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Putting a Q into the Study of Religions: Observations from a Global Study with the Faith Q-Sort

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Abstract

The Young Adults and Religion in a Global Perspective (YARG) research project implemented a cross-cultural, comparative, and mixed-method study of religious subjectivities in twelve countries worldwide. At the core of YARG was the use and development of the Faith Q-Sort (FQS), originally designed by David Wulff (2019). The FQS is based on Q methodology and a novel method in the study. Religion as an object of study has become increasingly evasive, and the FQS met our ambition of finding sensitive ways to assess contemporary religiosity in an international perspective. This article seeks to describe the project with a specific focus on the FQS. I draw here on other publications from the project, and our use of the FQS is further exemplified by two of the main analyses we conducted: the bird's-eye view of the shared patterns of being religious in the international sample, and the exploration of cross-cultural variations of these patterns across our country-specific cases.

The Åbo Akademi University Centre of Excellence in research (CoE) Young Adults and Religion in a Global Perspective (YARG) project is a cross-cultural, comparative, and mixed-method study of contemporary religion, non-religiosity, and spirituality. It set out to explore broad questions: What are the characteristics of the religious subjectivities and values among young adults globally? What are the main discourses that constitute and shape these subjectivities? What are the methodological and theoretical implications that follow from our results in how contemporary religion is conceived and

studied? These questions are ambitious, especially given that we also aim for cross-cultural reliability. The ambition is therefore better understood as exploratory (see Stebbins 2011); to present some relevant snapshots with reference to the research interests the initial questions define.

We have already contributed results and observations pertaining to the questions to several publications. The journal *Religion* published a special issue on religion and socialization (Klingenberg and Sjö 2019), and Routledge published a volume on religion and media, *Digital Media, Young Adults and Religion: An International Perspective* (Moberg and Sjö 2020). Springer published the volume *The Diversity of Worldviews among Young Adults: Contemporary (Non)Religiosity and Spirituality through the Lens of an International Mixed Method Study* (Nynäs et al. 2022a), and the volume *Interdisciplinary Studies in Sensitizing Religious Variety in a Global Perspective: Between Universalism and Particularism* (Nynäs et al. 2023, forthcoming) is contracted with Equinox as part of their Study of Religion in a Global Context series. The chapter 'The Faith Q-Sort: In-Depth Assessment of Diverse Spirituality and Religiosity in 12 Countries' (Nynäs, Kontala, and Lassander 2021) also merits mention. This article draws on the results and observations of these publications. It overlaps with and is indebted to several of these publications.

I will focus here on some elementary aspects of the YARG project. In the first part of the article I describe the central ideas behind YARG, including theoretical observations and issues related to method and the FQS. In the second part I exemplify how the FQS made a relevant contribution to our interest in comprehending contemporary religious subjectivities. I describe and discuss our study of the shared patterns of being religious, and how they vary across our country-specific cases. This provides a rationale for some reflections on the religious typology and the assumed universal character of such categories.

Current challenges in the study of religions

Researching contemporary religion entails several challenges, and the YARG project was united by two notions especially. First, it has been claimed that 'religion' has changed in recent decades, and we have therefore more often been confronted with the question 'What should scholars of religion deal with in their studies?' Second, it has simultaneously become apparent that we need to make an additional effort to deal with the different biases in our approaches and limitations that to a large extent reflect a dominant Western

position in the field. These notions constituted the core of the YARG project and require some explication.

In contrast with simplified assumptions about a linear disappearance of religious themes, ideas, practices, and phenomena, discussions about secularization in the West have recently shifted to religious change (see e.g. Nynäs, Lassander, and Utriainen 2012; Woodhead 2012). These have involved a range of interrelated theoretical frameworks or conceptualizations such as de-secularization (Berger 1999), re-sacralization (Davie 2010), re-enchantment (Partridge 2005), post-secularity (Habermas 2006; Nynäs, Lassander, and Utriainen 2012), un-churching (Fuller 2001), and de-Christianization (Brown and Lynch 2012), to name a few. Some researchers approach religious change against the background of a general social and cultural process, for example, in terms of a 'subjective or expressive turn' (Heelas and Woodhead 2005), while others refer to international processes and point to an 'Easternization of the West' (Campbell 2007) or approach change from a perspective of historical processes and speak of the emergence of a 'new style religion' that is replacing 'reformation style religion' (Woodhead 2012).

