

## Chapter 9

*Proposal for questions on religious identity*

**Suggested by**

*Jaak Billiet*  
K.U. Leuven

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## 9.1 Proposal for Religious identity

### 9.1.1 *The measurement of religion*<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the measurement of religion in survey research, one can distinguish two debates. The first discussion about the dimensions of the concept among sociologists of religion started in the fifties and remained a hot topic during the sixties and the early seventies. The second debate about the changing forms of religion started in the late sixties and is still going on. From the viewpoint of survey research, the first debate is the most important since it developed within the frame of statistical procedures such as scaling and exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The second debate has only indirect implications for survey measurement since the participants in the debate generally reject standardised survey interviewing as method for exploring and explaining the new forms of religion.

#### The 'classic' dimensions of religion

Multidimensional conceptualisations of religion have been widely accepted since they were proposed by Allport (1954), Glock (1954, 1959, 1962), and Fukuyama (1961). The term "dimensions" was introduced by Glock (1962) but it is connected with a much older tradition in which four expressions of religion were distinguished: beliefs, morals, practices, and feelings (Thung et al., 1985: 24). Later on, Wach pointed to doctrine, cult, and communion (Wach, 1955), and in their work, Glock and Stark looked for a greater analytical precision. According to Glock (1962), five dimensions should be distinguished in order to cover all expressions of religion. These dimensions are: (1) subjective and emotional religious experience as an expression of personal religiosity (experiential); (2) the ideological dimension or the acceptance of the belief system (ideological); (3) the participation in religious activities (ritualistic, practices); (4) knowledge of the belief system (knowledge, intellectual); (5) the ethical consequences of these dimensions and the prescriptions derived from them (consequential). These ideas were further developed in the well-known work of Glock and Stark (1965). Beginning in 1966, Faulkner and DeJong (1966) set out to develop measures of religiosity for each of the five dimensions (Roof, 1979, 22).

From the beginning of the debate, the consequential dimension was considered different from the other four since it "encompasses the secular effects of religious belief, practice, experience and other knowledge on the individual" (Glock, 1962). Glock and Stark even omitted the consequential dimension from their study "American Piety" because "it is not entirely clear the extent to which religious consequences are a part of religious commitment or simply follow from it" (Glock and Stark, 1968: 16). For the four remaining dimensions they used seven indices.

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<sup>1</sup> This part is based on a working paper on the measurement of religion that was prepared for conference in Budapest in 1992 (see: Billiet, 1992). It is updated for this occasion.

The ideological dimension was measured by the degree to which church members affirmed traditional Christian teaching (the orthodoxy index). Next to that, they used the particularism index to measure the degree to which people's own beliefs were considered the only permissible ones, while other beliefs were considered false, foolish, or wicked. The ethicalism index reflected the degree to which the fulfilment of certain ethical demands was considered necessary for gaining salvation. The ritualistic dimension was measured by means of a ritual involvement index and a devotionism index. For each of the other dimensions, experiential and intellectual, one index was used.

Empirically, Stark and Glock themselves examined, in addition to their basic dimensions, two relational measures (communal involvement and congregational friendships) but these measures were not conceived as core dimensions of religion. However, others have repeatedly been pointed out communion as another important aspect of religion. By this was meant the social relationships with other religious people (Fichter, 1969; King and Hunt, 1969). The promoters of that dimension generally referred to Lenski's *"The Religious Factor"* (1963, revised edition) but they suggested another operationalization than the one Lenski used (Dobbelaere, 1974: 105; Billiet, 1975).

The approach of Glock and Stark was used by many sociologists, but there was also good deal of criticism. On empirical as well as on theoretical grounds, two, four, and even nine dimensions were distinguished. Indeed, at the *"Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association"* in August 1973, there was no agreement on this point (Laeyendecker et al., 1973; Faulkner and Warland, 1973; Clayton and Gladden, 1974).

### The reduction of dimensions

As was pointed out, Glock and Stark themselves were not quite sure about the consequential dimension. Fichter (1969) and Fukuyama (1961) also denied this dimension, and Fichter took a rather different stand. He also mentioned four dimensions (creed, code, cult and communion), which one reminds very much of Wach's distinction. Fichter believed that the experiential dimension, because of its subjectivity, is typically Protestant and more psychological than sociological (Thung, 1985: 25). This is an important notion since the dimensions could then not be stable qualities of an abstract concept of religion but rather characteristics of its empirical manifestations in specific social contexts. The other idea, namely that the relevance of dimensions of a theoretical concept varies with the discipline of the researcher, is just as important. These points are developed further elaborated in the discussion section below.

Some scholars tried to reduce the dimensions to a more limited set on empirical and statistical grounds: (1) the strong intercorrelation between the dimensions (Gibbs and Crader, 1970); (2) the large amount of variance explained by the belief dimension (Clayton and Gladden, 1974); (3) the results of factor analysis that show only two meta dimensions, devotion and practice (Nudelman, 1971).

Mueller started not from an empirical but from a conceptual and theoretical point of view. He stated that the communal (associational) dimension should be omitted out because, first it tapped some of the most pervasive dimensions of social life in general and not specifically religious behaviour, and, second because Lenski's associational variable is heavily loaded with ritual and worship (Mueller, 1980: 3). According to Mueller, church attendance, financial support, and involvement in social work are not indicators of "intrinsic" religion but of "extrinsic" religion and so cannot be considered to be dimensions of religion. These two ways of being religious, namely, religion as an end in itself (intrinsic) and religion as a means to reach self-centred ends (extrinsic), were introduced by Allport (1959, 1966) and used by social psychologists. Mueller considered religion a cultural system, and he suggested the following three dimensions, aesthetic, intellectual and transcendental, the latter being the real core of religion (Mueller, 1980: 4-9). Mueller's theoretical reflections have hitherto had no serious impact on survey research practice.

### The search for more dimensions<sup>2</sup>

As noted above, the dimensions were not only reduced, they were also extended. In a number of studies, King and Hunt tried to identify dimensions of religious activity within the setting of local congregational life (King, 1967; King and Hunt, 1969, 1972) and not with student data as Faulkner and deJong, Clayton, and others had done (Roof, 1979: 25). Scales were developed for the following basic dimensions: Creedal Assent, Devotionalism, Church Attendance, Organizational Activity, Financial Support, Religious Knowledge, Orientation to Growth and Striving, Extrinsic Orientation, Salience:Behaviour and Salience: Cognition. They argued that, according to their replication in a nationwide sample, these dimensions apply not only to specific Protestant denominations in Northern Texas but perhaps to main-line Protestants in U.S.A. and Canada. Nevertheless, they state that homogeneity and other characteristics of the scales should be tested for each new population (King and Hunt, 1975: 14, 17).

The number of dimensions given by King and Hunt varied somewhat over the years. In some studies, they proposed seven basic scales, three composite religious scales and three cognitive style variables (King and Hunt, 1975; Roof, 1979: 25-29), others mention no less than ten dimensions (Hioll and Hood, 1999: 333-339). If we look carefully at the dimensions presented by Glock, on the one hand and the basic scales of King and Hunt, on the other, we find some similarities and some discrepancies. The similarities concern the dimensions of ideology (creedal assent), ritual (church attendance and organization activity), and experience (personal religious experience or some aspects of devotionalism) (King, 1967: 176). Some dimensions (and scales) seem to be more applicable to Protestants than to Catholics. From the viewpoint of the prediction of behaviour consequences from knowledge of religious commitment, the idea of "salience" seemed promising (Bahr et al., 1971; Gibbs et al., 1973; Roof and Perkins; Hoge and De

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<sup>2</sup> A nearly complete overview of all possible dimensions of the measures of religiosity can be found in Hill & Hood (1999). Hundreds of scales are listed and documented in this volume. Many are used in psychological research in student populations in the United States.

Zulueta, 1985; Reed, 1991). The expectation that salience would have a U-shaped relationship with orthodoxy fits the more general findings about the relationship between the direction and the strength of attitudes (Schuman and Presser, 1981: 231-234; Krosnick and Abelson, 1992: 178-179).

### The Religious Involvement Inventory

Given the disparate results between the number of dimensions identified by King and Hunt and others, the psychologists Hilty, Morgan, and Burns (1984) reexamined the multidimensional structure. Using the stronger analytic tool of confirmatory factor analysis (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1981), they found minimal support for the King and Hunt dimensions in a replication in a population of Mennonites with nearly the same questionnaire as King and Hunt. This time, seven dimensions were proposed. In order to eliminate confusion with the King and Hunt scales, Hilty et al. used different names.

