference now, with us it's like the only thing I'm doing now is just trying to open myself up more and more and more because there is just... and it's not like I'm opening myself up more is just maybe like I'm allowing mys- I don't know how to explain it, it's just letting it be and just allowing it to just blossom, I guess like a flower and it just, there is no difference now, it's almost like there is just no difference anymore and that's a very nice thing.

214. I: So anything else you want to-to add on?
215. N: No not that I can think of, I think I've said... I'm sure there is things that I have forgotten or can't quite remember, it's just, it's a learning experience, it's a process and it's, I just had found myself changing again from someone who feels like maybe there are answers but maybe I don't have the answer but just, I think it's just as important each day just to pray to... send out blessings in the world and just, you know, you see the person on the side of the road, you just send out white light and you just send them a blessing and maybe they be taking care of, I think it's important just to do this little things and I don't know, that's all I guess, I had-had to say at the moment.
216. I: That's okay, I have really enjoyed the interview.

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