Despite the variety of perspectives, we can underline one initial important observation: we need to be more attentive to how incompatible current secularization processes are with certain forms of religion and spirituality (e.g. Berger 1999; Day et al. 2013; Turner 2010; Nynäs, Illman, and Martikainen 2015). A strict juxtaposition between religion and secularity today entails a simplistic picture; the reconfiguration of religiosity and spirituality evolves alongside the growth of nonreligion. A growing body of research highlights that people increasingly mix ideas, practices, and identities in novel ways, following the changing organization of religion, secularization, and increasing religious diversity (e.g. van der Braak and Kalsky 2017; Bruce and Voas 2007; Woodhead 2012; Gilhus and Sutcliffe 2013; af Burén 2015; Nynäs, Illman, and Martikainen 2015; Nynäs 2017). The complexity and diversification this may entail requires us to be attentive to how change is differently manifested at societal, cultural, and individual levels. Secularization does not erase religion but comprises a change in the conditions for 'religious belief', and this has further consequences for how it can be expressed (Taylor 2007; Warner, Vanantwerpen, and Calhoun 2010).

Studies of contemporary religion have also made it clear that we need to broaden our horizon and account for sociocultural shifts in societies that are of a global nature. For example, studies of the role of media (e.g. Granholm, Moberg, and Sjö 2015; Moberg and Sjö 2020), consumerism (e.g. Gauthier and

Martikainen 2013; Gauthier 2020), and social movements (e.g. Nynäs and Lassander 2015) provide vital perspectives on these changes. Such developments may entail implications for understandings of religious authority and mechanisms of religious socialization, for example (e.g. Brown and Lynch, 2012). Beck's (2010, 42) claim that in contrast with a previous focus on the interrelation between nation and religion 'we see the formation of a new, religiously determined, global sociality in which increased significance is attached to transnational, religious imagined communities which complement, and enter into competition and conflict with the institutionalized forms of national societies and national institutions' thus makes sense.

The need to be more aware of current shifts goes hand in hand with the need to engage with religion outside the Western sphere. However, this is not only a matter of geography. Rather, it is entangled with conceptual and epistemological challenges. In writing about the 'Global East', Yang (2018) underlines that our comprehension of East Asian societies and cultures also needs to include diasporic communities of East Asians and the more general impact of East Asian culture and religion on the West. Furthermore, he claims that this 'presents theoretical and methodological challenges for the social scientific study of religion' (Yang 2018, 7). Yang sides here with several other scholars who draw our attention to how religion has often been one-sidedly conceptualized and assessed as a transhistorical universal essence, while religion as a concept has often been provincial in practice (e.g. Asad 1993; 2003; Balagangadhara 2005; Chakrabarty 2000; Masuzawa 2005; Winzeler 2008). The study of religions has been affected by a bias of presupposing conceptual similarity between various religious traditions. Research on religion has mainly been conducted by Western scholars and on religion in the West, and both common ways of approaching religion and specific measures or assessment tools have emerged on a Western and predominantly Christian horizon.

The conceptual bias is also related to the debate on universality versus particularism in the study of religions: the universality assumption clashes with the increasingly prevailing notion of cross-cultural incommensurability (e.g. Balagangadhara 2014a; 2014b). For example, as Balagangadhara (2014b, 41) states concerning the application of 'Western' understandings of religion on the study of religion in India, scholars tend to assume 'that religion is a cultural universal and that the difference between Indian and western culture (among other things) lies in the difference between their "religions"'. Again, however, we need to admit that the bias in relation to non-Western cultures that we try to address therefore also has wider implications for the

study of religions. Woodhead (2010) underlines that spirituality has often been understood to be socially precarious, because we think of institutions in terms of established churches and hierarchical structures. 'Here again,' Woodhead (2010, 42) writes, 'we see the distorting effect of identifying "real" religion with historic western churches.' This implies a cautious position regarding essentialist, limited, generic understandings of religion based on theistic, doctrinal, institutionally based faith (Beckford 2003; Day 2010; 2011) and a need to abandon dysfunctional categories and models and instead approach religion as a hybrid (Lassander 2012).

