How to Operationalize Religious Development?

Heinz Streib
How can we assess religious change and development?

- Retrospective self-reconstruction, e.g. in narrative interviews
- Retrospective self-report (e.g. questionnaire items) or
Change in Belief in God and Spiritual Self-identification 2018 in...

USA (GSS ) and Germany (ALLBUS)

Describe your beliefs about God

- I don’t follow a religion and don’t consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.
- I don’t follow a religion, but consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.
- I follow a religion and consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.
- I follow a religion, but don’t consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.

Change of belief in God

- I don’t follow a religion and don’t consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.
- I don’t follow a religion, but consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.
- I follow a religion and consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.
- I follow a religion, but don’t consider myself to be a spiritual person interested in the sacred and the supernatural.
How can we assess *religious change and development*?

• In cross-sectional data:
  • Retrospective self-reconstruction, e.g. in narrative interviews
  • Retrospective self-report (e.g. questionnaire items) or

• In longitudinal data:
  • Repeated assessment with questionnaire (items; scales)
  • Repeated interviewing

Two theses
• Multiple waves of data collection allows sophisticated assessment for biographical changes in qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Quantitative analysis can use method such as Cross-lagged Panel Analysis and Latent Growth modeling ... which is meeting requirements for researching ‘development’
• A multi-method approach is the ideal way for attention to participants on the individual AND on the group level.
How Do We Operationalize Religious Development in our Bielefeld-Chattanooga Research?

The Concept-Based Approach
Five Religious Styles – Recent Characterizations

5. Openness for dialog and for being challenged / changed by the encounter with the Other/the Strange; xenosophia

4. Critical and autonomous reflection; in case of conflicting validity claims, models of tolerance are considered.

3. Consent to conventions of one’s group or life-world; mutual interpersonal and uncritical harmony

2. Mythic-literal and ethnocentric insistence on the truth of text and teachings of own tradition; system of punishment and reward.

1. Subjective orientation without an awareness of the interiority of the other; dependence on the external authority of others/caretakers
The Faith Development Interview (FDI)

The FDI is the key measure in our research. The interview is structured by 25 questions that cover...

A. Life Review
B. Relationships
C. Present Values and Commitments
D. Religion

Heinz Streib & Barbara Keller

Manual for the Assessment of
Religious Styles
in Faith Development Interview

Fourth, Revised Edition of the
Manual for Faith Development Research
Summary of FDI Evaluation

2 = Instrumental-reciprocal Religious Style
3 = Mutual Religious Style
4 = Individuative-systemic Religious Style
5 = Dialogical Religious Style
Differences between FDIs ...

2 = Instrumental-reciprocal Religious Style
3 = Mutual Religious Style
4 = Individuative-systemic Religious Style
5 = Dialogical Religious Style
Four Typical Summaries of Religious Style Ratings

- Predominantly individuative-reflective
- Predominantly conventional
- Substantially ethnocentric
- Emerging dialogical-xenosophic

2 = Instrumental-reciprocal Religious Style
3 = Mutual Religious Style
4 = Individuative-systemic Religious Style
5 = Dialogical Religious Style
### Four Religious Types – Summary Characterizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characterization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging dialogical-xenosophic</strong></td>
<td>On top of the use of critical and autonomous reflection there is an openness for inter-religious dialog and for being challenged or changed by the encounter with the Other/the Strange (xenosophia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominantly individuative-reflective</strong></td>
<td>Predominant practice of critical and autonomous reflection—featuring religious (multi-religious) plurality; in case of conflicting validity claims, models of tolerance are considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominantly conventional</strong></td>
<td>Predominant inclination for consent to the conventional beliefs and prescriptions of one’s group or life-world; desire for mutual interpersonal harmony, while avoiding critical questioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substantially ethoncentric</strong></td>
<td>Characterized by a substantial mythic-literal, ethnocentric and mono-religious claim to the exclusive truth of texts and teachings of one’s own tradition and to a system of punishment and reward in morality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How did we construct validate the religious types in our data?
Past and Current Bielefeld-Chattanooga Studies

**Deconversion Project**
(2002-2005)

**Spirituality Project**
(2009-2012)

**Longitudinal Study of Religious development**
Sample Characteristics of FDI Subsamples for Type Construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deconversion Sample</th>
<th>Spirituality Sample</th>
<th>2017 Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field Work Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$n_{USA}$</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$n_{Germany}$</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: % female</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>16-86</td>
<td>18-76</td>
<td>16-84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profiling the Four Religious Types with Percentages of Style Ratings

Convergent Validity Using Latent Class Analysis (LCA)

LCA/LTA indicated that a model with four latent classes can be regarded as the final solution.

The distribution of religious style percentages in the four classes clearly demonstrated that the highest means of each style are distinctively associated with one of the four classes.

Re-interviewee subsample \((N = 87)\)
Assessment of Development over Lifetime Using Religious Types
Past and Current Bielefeld-Chattanooga Studies

Deconversion Project (2002-2005)

Spirituality Project (2009-2012)

Longitudinal Study of Religious development
   Wave II (2014-2017)

Longitudinal Study of Religious development
   Wave III (2017-2020)

Deconversion revisited

Deconversion: Qualitative and Quantitative Results from Cross-Cultural Research in Germany and the United States of America

Semantics and Psychology of Spirituality: A Cross-Cultural Analysis
Developmental Trajectories in Religious Types

Emerging Dialogical-Xenosophic Type
Predominantly Individuative-reflective Type
Predominantly Conventional Type
Substantially Ethnocentric Type

Time 1 Time 2 Time 3

Michael Stayer Isabel Upmove Crystal Downmove
## Developmental Trajectories in Religious Types

### Movers and Stayers Time3 - Time1 & Original Project (first-time questionnaire participation) Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Original Project (first-time questionnaire participation)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deconversion (De)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality (Sp)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movers and Stayers Time3 - Time1</td>
<td>% within Original Project (first-time questionnaire participation)</td>
<td>14,7%</td>
<td>34,2%</td>
<td>25,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mover downward between Time 1 and Time 3</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayer between Time 1 and Time 3</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Original Project (first-time questionnaire participation)</td>
<td>44,1%</td>
<td>23,7%</td>
<td>33,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mover upward between Time 1 and Time 3</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Original Project (first-time questionnaire participation)</td>
<td>41,2%</td>
<td>42,1%</td>
<td>41,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Original Project (first-time questionnaire participation)</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concluding Remarks

- Our recent results confirm the assumption that religion, spirituality, meaning-making are not monolithic, but there are structurally different versions.

- The model of religious types addresses such variety in a way that can be related to and triangulated with other sorts of data.

- Researching religious development is an ambitious project, when based on the faith development interview. But re-interviewing the same person some years later is the best start to account for religious development.
Thank you for your attention!