Factor one, Personal Faith, indicates the degree of active religious faith and reflects an intrinsic orientation with regard to the importance of religion in the private life of the individual. This factor combines several questions from the King and Hunt scales of Devotionalism, Growth and Striving, and Salience: Behaviour. The second factor, Intolerance of Ambiguity, measures the degree of rigid categorical thinking. If one looks closely to the items, some similarity with Adorno's authoritarian scale is apparent (Adorno et al., 1950/1982). The third factor, Orthodoxy, measures the extent to which an individual is willing to accept the traditional beliefs of church doctrine. Social Conscience, factor four, measures the belief about one's own and the church's role in society. Factor five is identified as Knowledge of Religious History. The next factor is deemed to be a general Life Purpose factor. Finally, the seventh factor is Church Involvement, the financial and social investment within the church setting reflecting an extrinsic orientation with regard to an individual's public religious practice. Those new scales mixed and combined several items of the original King and Hunt scales (Hilty et al., 1984: 258-262).

In the discussion of the findings, some of the discrepancies were assigned to differences in the test construction strategies applied to the data. After initial component analysis with a varimax rotation, King and Hunt performed an item-scale analysis in order to shorten some of the components into scales. According to Hilty et al., these procedures could have reduced the construct validity. They believe that the pure latent-class analysis they performed using more sophisticated software (LISREL) was better equipped to approximate the underlying multidimensional structure of the measurement instruments since it is based on the respondent's actual responses. Moreover, they considered that it reasonable to assume that the configuration of the factors is generalisable across Protestant denominations (Hilton et al., 1984: 263-264).

In a subsequent study, Hilty and Morgan (1985b) investigated the stability of their solution by performing confirmatory factor analysis in a sample of Methodists, a sample of Disciples, Lutherans, and United Methodists, and a sample of Presbyterians. They arrived to two seven factor solutions and one five factor solution. The factors 'Social

Conscience' and 'Knowledge of Religious History' seemed unstable. The most congruent results over the four samples (original Mennonite sample included) were obtained for 'Orthodoxy' and 'Life Purpose'. Hilty and Morgan concluded that their multidimensional model is more parsimonious than the King and Hunt solution for the scales and that the Religious Involvement Inventory factors could help researchers measure religious involvement (Hilty and Morgan, 1984, 1985a). The Religious Involvement Inventory contains five scales: Personal Faith, Orthodoxy, Social Conscience, Knowledge of Religious History, and Church Involvement.<sup>3</sup>

### The dimension of quest

One of the dimensions proposed by King in his initial study was "commitment to intellectual search despite doubt". According to King, this dimension should be used cautiously because most of the correlations among the items are rather low and some do not fit the pattern (King, 1967: 176,182). Some of the items in this scale come close to Niebuhr's idea of "permanent reflection" (Niebuhr, 1963), which was operationalised by Batson and Ventis as the "quest" dimension (Batson, 1976; Batson and Ventis (1982). According to Batson and Ventis, this dimension should be distinguished from the two popular extrinsic (means) and intrinsic (end) dimensions of religious orientations. "Religion as quest" involves honesty facing existential questions in their complexity, while at the same time resisting clear-cut, pat answers. The "questing" individual recognises that he or she does not know, and probably never will know, the final truth about religious matters (Batson and Schoenrade, 1991a: 417).

In the eighties, among the social psychologists, there has been much discussion about the six-item Interactional (or Quest) scale that was introduced by Batson and Ventis (1982). Batson and Schoenrade (1991a: 418) report that low correlations with the Intrinsic and the Extrinsic scales were found in virtually every one of more than fifty studies using the Quest scale. For this reason, some have wondered whether the Quest scale might be more than a measure of agnosticism, of anti-orthodoxy, of sophomoric religious doubt, or of religious conflict. It is even questioned if the scale measures anything religious at all (Batson and Schoenrade, 1991a: 416).

In order to answer those questions about validity and other questions about reliability, Batson and Schoenrade (1991a, 1991b) reviewed a number of studies in which the scales were applied to contrasting subgroups of subjects according to the degree of religiosity, of sophomoric doubt, and of religious conflict (i.e. members of different Bible study groups, seminarians, and undergraduates). On the basis of response distributions and correlations, they convincingly concluded that the Quest scale measures a specific dimension of religious orientation and that it measures what it was designed to measure

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<sup>3</sup> The five scales of the Religious Involvement Inventory (RII) are copyright protected. Written permission for use of RII can be obtained from Hilty. The two other factors (Life Purpose and Intolerance of Ambiguity) consist of scales developed by Martin and Westie (1959, Feagin (1964), and Allport and Ross (1967). They were modified by King and Hunt (Hilty and Morgan, 1985b: 80).

(Barton and Schoenrade, 1991a: 418-417). For example, high scores on the Quest scale were obtained by seminarians and by a substantial portion of orthodox believers.

Although the six-item Quest scale seems to have acceptable test-retest reliability, it shows poor internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha. With more items added to the scale, a new twelve-item version of the Quest scale tapping three sub-dimensions showed a considerable increase of internal consistency (alphas in the .75 to .82 range) and seemed to measure the same construct as the original scale ( $r$  almost  $> .85$ ). The sub-dimensions are: readiness to face existential questions without reducing their complexity, self-criticism and perception of religious doubt as positive, and openness to change. The researchers concluded that the twelve-item scale is not yet perfect, but they appealed for the scales to be used in substantive research about religion in order to determine its utility (Barton and Schoenrade, 1991b).

#### New forms of religion: Invisible religion: (ultimate) meaning systems

A quite different approach to religious commitment centers upon people's *ultimate concerns*. This approach which seems very attractive to sociologists of religion, is heavily influenced by the work of Geertz (1966), Berger (1967), Luckmann (1967), and Yinger (1970). This work paralleled with the declining trend in participation in traditional forms of religion (large churches and denominations), at least in Western Europe. The idea of looking for hidden forms of (new) religious expressions turned out to be very popular among (religious) sociologists of religion.

In 1973, the *International Conference on Sociology of Religion* was dedicated to the theme of religious change (C.I.S.R., 1973). Some sociologists rejected the classic measurement approach to religious involvement as a problem of normative integration in a social system (Dobbelaere, 1974: 102). This kind of criticism emerged from the sociologists' experience of rapid religious change and from Luckmann's idea of 'invisible religion' (1967). Since the focus was on the active construction of religious reality by the actors in their everyday lives, a number of sociologists rejected standardized questionnaires and measurement (Hilhorst, 1976; Hijmans and Hilhorst, 1990). However, even in this tradition, there were attempts to measure ultimate concerns and alternative meaning systems in a systematic and standardized way (Thung et al., 1985).

Yinger called for generalized scales that measure "awareness of an interest in the continuing, recurrent, 'permanent problems' of human existence" (Yinger, 1969: 91; 1970: 33). His indicators are non-doctrinal and intended to tap cross-cultural expressions of concern over the perennial problems of life (Yinger, 1977). In his research, he found that nearly three-quarters of the responses expressed 'ultimate' religious concerns.

Nelson et al. (1976) subjected the seven Yinger items to factor analysis using data of two samples and concluded that the items do not form a unidimensional scale but rather two or three factors, depending of the sample. Moreover, the items are moderately related to traditional religious forms and are not as invisible as claimed.



Roof et al. (1977) found little internal consistency among the items in a sample of students. They detected three factors: value of religious efforts, value of difficult experience, and belief in order and pattern, all of which are closely related to measures of Judeo-Christian religion. According to Roof, more research is needed using data from the general populations (Roof, 1979: 34). These studies indicate that privatised 'invisible' non-doctrinal religion exists, but that it does not form a unitary belief system. Moreover, it seems to be multidimensional and related to traditional religiosity (Dobbelaere, 1981: 144-145).

Another approach in nearly the same tradition is not as much concerned with 'ultimate' meaning systems but with 'alternate' meaning systems. In "The Consciousness Reformation", Wuthnow tries to empirically locate four meaning systems: theistic, individualistic, mystical and social scientific (Wuthnow, 1976). These meaning systems encompass differing notions of the causal mechanisms in reality and differing symbolic conceptions of how and why the world is as it is (Roof, 1979: 33). In another study, the alternative religious are compared with four other types of religious orientation: the conventional, the nominal, the nonreligious and the alternative (Glock and Wuthnow, 1979). Other pioneering work in this area has been done by McCready and Greely (1976) and by Glock and Piazza (1978, 1979).