Scholars have increasingly engaged with how to develop the conceptual toolkit of the study of religions (e.g. Bowman and Valk 2012; Droogers and van Harskamp 2014; Lassander 2012; 2014; McGuire 2008; Nynäs, Illman, and Martikainen 2015). It is natural that concepts such as religion, spirituality, and belief are created and defined within various forms of academic enterprise. Yet to continue this development, we also need to be attentive to the social location of religion and 'its role in bringing into being forms of identity that actors strategically create in order to adapt to and integrate themselves into various social situations' (Day, 2010, 10). In short, there is a need today to de-centre taken-for-granted categories and perspectives in the study of religions (see Bender et al. 2013a).

Q methodology and the Faith Q-Sort

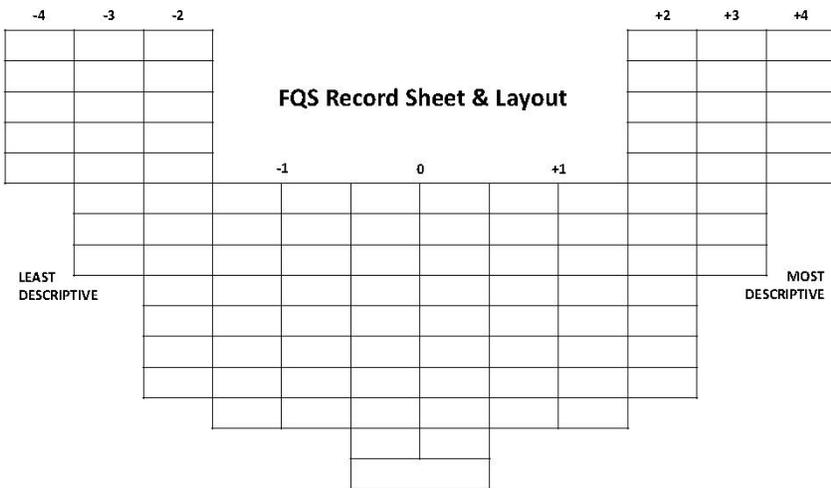
De Roover claims that 'the contemporary study of religion has a unique opportunity to settle the debate on the cultural universality of religion' (de Roover 2014, 2017). As was emphasized in the previous paragraph, in YARG we have taken this to indicate a need to develop new methodological approaches, and the FQS met our expectations. The FQS is based on Q methodology and was originally developed by David Wulff (2019) for the assessment of religion. Within the YARG study we developed and translated the FQS for cross-cultural use (see Nynäs, Kontala, and Lassander 2021).

Q methodology is rather unknown and is usually not discussed in the literature on method, with some exceptions (e.g. Newman and Ramlo 2010; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998). It was developed in the 1930s by William Stephenson (1993/1994) to assess subjective viewpoints on a specific topic, or subjectivities. 'Subjectivity' here refers to the range of individual experiences that serve as a platform for agencies, identities, and social identifications, such as variations regarding preferences, emotions, values, desires, interests, practices, views, and beliefs. Subjectivities are fluid and relational

and emerge as parts of interpretative communities at play in various contexts (Biehl, Good, and Kleinman 2007). Q methodology has therefore been found to be of value in a variety of fields, ranging from studies of political opinions and marketing research to studies of educational settings and personality psychology, including studies that assess worldviews (Block 1978; 2008; Brown 1980; Gabor 2013; Watts and Stenner 2012; van Exel and de Graaf 2005; McKeown and Thomas 2013; Nilsson 2015).

A Q study presents the respondents with statements that reflect a broad array of views on a subject matter, and the respondents then rank-order these statements on a record sheet (see Figure 1). The breadth covered by statements in a Q set is significant: it allows a variety of expressions of nuances and complexity and a variety of expected and unexpected configurations to emerge from an analysis. The validity of a Q set depends on how representative it is of the entire field or discourse being studied. A Q set is therefore derived from many different sources that reflect relevant views on the topic, both academic and non-academic points. This can include interviews, observations, literature, material from different media (van Exel and de Graaf 2005). Of course, there is not an endless option of viewpoints that people hold on a certain subject, and the assumption behind Q methodology is that only a limited number of distinct viewpoints exists on any topic (Brown 1980).

Figure 1 FQS Record sheet and layout. The 101 statements of the FQS are printed on cards, and respondents rank them by placing them in different categories on a layout. This reflects the extent to which the respondent identifies with a certain statement in comparison with other statements in the Q set of the FQS.



A Q method study is a qualitative procedure, but it is assisted by quantitative analyses. The individual sorts from a Q study provide an imprint of an individual position, and these can be compared between individuals. However, sorts are usually combined and analysed to achieve more general patterns. We call these prototypes. The data for these are extracted through an analysis of intercorrelations among Q sorts, which are then factor-analysed (see Schmolck 2017; Banasick 2019). The analysis provides tables with factor loadings, item factor scores, and distinguishing statements for each of the factors (prototypes), for example. Through an interpretation of these data the distinct patterns are defined, and these are described with more or less nuance. These prototypes are distinct, but they may also share characteristics. Some statements define a particular prototype, whereas others distinguish one prototype from the other. The latter can be exemplified by a case in which the statement 'Feels that one should remain loyal to the religion of one's nation' (FQS46) is ranked as +4 in one prototype but negatively by all other prototypes. Sometimes a prototype is constituted by a very small number of participants, but it remains relevant, because it is distinct from other prototypes and represents a unique point of view (see Watts and Stenner 2012).

The weaknesses of Q methodology should not be overlooked. The subjectivity and bias of the researcher is often missed (Robbins and Krueger 2000; Sneegas 2020), and the forced distribution in the ranking process may distort viewpoints (Kampen and Tamás 2014). The design of the Q set is critical to avoiding both. Another important aspect is the confusion related to Q methodology being a blend of both quantitative and qualitative analyses (Ramlo 2021). Stenner, Watts, and Worrell (2008, 218) underline that the 'Q sort as a data-collection form is designed to maximize the expression of qualitative variation and to record it in numerical form'. It is not primarily concerned with which proportion of a larger population is associated with which prototype, lacking the possibility to quantify generalizations (see e.g. Thomas and Baas 1992/1993). A Q study will yield results that are closer to concluding that white, brown, and yellow tigers exist than claiming that all crows are black.

Except for McKeown's (2001) Q set for Christian Orthodoxy, Q methodology is relatively new in religious studies. David Wulff (2019) designed the FQS to meet the growing challenge of how to assess religiosity and spirituality and designed an instrument that differed substantially from most other instruments in the field, such as the well-known Allport-Ross Religious Orientation Scale, ROS (Allport 1950; Allport and Ross 1967). Wulff (2019)

compiled 101 statements that reflected major religious traditions, including observations from subfields in the study of religions. The statements tap into ways of thinking and viewing. It covers experiential and emotional dimensions and practices and ways of doing things. Wulff's version was developed in a North American context but has also been successfully used in some studies with both religious and nonreligious groups in other contexts (Kontala 2016; Lassander and Nynäs 2016; Pennanen 2013; Terho 2013).

Any cross-cultural study requires a thorough method assessment. To achieve validity involves item-by-item international, multilingual, and cross-cultural validation of all statements (Wolf et al. 2019). The ambition to produce an internationally valid version therefore requires modesty. For example, the process of producing valid statements tends to push the wording to a level of abstraction that does not necessarily reflect how people themselves express their views. If the statements in the Q set become too distanced from a real-life discourse, they may be difficult to comprehend, inviting participants to play a guessing game or making participants lose interest. In YARG our co-investigators and assistants from all countries could take part in developing Wulff's version. They suggested revisions of statements, proposed new ones, and addressed statements that were problematic for some reason. This contributed to the cross-cultural validity of the FQS with regards to the religious and spiritual worldviews across the world and resulted in the FQS-b. Only this version was used in the YARG study. Table 1 exemplifies statements from the FQS.