Dutch sociologists have also tried to develop instruments to measure ultimate meanings and ultimate values as new forms of religion within large populations (Laeyendecker, 1973: 25; Thung et al. 1985; Felling, Peters en Schreuder, 1987, 1989). The instrument used in the exploratory study by the Dutch Working Group was organized around religious experiences and devotional practices, processes of change on the level of the individual (biographical data) and at the level of society, and four components of religion: (1) a variety of beliefs collected in various exploratory studies; (2) interpretations of the purpose of life; (3) interpretations of suffering and death; and (4) values. In an exploratory factor analysis, eight "world views" were detected: Contemplation, Agnosticism, Self-denial, the Explicitly Christian World View, General Theism (recognition of an extra-empirical reality); the Bourgeois Ethic, Social Radicalism, and Pleasure in Life (Thung et al., 1985).

#### And what about "Civil religion"?

Another aspect of religion is 'civil religion', an idea of Jean Jacques Rousseau that is taken up and linked to Durkheim's notion of the unity of religion and society by Bellah (1967: 5, 19). The concept has been applied mainly to the American scene, but in the eighties, it was used in a number of studies about other societies (Bellah and Hammond, 1980; Ter Borg, 1985; Dobbelaere, 1986a, 1986b; Laeyendecker, 1986). Civil religion refers to a number of values, symbols, and rituals that are common for all members of society across the boundaries of religious denominations. It is manifest in national crises, holidays, presidential inaugurations, and in a heritage of moral and religious experience (Roof, 1979: 29). The concept is mainly used by sociologists for macro-sociological analysis because it concerns more the integrative function of religion for society than with individual religious orientations. This may be one of the reasons why it has been

often discussed but rarely measured.

The most direct attempts to establish an additional dimension of religious commitment and to develop a scale were made by Wimberley et al. (1976). Eight items that were assumed to measure civil religion were used along with more conventional, church-type measures in a follow-up study of participants in a Billy Graham crusade. Factor analysis showed four factors (oblique rotation). The first factor loaded heavily on six of the civil religion items. The other factors may be identified as religious belief (orthodoxy), religious behaviour (church attendance), and religious experience (private prayer, etc.) (Wimberley et al., 1976). A second-order factor analysis revealed two dimensions: church religion and civil religion. The latter seems to be independent of behavioural or ritual forms of church religion (Roof, 1979: 30).

In a subsequent community election study (Wimberley, 1976) and a state-wide survey (Christerson and Wimberley, 1978) it was confirmed that the items did indeed measure the same underlying dimension, but some doubt arose about its epistemic referent. Because of Bellah's critical questions about the validity of the scale of Wimberley et al. (Bellah, 1976), a new study was performed with five modified civil-religion items in a set of twelve. The seven other items dealt with social status, with friendships in which the friends have the same view on politics, and with church involvement. The modifications of the civil-religion items were in response to Bellah's charge that the items in prior studies did not really measure civil-religion but rather public theology since they did not "get at the core of civil religious faith" (Bellah, 1976: 155; Wimberley, 1979: 59). In the new survey, carried out in the same population as the community-election study, the five civil-religion items turned out to belong to one and only one factor (Wimberley, 1979: 61-62).

We may conclude that, at least in the pluralistic religious scene of the United States, a civil-religious dimension exists apart from church-type religious commitment, although much work remains to be done on the subject. The notion should be conceptually broken down (into attitudes, beliefs, and practices), elaborated and empirically refined, as has been done with the church-type dimensions (Roof, 1979: 31).

### Implicit religion

As we have noted, the notion of "civil religion" has been mainly used on the macro-sociological level. In the eighties, an equivalent of civil religion on the micro-level (the life world) was suggested, namely "implicit religion" (Bailey, 1990). The analogy between civil religion and implicit religion lies in the fact that both concepts classify a number of practices and symbols without explicit religious connotations under the label of religion. These practices and symbols are called religion because of the integrative function they fulfil for society (civil religion) or for the life cycles of individuals (implicit religion).

Indeed, according to Nesti, "the concept of implicit religion appears useful in that it allows one to find and arrange ultimate connotations of meaning in the most diverse

areas beyond their explicit connotations and formal appearance. Implicit religion is a request for meaning that originates in the subject's life-world, expressing itself by means of a complex number of symbols and practices" (Nesti, 1990: 432). The behaviours and practices that are called "implicit religion" are mainly found in crisis situations such as sickness, exams, and marriage, or in a context involving a certain multisensorial effervescence. The aesthetic dimension plays an important role in it (Nesti, 1990: 424). The meaning of most personal events of existence can be found in the dimension of implicit religion. It expresses "an emotional involvement aimed at transcending separateness and isolation in order to explore feelings of solidarity and re-identification" (Nesti, 1990: 433).

In some studies, the concept is used in order to explain the paradox that believing seems to persist while church membership continues to decline. According to Davie, this imbalance between believing and belonging pervades a very great deal of the religious life. It characterises what might be termed "implicit religion" (Davie, 1990: 455). Should implicit religion be measured by the imbalance between the two variables of believing and belonging for which measurement prescriptions exist? The supporters of the concept are not clear about this. In fact, they have little concerns about measurement because survey methodology is not what they want to promote.

### *9.1.2 Summary and discussion in view of comparative survey research*

The discussion about the four, five, seven, nine, or even more dimensions came to an end without a definite solution. It was eclipsed by the search for new forms of religiosity in time of declining church involvement, at least in Western Europe.

An important reason for the inconsistencies is the absence of theoretical a priori agreement about the conceptualisation of religion (Thung et al., 1985: 27). The kind and number of dimensions, meta-dimensions, scales, etc. depend largely on the input of the issues and the questions in the standardized questionnaires. Since most of the studies used various sets of questions in different combinations, disagreement about the dimensions was to be expected. Another reason is the differences in populations (religious denominations, age groups, etc.). Further, changes in the analytic procedures could also be held responsible. Finally, it is suggested that the uni-dimensionality or multi-dimensionality of religion may be a time-bound phenomenon. "It may be related to the degree of institutionalisation of religion. If various components of religion are not correlated, this may indicate a de-institutionalisation process, a stage of transition to a new re-institutionalisation process" (Thung, 1985: 33). Therefore, Thung argued, the research should no longer focus on a set of universal dimensions but on the change in the contents of the various components and on the change in the degree to which the components are interrelated (Thung, 1985: 34). However, a minimum degree of agreement seems possible. Let us look carefully at the dimensions of those who propose at least five (see Exhibit 1.1.).

#### The ideological dimension (belief, creed, faith)

First of all, the ideological dimension is present in nearly all the proposals under several labels: creedal, beliefs, faith. The variations deal with (a) the content of the "doctrine", (b) the kind of acceptance of them, (c) the degree to which personal devotion and experience is involved, and (d) the centrality of the faith for the individual's life (salience).

The first aspect, the content of the doctrine, varies with the kind of denominations involved. Special problems arise in national surveys in pluralistic societies and in situations in which a large portion of the population does not accept the doctrines but still consider themselves believers. In such situations, it seems necessary to search for standardised measurements of the new forms of religion and to put them in the ideological dimension. This is what the Dutch investigators did in the 1985 national survey on religious and secular attitudes (Felling, Peters and Schreuder, 1985: 14-15). In addition to explicit Christian beliefs, they included a number of items from the exploratory study on ultimate values (Thung et al., 1985). However, it is still problematic to measure concepts like "implicit religion" in the context of social surveys because all kinds of practices, beliefs, and cognitions may have subjective religious meanings, depending on the construction of meaning in the actor's life world. Survey research is not adequate in situations in which no objectivated meanings exist since

common meaning (and language) is a prerequisite for the construction of standardised questionnaires and for the application of objective statistical measures.

**Exhibit 1.1.** An overview of the dimensions proposed (number of dimensions

Glock & Stark	King & Hunt	Hilty et al.	Hiltey & Morgan (RII)
Ideological - <i>orthodoxy</i> - <i>particularism</i> - <i>ethicalism</i>	Creedal assent  Orientation to growth & striving	Personal faith Orthodoxy Intolerance of ambiguity	Personal faith Othodoxy
Experiential	Saliency: behaviour Devotion		
Ritualistic - <i>practice</i> - <i>devotion</i>	Church attendance  Organisational activity Financial support	Church involvement	Church involvement
Intellectual - <i>knowledge</i>	Religious knowledge Saliency: cognition	Knowledge of religious history	
Consequential (?)		Social conscience	Social conscience
(relational measures) - <i>communal involvement</i> - <i>congregational friendships</i>			
		Life purpose	

The degree of acceptance of the belief system is present in most of the studies under the labels of "orthodoxy", "particularism", "intolerance of ambiguity", or as the opposite in King's concept of "commitment to intellectual search despite doubt" (King, 1967) and Batson and Ventis' "quest dimension" (1982).