Table 1. Examples of statements from the Faith Q set

12. Participates in religious activities chiefly on special occasions.
16. Being religious or spiritual is central to whom he or she is.
29. Is inclined to embrace elements from various religious and spiritual traditions.
46. Feels that one should remain loyal to the religion of one's nation.
70. Rejects religious ideas that conflict with scientific and rational principles.
86. Is committed to following a spiritual path that is in harmony with the environment.

Method and data collection

The data for the YARG project were collected during 2015–16 using a mixed methods approach. The first part of this was a survey ($N \approx 300$ / country) assessing the participants' current life situation, social life, sources of news and information, views and convictions, wellbeing and happiness, personal details, and the Portrait Value Questionnaire (Schwartz 1992; 2012; Schwartz et al. 2012). The YARG project is based on convenience sampling, and there is no way to tell if the sample is representative of a larger population and serves a more exploratory interest. Nevertheless, the survey provided valuable data for our sampling for the FQS study. A study with Q methodology does not require many respondents, but respondents need to reflect a variety of viewpoints. Our initial survey allowed a broad sample regarding gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, language groups, class, and value profile for the FQS part ($n \approx 45$ / country).

Data were collected in twelve countries: Canada, China, Finland, Ghana, India, Israel, Sweden, Peru, Poland, Russia, Turkey, and the USA. These countries were chosen because they reflected a variety of national, cultural, religious, and linguistic contexts and cover the cultural value areas recognized in the World Value Survey and 'the Global Cultural Map' (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). In all countries we collaborated with a couple of universities where the data were collected, and our network of co-investigators and research assistants played a decisive role for the research process, gaining access, and data collection. Turning to university students was a deliberate choice with regards to our interest in contemporary religiosity and change. Compared with previous generations, social phenomena such as consumer culture and digital media have constituted an inherent and unquestioned experience of more recent generations. Beyer (2019, 278) concludes that 'millennials' have grown up with expanding global horizons and contexts that are 'better regarded as dynamic and contextual projects, as fluid nodes in networks of relations' (see also Possamai 2009; Palfrey and Gasser 2008). We assumed that university students generally had relatively extensive capital in this respect compared to other young adults. However, Klingenberg, Sjö, and Moberg (2022) showed in their analyses that the sample presents great variation across the cases. There is thus no definite homogeneity.

The material produced for the use of our respondents (the consent form, the survey, the FQS, etc.) was translated from English to target languages (Arabic, Bengali, Mandarin Chinese, Finnish, French, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish) with a double back translation method to secure the highest comparability and reliability across cultures (Brislin

1970, 1980; Geisinger 1994; Hambleton 1993; 1994; Harkness 2003; Lin, Chen and Chiu 2005; Plake and Hoover 1979; van de Vijver and Hambleton 1996). This process revealed that religious vocabulary was often marked by biases: religion in one culture was often much more varied than a translator might realize. Translators could often present quite different proposals, and we needed to rely on local academic expert teams to decide on the most adequate translation. The theoretical issues involved in translation are well discussed in a separate publication by Broo et al. (2023, forthcoming).

Information on religious and secular life-views and data on opinions, attitudes, and values are sensitive, and many ethical concerns were raised in the project. We followed both national and European ethical guidelines (TENK 2009; ALLEA 2017). We attained (2015) ethical approval for the YARG project as a whole from the Åbo Akademi University Research Ethics Committee. Procedures for this vary between countries, and our co-investigators followed corresponding procedures in respective countries. In some countries personal worldviews are also politically sensitive. We have therefore refrained from further descriptions of the universities involved in the YARG study and where the data were collected.

Five global prototypes

Our research question about the characteristics of the religious subjectivities among young adults globally receives its most distinct answer in the 'Who are they and what do they value? – The five global worldviews of young adults' study by Nynäs, Keysar, and Lagerström (2022). The study presents an analysis of all the FQS sorts (N = 562), a bird's-eye view of shared patterns in the whole sample. We extracted five distinct prototypes: (1) Secular Humanist; (2) Active Confident Believer; (3) Noncommitted Traditionalist; (4) Spiritually Attuned; and (5) Disengaged Liberal. The narrative descriptions catch the most defining and distinguishing elements of each prototype. They are the result of interpretations; some nuances have been disregarded, and other aspects might have been emphasized more. Short narrative descriptions of the global prototypes follow.