Another aspect is personal devotion, measured by prayer and other individual ritual practices that are not obligations of the individual's denomination. This is a quite different aspect since not only beliefs but behaviours are involved. It present in a lot of studies under the label "religiosity", and it partly overlaps the "experimental" dimension.

Finally, the salience of religion was often measured by the impact of religion in daily life, where it comes close to concepts like "consequential" or "ethicalism" (Felling, Peters, and Schreuder, 1985: 15). In other studies, "salience" was simply measured by the degree of talking and reading about religion (King, 1967: 183). This approach is more in line with the standard use of "attitude strength" survey methodology. If salience is not measured by the consequences but by other indicators such as talking and reasoning or perceived importance, then it is possible to conceive it as a condition in the study of the social consequences of religious commitment (Hodge and De Zulueta, 1986).

#### The ritualistic dimension (church attendance, church involvement)

This dimension is also *always* present under different forms (see Hill and Hood, 1999: 330-332). The involvement in religious groups (churches, denominations, sects) is measured by membership, by participation in official collective seasonal rituals, and by participation in regular ritual and other organisational activities (even financial support).

#### The intellectual dimension (religious knowledge, knowledge of religious history)

The knowledge of the different aspects of one's religion is also present in most theoretical studies. Religious knowledge is measured by knowledge questions about the Scriptures and by questions about moral and ritual prescriptions of denominations and churches (Hilty and Morgan, 1985: 84).

#### The 'communal' aspect

The communal aspect of religion ('relational measures') is less often used. However, in the 1990s this became one of the important aspects in the context of 'social capital' (Putnam, 1995; Stolle, 1999; Hooghe, 1999; Billiet, 1998). This dimension needs a lot of measures all related to participation in social networks. The participation in religious associations is only a minor part of it, but it can be included in surveys in which 'social capital' is operationalised.

### 9.1.3 *The measurement of religious dimensions in European surveys*

The theoretical attempts to build a universal and general system of dimensions of religion have failed. There is no agreement about the indicators, even if the same dimensions are proposed. If we want to answer the question "what to do?" we concur with Roof: "In some instances a complex, multidimensional approach to religion is unnecessary and may even confuse rather than clarify issues" (Roof, 1979: 36). The choice "is not between right or wrong approaches or. between crude and more sophisticated types of analysis. Rather, it is a matter of explanatory purpose and level of analysis, resolvable only in terms of the broader questions to which the research is addressed" (Roof, 1979: 37).

The studies we have reviewed can provide a number of ideas and instruments for those who want to operationalise some aspects of religion. The final choice of the dimensions and indicators depends largely of the kind of questions about the relationship of religion to other variables the researcher has in mind.

Most researchers undertaking investigations have continued to use Glock's model even though the King and Hunt theoretical model and findings identified a more comprehensive typology of religious involvement (Hilty, e.a 1984: 253). In large, cross-national surveys the researchers easily returned to the instruments created within the normative framework (Dobbelaere, 1984, 1992).

Since the ESS is not a survey about religion, only a small number of questions about religion can be used. It is important to choose the most important ones, to make comparison with other surveys possible and to choose at the same time the most optimal question wordings. In order to do that, we first explore briefly how religion is measured in surveys that are explicitly set up to measure the religious dimensions. After that, a selection is made at the basis of the important conclusions derived from this.

#### Measures of religion in the European Value System Study Group (1981, 1990 and 1999).

The *European Value System Study Group* (EVS) is chosen because of its large-size, and because a number of experts in sociology of religion are involved in the formulation of the survey questions on religion. With samples in almost all the countries of Europe, including those of Central and Eastern Europe, and in the US and Canada, this cross-national survey offers one of the most used data-sets. Moreover, other research teams have used the EVS questionnaire. For example, Ron Inglehart, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), in particular promoted fieldwork in countries other than those participating in the EVS. The expanded project uses the name of *World Value Survey* (Ester, Halman and De Moor, 1993: vi). Also '*Religion and Moral Pluralism*' (RAMP: 1998) is based on a number of questions on religion that are derived from EVS. In RAMP, eleven European countries are involved. Unfortunately, because of some problems with contributors, the European book is not yet published although a number of articles are already presented in conferences, but the data-set is distributed among the members and we have already analysed it.

One of the main problems of the EVS is the weak theoretical foundation of its measurements. The selection of the items was not at all guided by any theory in the specific domains in sociology, such as in the sociology of religion (Halman, 1993: 1). This is surprising since the measurement of religious values is one of the main goals of the research. The reason for this was that the selection of the questions was mainly guided by practical considerations and by very broad and general ideas on modernisation and social change. According to Halman, the questions resulted from an archive search at Gallup institutes (Halman, 1993: 1) and not from the result of theoretical reflections. In the latter cross-sections of the EVS, the existing questions on religion were not changes because of comparability. New questions that were included deal mostly with other issues. The basic questions behind EVS are: (1) Do Europeans share a homogenous and enduring set of values?; (2) Are values changing in Europe and, if so, in what directions?; (3) What are the implications for European unity? (Halman, 2001:2).

In an exploratory analysis of the 1981 EVS data, three underlying dimensions (latent variables) were found in the questions about religion: general religiosity, religious orthodoxy, and confidence in the churches (Ester and Halman, 1990). General religiosity and orthodoxy both fit the concepts we have discussed earlier in this study. Confidence in the churches is rather specific for the EVS questionnaire. Apart from this religious orientations, a number of indicators are used in order to measure church involvement. Let us start with this since that measurement is widely used in the domain of sociology of religion, *religious (or church) involvement*.

### **1. Religious (identification and) involvement**

This is measured by a set of questions about present and past participation in institutionalised religious activities and associations.



**Exhibit 1.2.** Indicators and types of church involvement in the EVS

<i>Indicators of church involvement</i>					
- Belonging to a religious denomination	= two questions: 1 two-step actual and 1 two step past				
- Frequency of church attendance	= from never to weekly				
- Membership of religious organisations	= choosing from list				
- Voluntary work for religious organisations	= choosing from list in case of previous is chosen				
Typology of church involvement derived from these questions					
<i>Types</i>	<i>Present belonging</i>	<i>Past belonging</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Membershi p</i>	<i>Voluntary</i>
Core member	Yes	-	>= Monthly	Yes	-
	Yes	-		-	yes
Modal member	Yes	-	>= Monthly	no	no
Marginal member	Yes	-	>=	-	-
Unchurched (1st generation)	No	yes	Monthly	-	-
	no	no	irregular	-	-
Unchurched (2th. gen.)			-		
			-		

- = irrelevant

This typology has been widely used in sociological studies in the Netherlands (e.g. Felling, Peters and Schreuder, 1985) and in Belgium (e.g. Dobbelaere and Voye, 1992; Billiet, Scheepers and Eisinga, 1996) and applied to institutionalised religious groups like denominations and churches. The typology is a combination of actual and past *religious affiliation* and the *participation* at religious services. There is a serious problem about the way the question about belonging (affiliation) was formulated (Oudhof, 1985, 1988; Oudhof and Pannekoek, 1988). The first problem deals with the difference in one-step versus two-step questions; the second problem concerns the measurement of the non-affiliated (free-thinkers, a-religious) that are not further differentiated. The questions that were used in the Dutch surveys are listed in Exhibit 1.3.

There are large differences between these measurements in a number of national surveys in the Netherlands. The percentage of respondents reporting "no denomination" is substantially larger when using the two-step question instead of the one-step question. The two-step question reduces the size of the denominations. The wording effect turns out to be the largest for the Roman Catholics and the Dutch Reformed respondents and the smallest for the Calvinists (Oudhof and Pannekoek, 1988:

13-14). Moreover, the gap between the two measurements increases in time. In 1971, the difference of the 'no religion' between the one-step (23.7%) and the two-step question (30.7%) was about 7 point; this increases to 20 points (32.0% and 52.0% in 1987 (Oudhof, 1985; Oudhof, 1988; CBS, 1991, part 3). Another important finding is the fact that the wording effect increases in time, being the largest in 1987 and the smallest in 1971 (Felling et al., 1987: 54-56).

**Exhibit 1.3.** Religious affiliation: the one-step, the two-step, and the one-and-an-half step questions (The Netherlands, 1970-1989).

<i>One-step-question</i>
<p>To which religious denomination do you belong?*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- none</li> <li>- Roman Catholic</li> <li>- Dutch Reformed</li> <li>- Calvinist</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>
<i>Two-step question</i>
<p>a) Do you consider yourself as belonging to a religious denomination?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- YES</li> <li>- - NO</li> </ul> <p>(if YES) To which denomination do you belong?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- none</li> <li>- Roman Catholic</li> <li>- Dutch Reformed</li> <li>- Calvinist</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>
<i>One-and-an-half-step question (1989)</i>
<p>Do you consider yourself as belonging to a particular religious denomination or philosophical association**, and if yes, which one?</p>

\* In the EVS surveys, these categories are: Roman Catholic, Church of England (Protestant), Free Church/non-conformist/Evangelical, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Orthodox, Other.

\*\* In the sense of "world view". It is difficult to translate the original Dutch (and Flemish) term for this. The Dutch and the Flemish use the term "*levensbeschouwing*", including all religious and non-religious world-views. Since the end of the 1980s, "*levenbeschouwelijke vereniging*" (philosophical associaton) is used together with

'religious denomination'. This is also the case for the Belgian Election Surveys. This reflects the institutionalisation of the non-religious philosophical world view.

In the *National Voters' Study of 1989* another type of question was used that holds the middle between the two others ("one-and-an-half-step-question") (CBS, 1991). In this form, the category 'non religious' is explicitly offered as a response option.

What kind of wording effect is involved here? Contrary to the one-step, the first part of the two-step question (a Yes/No question) makes a "none" alternative a more acceptable response. People who think of themselves actually as not belonging to an unspecified denomination are filtered out in the first step. The directive one-step question leads the respondent to one of the specified categories of denominations (Molenaar, 1982). The "none" alternative is not explicitly stated in that case. Thus, respondents who do not think of themselves as belonging to a denomination must overcome the pressure exerted on them by question wording, although there is a 'none' category at the bottom. From the differences according to denominations, period, and gender, we can learn that the capacity to overcome the pressure varies among types of respondents. We may presume that respondents with weak feelings towards religion are more sensitive to question-wording effects than others (Schuman and Presser, 1981: 304).

That hypothesis about the relationship between question-wording effects and attitude strength is sustained by the following arguments. From additional data, we know that the intensity of church involvement was decreasing among Roman Catholics and Dutch Reformed in the seventies (Van Hemert, 1980, 1981; CBS-surveys, 1974-83, Dobbelaere, 1989: 88-92). It is also known that females and Calvinists are more involved than males and Roman Catholics or Dutch Reformed. Therefore, we can expect smaller effects in 1971 than in 1988. Smaller effects are also expected among females and among Calvinists. Oudhof and Pannekoek (1988) tested (and retained) these hypotheses by means of log-linear analysis using panel data and a split ballot (Billiet, 1989).

In the US national surveys conducted by two major organisations at least ten different formulations of the one-step question have been used in the past (Glenn, 1987: 297). In one series of questions, "no religion" was explicitly offered as a response alternative. Formulations that hold the middle between the one- and the two-step question can be proposed ("one-and-an-half-step-question"). The EVS surveys used a two-step question in which the "no" respondents received a follow-up question about which religion they belonged to in the past (Ester, Halman and de Moor, 1993; Halman, 2001: 306-307). The RAMP survey of 1998 also uses a two-step question, and the consequence of this is that 25% of all 12,286 say NO to the first question (no denomination). This number increases to 40% in Belgium, and even 54% in the Netherlands, two countries with high numbers of Catholics or Protestants by name.

Belonging to a denomination for many people is not a matter of saying 'yes' or 'no'. This simple question should be replaced by several questions about formal criteria of affiliation (baptism, registration, paying church taxes), subjective feelings of belonging to a denomination, and the degree of commitment to a specific denomination (church involvement measured by the participation in religious practices).

The second element in the typology of church involvement is the degree of *participation* at religious services and rituals (an aspect of normative integration into the church). There are many kinds of activities, but one can at least make a distinction between collective and individual rituals, and between those that are obliged (duties) and others that are recommended. The most used question deals with the participation in weekly religious services (see: Hill and Hood, 1999: 332). Here again, the original question is best adapted to Christian churches, but with some modifications, one can also use it for other religions. The EVS question about participation in religious services applied to both the actual situation ("*these days*") and the past ("*when you were 12 years old*"). Both are used in the construction of the typology (Exhibit 1.2).

**Exhibit 1.4.** Actual participation in regular religious services in the EVS (Halman, 1999: 306-307)

Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?*		
A	More than once a week	1
B	Once a week	2
C	Once a month	3
D	Christmas/Easter day	4
E	Other specific holy days	5
F	Once a year	6
G	Less often	7
H	<b>Never, practically never</b>	<b>8</b>

\* 'Don't know' and 'No answer' are printed at the questionnaires but not offered to the respondents

When both, the affiliation and participation questions are used, one should know that context effects are possible. Context effects are response effects coming from one or more preceding questions (and answers) or from response scales belonging to previous questions. A major problem arises out of the increasing use of attitude questions as indicators of social change in the domain of religion. If the meaning of a question is influenced by preceding questions, then the replication of a question in different contexts confounds order effects with true change (Schuman and Presser, 1981: 75; Schuman, 1992).

The effects of the context are various. The information provided by previous questions and answers may alter the meaning of subsequent questions. Preceding questions and response scales shape a frame of reference; the respondents may formulate their responses in contrast to, or in consistency with previous answers. Particular responses may become more available or more attractive through a kind of consciousness-raising process created by preceding questions (salience effect) (Schuman and Presser, 1981: 23-

77; Schwarz and Sudman, 1992). In our own research on question wordings, several context effects with questions about religion were detected (Billiet, Waterplas and Loosveldt, 1988 and 1992; Billiet, 1989). We have found that the number of Catholics is higher when the affiliation question precedes the participation question. The reason is that a large number of respondents that do not participate in religious services, do not identify as Catholic after they had answered the participation question. Since the affiliation question is more sensitive to context effects than the participation question, it is recommended to ask first for affiliation. It is nearly always done this way and it is logic. In order to avoid context effects in actual and past questions, one can prepare the respondent by a small introduction in which it is announced that there are actual and past questions and that there are affiliation and participation questions.

A last remark deals with the asymmetry between those who identify themselves as 'belonging' to a religion and those who do not. For the first category, one has a further differentiation in degree of participation, for the 'no religious' there is no differentiation.

A first possibility to solve this problem is to make a distinction between 'non-religious philosophy of life' and 'none'. This is done in the Belgian General Election Survey of 1999. The following question was asked (in Dutch): "*Do you consider yourself as belonging to one of the philosophical streams (impossible to translate in English: LEVENSBESCHOUWELIJKE STREKKINGEN) on card n° X or do you consider yourself as belonging to none of these? (Non believer, free thinker, protestant, katholiek, Christian but not catholic, other...., none)*". This makes sense in Belgium where there is an organised non-religious humanism ("vrijzinnigheid" = free thinking, as a consequence of the School wars and religious cleavage in the past) and where a large number of Catholics consider themselves no longer as Catholic but as a Christian (not the same as 'protestant'). Apart from other, Islam and Protestants (1,5%);, each of these categories has a substantial number of responses (7% non-believer, 9% Free thinker, 54% Catholic, 22% Christian but not Catholic (although they are baptised in the Catholic Church), 7% none. This way of asking is too typical for the Belgian situation, but it warns us for the problem of functional equivalence of the question of religious (philosophical, LEVENSBESCHOUWELIJKE) affiliation. It also touches the problem of 'formal' and 'subjective' belonging. In that question, there may be confusion between group membership and belief, and between formal and subjective feeling.

A second possibility is to ask an additional question about the *intensity of the affiliation* in philosophical (LEVENSBESCHOUWELIJKE) groups (groups dealing with 'world view' affairs). This is done in the *Electoral Survey in Belgium* (ISPO 1995 and 1999). In 1999, at the basis of both empirical analysis and reflection, it was decided to put that question in between the affiliation and the participation question. Since this is a subjective question that is more sensitive to question order effects than factual questions about religious practise, this solution is recommended even when no differentiation is made between institutionalised religious and institutionalised non-religious world-views.

In ISPO 1999 (Flanders) the Pearson correlation between the participation and the intensity question is .40 (Spearman = .36 and Kendall = .32). The Modus of the intensity question is 55% (moderate). So there is a tendency to choose the middle category. These

percentages are highest for the irregular churchgoers (75%). 72% of the regular churchgoers. In a Catholic society, one has more or less the same information are rather strongly or strongly attached to their belief.

**Exhibit 1.5.** The intensity question in ISPO 1999 (Meersseman et al., 2001: 45).

How strongly are you attached to this belief?

1. not at all
2. weak
3. moderate
4. rather strong
5. very strong

(Do not know)

(No answer)

### Religious involvement: recommendations

If the questions about actual and past religious affiliation are used in combination with the question about participation in religious services, one has then still to choose between the one step or the two step question. We know that the 'non-religious' are underestimated in the one step question, but it is possible to catch this category by combining the questions about actual and past religious affiliation. If one uses a two-step affiliation question, then a number of marginal religious people are classified in the 'none' group, but it is possible to detect these by means of the question about past. We can thus recommend a two-step affiliation question, together with a question about past affiliation and an intensity and participation question. The questions about the past are in agreement with the recommendations of R. Lesthaeghe at the *Scientific Advisory Board* of 30 October in the Hague (see for the idea: Lesthaeghe, *ESS "ever"-questions*). Scheepers (a participant in RAMP) is also in favour of a two step question at the condition that the question about the past is also included. This made it possible to construct the typology in Exhibit 1.2.

It is recommended to start with the affiliation question and to differentiate between the 'no philosophy of live' and those who identify with an institutionalised non-religious 'world view' (for example: humanists, 'free thinkers') in countries where this is real. A response card is necessary. The respondents should code themselves (no field coding by the interviewer). The list of religions can be country specific. In a Catholic country as Belgium, the questions participation and intensity questions are somewhat redundant, but this can be different in societies with more religious pluralism where the religious practices are more heterogeneous and not so well covered by the participation question. If one can skip the past questions, it is not possible to build the typology in Exhibit 1.2.

## 2. Religious beliefs (orthodoxy)

This dimension is measured by a set of yes/no items about the acceptance of a number of elements in Christian doctrine ("do you believe in...").

**Exhibit 1.6.** Results of the explorative principal component analysis of the belief items, based on the 1990 EVS data (16 countries) (Halman, 1993: 8).

Items	PCA loadings
Q355: believe in God	.65
Q356: believe in life after death	.75
Q357: believe in a soul	.71
Q358: believe in the devil	.75
Q359: believe in hell	.77
Q360: believe in heaven	.81
Q361: believe in sin	.71
Q362: believe in resurrection of the dead	.78
Q363: believe in reincarnation	.35
Variance explained	50.4%

An exploratory factor analysis on the whole dataset showed that "belief in reincarnation" cannot be regarded empirically as a part of traditional Christian belief (Halman and Vloet, 1992: 7). This is not surprising since reincarnation is not a part of official Christian theology. The results of the exploratory factor analysis are given in Exhibit 1.6 (Halman, 1993: 8). The reliabilities of the scale based on the items (without reincarnation) range between .73 in Iceland and .88 in Italy.

### Recommendation

These questions are problematic in multi-cultural and pluralistic societies since they are quasi exclusively based on Christian beliefs. Moreover, this set is too large for a survey that has not religion as his main theme. Let us first explore the other religious dimensions in order to see whether we can find a more general question on religious beliefs.

## 3. General religiosity

In EVS 1990, the items that measure religiosity do not directly fit clearly into the dimensions we have discussed, but they relate to devotion (prayer) and salience (importance of God in life). They represent a more emotional dimension linked with what is called the intrinsic religious orientation. Since no specific statement about the content of religiosity is included, and none of the items refer to the institutional side of religion, the term "general" religiosity may be applied here. The reliabilities of the scale range from .67 in the United States to .77 in Belgium (Halman, 1993: 9; Halman and Vloet, 1992: 63) (*see Exhibit 1.7*).

These items are closely related and they are more general than the previous 'Christian belief' questions. Therefore, they are better candidates for ESS. Five items is too much. It is possible to take one that contains more information than the others. This is the question Q364 about the idea about God. It has the advantage that it is also applicable for non religious respondents. This question is also used in EVS 1999 (Halman, 2001: 308) and in the RAMP surveys (modified form). The questions are listed in Exhibit 1.8.

**Exhibit 1.7.** Results of the explorative principal component analysis of the religiosity items, based on the 1990 EVS data (16 countries) (Halman, 1993: 9).

Items	PCA loadings
Q340: are you a religious person	.80
Q364: what comes closest to your beliefs (personal God, etc.)	.80
Q365: how important is God in your life	.90
Q367: comfort and strength from religion	.85
Q369: take some time for prayer	.74
Variance explained	67.3%

These questions are different in wording, in response categories and also in order. As we can expect, there are large differences between the two questions.

**Exhibit 1.8.** The "what comes closest to your beliefs" question in EVS (1981, 1990, 1999) and RAMP (1998).

<i>EVS 1999</i>	
Which of these statements comes closest to your beliefs? ( <i>code one answer only</i> )	
A. There is a personal God	1
B. There is some sort of spirit of life force	2
C. I don't really know what to think	3
D. I don't really think there is any sort of spirit God or life force	4
(No answer)	
<i>RAMP 1999</i>	
Which of these statements comes closest to your own beliefs? ( <i>code one answer only</i> )	
A. I believe in a God with whom I can have a personal relationship	1
B. I believe in a ( <i>GB: an impersonal</i> ) spirit of life force ( <i>Hungary: supernatural power</i> )	2
C. I believe more that God is something within each person rather than something out there	3
D. I don't believe in any kind of God, spirit, or life force ( <i>Hungary: supernatural force</i> )	4
E. I don't really know what to believe	5
(No answer)	



In Exhibit 1.9, the frequency distributions are given for selected countries that take part of both EVS 1999 and RAMP (1998).

**Exhibit 1.9.** Frequency distributions of two comparable questions in two different wordings (EVS 1999 and RAMP 1998).\*

Country	EVS				RAMP				
	A	B	C**	D	A	B	C	D	E**
Belgium	29.9	35.6	18.1	16.5	21.5	23.9	30.8	10.8	13.1
Denmark	24.9	38.1	18.7	18.3	20.1	20.9	35.2	13.4	10.4
Great Britain	31.0	40.1	18.7	10.2	23.4	14.3	37.2	9.1	16.0
Hungary	44.7	15.2	18.6	21.4	32.9	7.8	24.6	14.8	19.9
Italy	70.7	19.5	7.0	2.8	50.4	7.2	35.9	4.6	1.9
Netherlands	23.5	49.1	15.1	12.4	23.4	27.3	26.4	14.4	8.5
Poland	82.7	10.1	5.4	1.7	63.2	12.2	18.4	0.9	5.3
Portugal	78.8	15.2	3.6	2.5	25.9	21.1	36.0	11.6	14.7
Sweden	15.7	52.4	15.9	13.3	18.0	19.7	36.0	11.6	14.7

\* Sources: Halman, 2001: 32; RAMP source book, 2000.

\*\* Nearly same category ("do not know what to believe")

One should be careful with comparison because some disproportional samples are not correctly weighted here (e.g. Belgium, the region with lowest believers is over sampled). Anyway, the pattern is as we could expect. The EVS percentages are higher because there are lesser categories (four). Surprisingly, the newly added category C in RAMP attracted large numbers of respondents. This may mean that this category is real ('immanent, inside the individual persons'), or the large numbers are caused by the fact that it is the middle category. But this interpretation is not reflected in a serious drop of "do not really know what to think (or "believe") (C in EVS and E in RAMP).

In the Belgium RAMP survey, the Spearman correlation between the (new version of) the "comes closest" question and participation in religious services is .39. However, the "comes closest" question is not entirely ordinal. 71% of those who participate regularly in religious practices believe in a personal God (A) Remember that these are mostly Catholics or Christians. The category of "personal God" decreases to 8% among the group that never participates at services. The second category of the "comes closest" question (B) and the fourth category (D) show a pattern in opposite direction (50% of "never participation" and 8% of weekly). The third (new) category (C) has its highest numbers in the middle categories of the participation question (40%). Is the new "comes closest" question applicable for all Christian denominations and for other religion? Let us check the responses in the whole RAMP dataset (all countries together) (see Exhibit 1.10).

It is worth to notice that in the RAMP surveys in Western and Central Europe, only a small portion of the population reports a non-Christian religion (Islam, Jews). The religious (and ethnic) minorities are seriously under-estimated in these surveys.<sup>4</sup> The new category has a substantial amount of responses in each of the religious groups, even among the non-Christians and those who do not belong to a religion.

**Exhibit 1.10.** Distribution of the "comes closest" question according to denomination (RAMP, 1998; N = 12,286) (Unweighted column percentages).

	Roman Catholic	Protestant	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Anglican	Other Christian	Non Christian	None
A. Personal God	47.4	61.4	23.7	46.8	27.4	60.5	49.2	8.8
B. Spirit of life	13.3	9.1	17.9	12.4	12.8	6.9	12.2	20.9
C. God inside	31.5	21.6	32.8	29.1	45.6	25.0	29.8	27.6
D. Do not believe	1.8	1.1	10.2	3.3	1.2	0.4	2.2	22.8
E. Do not know	5.4	4.6	12.6	7.6	10.6	3.6	3.3	18.4
Missing	0.5	2.3	2.8	0.7	2.4	3.6	3.3	1.5
Total (100%)	5,339	88	2,540	419	423	248	181	3,104

*Recommendation.* At the basis of the latter arguments, one should use the RAMP wording (substantial number of responses in new category), although the makers themselves of this new question have not a decisive view on it.<sup>5</sup> If one wants to compare with other research, then EVS wording is recommended because the question is mostly used that way. The EVS question is more or less ordinal, the RAMP question certainly not.

*Conclusion:* This overview of the religious orientations in the EVS reveals that even in one of the largest scale surveys in which these orientations have a central place, only a small subset of the theoretical diversity in dimensions of religion were measured.<sup>6</sup> The core dimensions of religious affiliation and (church) involvement, general religiosity, and religious orthodoxy seem to have no completely standardised measurement prescriptions. There are still suggestions for improvement that are related to the changing religious situation in Europe.

<sup>4</sup> The amount of "other" is 6.4% in EVS 1999 (Halman, 2001: 77).

<sup>5</sup> I asked the question about preference to K. Dobbelaere by e-mail Oct. 9, 2001: "It was a long discussion in the group; it was important to grasp something as 'the God within'... but EVS will not change their question and this is mostly used... I prefer the new question since it seems to be a new phenomenon, and it is recommended by leading sociologists of religion in GB".

<sup>6</sup> We do not discuss the other dimensions that are planned ("Confidence-in-church") or discovered in the EVS ('reflective men' and 'outer world worldview') since they are a-priori excluded from ESS because it is not a survey on religion.

### 9.1.4 Proposal for the ESS questions on religious affiliation and participation

We are now ready to make a selection of a very limited number of questions (see the previous *recommendations*). Because of the high correlations with other religious measurements, and because it are the most used questions in both general surveys and surveys on religion, the affiliation and participation questions are the best selection. Moreover, these questions deal most clearly with identification with social (religious) groups. We assume that ESS is interested in the typology in Exhibit 1.2, and that we can ask in line with the idea of “ever questions” ask about both actual religious identification and past identification.

#### Compulsory

##### Affiliation

<p><b>QX1.</b> Do you consider yourself to belonging to a church, denomination, or a religious community?          YES          NO -&gt; <b>go to QX4</b></p> <p><b>QX2.</b> Which one? (<i>show Card</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Protestant</li> <li>2 Roman Catholic</li> <li>3 Eastern Orthodox</li> <li>4 Islamic</li> <li>5 Jewish</li> <li>6 Buddhist</li> <li>7 Hindu</li> <li>8 Other (Write in) .....</li> </ol> <p>(Do not know)          (No answer)</p>
---

First comment by Willem Saris: We refer to Erikson and Johnson p. 21, to a previous note of Billiet, to the annotated version of Kirstin Kolsrud. The use of a show card on this question indicates that these religious alternatives should be shown to the respondent and not coded from various country specific lists of religious denominations. The list can be somewhat longer in some countries (country specific: e.g. Church of England; Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican) and if a non-religious world-view is really institutionalised as an alternative of the religious denominations (membership, practices, functions...) this category can be included. We propose the one-and-an-half step question, and certainly not the two step question.

##### Intensity

<p><b>QX3.</b> How strongly are you attached to this church, religious denomination or religious community?</p>
---

- 1 Very weakly
  - 2 Rather weakly
  - 3 Moderately
  - 4 Rather strongly
  - 5 Very strongly
- (Do not know)  
(No answer)

First comment by Willem Saris: This is a more subjective way to measure the strenght of belonging (see recommendations). We refer to Erikson and Jonssons list and to Kirstine Kolsrud. It is possible to replace the first category (1) by "not at all" and the second (2) by "weakly" and skip the -> QX2 in QX1.

#### Past affiliation

**QX4.** Have you ever belonged to any church, denomination, or a religious community?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO -> go to QX6

**QX5.** Which one? (*show card*)

- 1 Protestant
- 2 Roman Catholic
- 3 Eastern Orthodox
- 4 Islamic
- 5 Jewish
- 6 Buddhist
- 7 Hindu
- 8 Other (Write in) .....

(Do not know)

(No answer)

#### Participation in religious services

**QX6.** Apart from religious activities at the occasion of social events as weddings, funerals, christenings, and circumcisions, about how often do you attend religious services these days?

- 1 More than once a week
- 2 Once a week
- 3 Once a month
- 4 Only at specific holy days
- 5 Less often
- 6 Never, practically never

(Do not know)

(No answer)

First comment by Willem Saris: This is a crucial factual question. In this form, the question is not only applicable for Christians (Catholics and Protestants) but also for Islam and Jewish religion. Question: is it also applicable for Buddhism?

### Praying

In a discussion about these core questions, Norman Bradburn suggested to use also the question about praying since this correlates very well with a number of variables. This question is more universal than the religious practice question.

**QX7.** About how often do you pray?

1. Every day
2. more than once a week
3. once a week
4. at least once a month
5. a few times a year
6. once a year
7. less often
8. never

### **Optional**

The three previous questions are compulsory. It is recommended to add the general question about belief in God, the most important issue in each religion. This question allows some differentiation in those who are classified as "not belonging to a religious denomination" (**QX1**) and it can also reveal some differentiation in the other categories (denominations and religions).

### General Belief (Image of God)

Which of these statements comes closest to your own beliefs? (*code one answer only*)

- F. I believe in a God with whom I can have a personal relationship  
1
  - G. I believe in a (*GB: an impersonal*) spirit of life force (*Hungary: supernatural power*)  
2
  - H. I believe more that God is something within each person rather than something out there  
3
  - I. I don't believe in any kind of God, spirit, or life force (*Hungary: supernatural force*)  
4
  - J. I don't really know what to believe  
5
- (No answer)

First comment of Willem Saris: this is the RAMP question. It is not an ordinal question, and there is a mixture of dimensions (within - outside; personal - impersonal; certainty - doubt), however, data from RAMP show that different groups of people are in the different classes.

Participation in the past (*if used, directly after QX6*)

Apart from religious activities at the occasion of social events as weddings, funerals, christenings, and circumcisions, about how often did you attend religious services when you were 12 years old?

More than once a week	1	
Once a week	2	
Once a month		3
Only at specific holy days		4
Less often	5	
Never, practically never	6	
(Do not know)		
(No answer)		

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## 9.2. Evaluation and improvement of the proposals

The typology presented in Exhibit 9.2 has been suggested which makes a lot of sense. In order to construct this typology the questions about religious belonging in present and the past are needed and the religious practice in the present but also a question about membership and whether people are doing voluntary work. The last two questions are missing in the core module. On the other hand several other questions are suggested. Does this mean that a different typology should be built or that you have not taken this idea into account?

### Exhibit 9.2. Indicators and types of church involvement in the EVS

<i>Indicators of church involvement</i>					
-	Belonging to a religious denomination	= two questions: 1 two-step actual and 1 two step past			
-	Frequency of church attendance	= from never to weekly			
-	Membership of religious organisations	= choosing from list			
-	Voluntary work for religious organisations	= choosing from list in case of previous is choosen			
Typology of church involvement derived from these questions					
<i>Types</i>	<i>Present belonging</i>	<i>Past belonging</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Membershi p</i>	<i>Voluntary</i>
Core member	Yes	-	>= Monthly	Yes	-
	Yes	-		-	yes
Modal member	Yes	-	>= Monthly	no	no
Marginal member	Yes	-	>= Monthly	-	-
Unchurched (1st generation)	No	yes	Monthly	-	-
Unchurched (2th. gen.)	no	no	irregular	-	-
			-		
			-		

- = irrelevant

Jaak Billiet's reply: an equivalent typology can be built with only the questions on present and past denomination and on actual church attendance. Core members are the present members who practice several times a month or more, modal members are those who practice monthly, several times a year or at the occasion of Holy days. The other categories remain unchanged. This typology is also often practised among sociologists of religion. However, the simple question about voluntary work in religious

organisations or active membership in religious associations (combined in one "or" question) can be asked if we want to construct an identical typology.

The CCT suggests not to add new questions but to adjust the typology. The typology that can be made without this question is shown below:

**Exhibit 9.3.** Indicators and types of church involvement in the EVS

- Belonging to a religious denomination: now and in the past				
- Frequency of church attendance : more or less than monthly				
<i>Types</i>		<i>Present belonging</i>	<i>Past belonging</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Core member		Yes	-	>=
Modal member		Yes	-	Monthly
Marginal member		Yes	-	< Monthly
Unchurched (1st generation)		No	yes	irregular
Unchurched (2th. gen.)		no	no	-

- = irrelevant

For development of the typology of church involvement the following six questions have been proposed as necessary:

**QX1.** Do you consider yourself to belonging to a church, denomination, or a religious community?

YES

NO -> go to QX4

**QX2.** Which one? (*show Card*)

1 Protestant

2 Roman Catholic

3 Eastern Orthodox

4 Islamic

5 Jewish

6 Buddhist

7 Hindu

8 Other (Write in) .....

(Do not know)

(No answer)

Jaak Billiet comments him self on this question: Exactly these religious alternatives should be shown to the respondent on a card and not field coded from various country specific lists of religious denominations. The list can be somewhat longer in some

countries (country specific: e.g. Church of England; Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican, Norwegian State Church...) and if a non-religious world-view is really institutionalised as an alternative of the religious denominations (membership, practices, functions...) this category can be included.

Knut Sjak also proposes a response card with standardized categories and additional country specific categories. Data from Norway show a substantial difference in response distributions depending on the presence of the category "Norwegian State Church" (83.7%) or Protestant (58%). In the latter case, the number of "other" is 8.1% (only 0.6% when "protestant" is used. *Knut Sjak* also mentioned the problem of the organised humanist, as is done in the note of *Jaak Billiet*. The Society of Humanist Ethics (Norway) has about 3% members that are in the denomination question classified as "none". Such associations exist in several countries. Should we try to measure this?

If the respondent does not belong to a church the following question about past should be asked:

**QX4.** Have you ever belonged to any church, denomination, or a religious community?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO -> go to QX6

**QX5.** Which one? (*show card*)

- 1 Protestant
- 2 Roman Catholic
- 3 Eastern Orthodox
- 4 Islamic
- 5 Jewish
- 6 Buddhist
- 7 Hindu
- 8 Other (Write in) .....

(Do not know)

(No answer)

For Participation in religious services the following question has been suggested.

**QX6.** Apart from religious activities at the occasion of social events as weddings, funerals, christenings, and circumcisions, about how often do you attend religious services these days?

- 1 More than once a week
- 2 Once a week
- 3 Once a month
- 4 Only at specific holy days
- 5 Less often
- 6 Never, practically never

(Do not know)

(No answer)



Jaak Billiet comments himself: This is a crucial factual question. In this form, the question is not only applicable for Christians (Catholics and Protestants) but also for Islam and Jewish religion. Question: is it also applicable for Buddhism?

In the final editing of questionnaire, the religious practice question was somewhat changed by including the category "every day". This is done in order to make the response categories identical to those of the question about praying (see below). We may assume that only a very small number of respondents will fall in the categories "every day" and "more than once a week", but we assume that change has no implications on the further part of the distribution.

With these questions the reduced typology presented in Exhibit 9.3 can be built.

With respect to intensity the following question has been suggested for those people who belong to a religious denomination:

**QX3.** How strongly are you attached to this church, religious denomination or religious community?

- 1 Very weakly
- 2 Rather weakly
- 3 Moderately
- 4 Rather strongly
- 5 Very strongly

(Do not know)

(No answer)

In a discussion about these core questions, Norman Bradburn suggested to use also the question about praying since this correlates very well with a number of variables. This question is more universal than the religious practice question.

**QX7.** About how often do you pray outside of religious services?

1. Every day
2. more than once a week
3. once a week
4. at least once a month
5. a few times a year
6. less often
7. never

### 9.3. Final Choice

#### 9.3.1. The questionnaire

##### Affiliation

**G1** Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?

Yes	1	<b>ASK G2</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO G3</b>
(Don't know)	8	

**G2** Which one?

Christian – no denomination	01	
Roman Catholic	02	
Church of England / Anglican	03	
Baptist	04	
Methodist	05	
Presbyterian / Church of Scotland	06	
Free Presbyterian	07	
Brethren	08	
United Reform Church / Congregational	09	<b>GO TO G5</b>
Other Protestant ( <b>WRITE IN</b> ) _____	10	
Other Christian ( <b>WRITE IN</b> ) _____	11	
Hindu	12	
Jewish	13	
Islam / Muslim	14	
Sikh	15	
Buddhist	16	
Other non-Christian ( <b>WRITE IN</b> ) _____	17	

##### Past affiliation

**ASK IF NO RELIGION AT G1**

**G3** Have you ever considered yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?

Yes	1	<b>ASK G4</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO</b>

**G5**

(Don't know)	8	
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**G4 Which one?**

- Christian – no denomination 01
- Roman Catholic 02
- Church of England / Anglican 03
- Baptist 04
- Methodist 05
- Presbyterian / Church of Scotland 06
- Free Presbyterian 07
- Brethren 08
- United Reform Church / Congregational 09
- Other Protestant (**WRITE IN**) \_\_\_\_\_ 10
- Other Christian (**WRITE IN**) \_\_\_\_\_ 11
- Hindu 12
- Jewish 13
- Islam / Muslim 14
- Sikh 15
- Buddhist 16
- Other non-Christian (**WRITE IN**) \_\_\_\_\_ 17

01
02
03
04
05
06
07
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12
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15
16
17

Intensity

**ASK ALL**

**G5 CARD G1:** Using this card, how religious would you say you are?

**Not at all  
religious**

**Very  
religious (DK)**

00      01   02   03   04   05   06   07   08   09      10      88

Participation

**G6 CARD G2:** Apart from special occasions such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, festivals and circumcisions, about how often do you attend religious services these days?

- Every day 1
- More than once a week 2
- Once a week 3
- At least once a month 4
- Only on special holy days 5
- Less often 6
- Never 7
- (Don't know) 8

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

**G7 CARD G2 AGAIN** About how often do you pray outside of religious services? Please use this card.

--

<i>Every day</i>	1
<i>More than once a week</i>	2
<i>Once a week</i>	3
<i>At least once a month</i>	4
<i>Only on special holy days</i>	5
<i>Less often</i>	6
<i>Never</i>	7
<i>(Don't know)</i>	8

Because the pilot study did not suggest any correction in these questions. This set of questions was also used in the first wave of the ESS.

### 9.3.2 *The results in wave 1*

Questions on membership and voluntary work are included in the module on citizenship (see: the list of participation in voluntary organisations, category J of question E2). However, these questions on membership and voluntary work are not asked within the context of the religious questions but in the context of memberships of several kinds of voluntary associations. Moreover several small changes have been made. An additional question about the importance of religion in life (E18) was also included in the rotating module about citizenship.

After an analysis of 16 countries, it seemed to be possible to built the original typology presented in Exhibit 9.2 for these countries. The question about Buddhism was not properly formulated, however the number of Buddhists is very low in most countries.

Because of the inclusion of the variables “frequency of praying” (C15b), “degree of religiosity” (C13), “frequency of participation in religious services” (C14b), and the inclusion of the question about “importance of religion in life” in the rotating module (E18), it is also possible to construct a quasi-metric latent variable with good measurement quality. A factorial invariant model fitted to the data for these countries while the factor loadings were assumed to be identical in all countries. These loadings turned out to be between 0.76 and 0.87. This metric variable can be used as an alternative for the typology in some analysis.