Secular Humanist:

The Secular Humanist takes a clear distance to all religious ideas and practices. One is critical of the religious tradition of one's people, and one actively seeks to change societal structures and values, believing that human progress is possible on a worldwide scale. Individual freedom of choice in

matters of faith and morality is an important value, and one believes that one can be deeply moral without being religious. Consequently, the thought of dedicating one's life to serving the divine is a very foreign idea. One cannot identify with those who rely on religious authorities, who observe prescribed religious practices and laws, whose sexuality is strongly guided by a religious or spiritual outlook, and who experience the presence of the divine. In contrast, one views religion as the illusory creation of human fears and desires, and rejects religious ideas that conflict with scientific and rational principles. One views religious content as metaphoric, rather than literally true. The Secular Humanist feels spiritually moved and sustained by music, art, or poetry.

Active Confident Believer

The Active Confident Believer centers life on religion. One believes in a divine being with whom one can have a personal relationship, experiences the divine as a sheltering and nurturing parent who guides and protects. One is an active, contributing member of a religious or a spiritual community, and engages regularly in religious or spiritual practices also in private. One views religion as a central means for becoming a better and more moral person. Longing for a deeper, more confident faith is an essential part of one's life, and the idea of having a vague and shifting religious outlook feels foreign. One feels different from people who see no higher purpose or ultimate destiny for the human species. Neither can one identify with people who take no interest in religious or spiritual matters, or who feel distant, uncomfortable or fearful in turning to the divine. One feels foreign to consider all religious scriptures to be outdated or misguided, or to experience the idea of divinity empty of significance or meaning. One would not participate in religious practices chiefly to meet others' wishes or expectations: being religious or spiritual is central to whom the Active Confident Believer is.

Noncommitted Traditionalist

The Noncommitted Traditionalist values the cultural and societal role of religion. One feels the importance of remaining loyal to the religion of one's nation and of maintaining continuity of the religious traditions of family and ancestors. Personally, one prefers to claim that one believes in some way, but would not identify as religious. One is moved by the atmosphere of sacred or venerated places. One thinks that the world's religious traditions point to a common truth, perhaps that the ultimate is a life force or creative energy, rather than a supernatural being. Accordingly, one views

religious faith as a never-ending quest. Yet, there is no place in one's life for frequent doubts about long-held religious convictions, nor does one feel adrift, without direction, purpose, or goal. One does not identify with people who consider all religious scriptures to be outdated, misguided and of human authorship, who view religion as the illusory creation of human fears and desires, or who feel contempt for all religious institutions, ideas and practices. One feels very foreign to thinking that the idea of divinity is empty of significance or meaning, or to relate to the divine as feminine. One also takes comfort in thinking that those who do not live righteously will face suffering or punishment, and the Noncommitted Traditionalist values purity and strives to safeguard it.

Spiritually Attuned

For the Spiritually Attuned religion and spirituality are important sources of life. One believes in some way, but does not view oneself as religious and has not dedicated one's life to serving the divine. Nevertheless, one sees personal self-realization as a primary spiritual goal in life. One feels spiritually moved and deeply sustained by music, art, or poetry, but can also sense a spiritual or higher order of reality in the midst of nature. One is positively engaged by and interested in other peoples' religious traditions and inclined to embrace elements from various religious and spiritual traditions. One thinks about the ultimate as a life force or creative energy rather than as a supernatural being. One does not rely on religious authorities for understanding and direction, and takes a clear distance to ideas about certain beliefs being crucial for salvation and to claims that regular attendance at places of worship are essential expressions of faith. One does not take part in religious activities to form or maintain social relationships. Rather, one embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values, and actively works towards making the world a better place to live. The Spiritually Attuned cannot identify with notions about men and women being by nature intended for different roles, and is committed to following a spiritual path that is in harmony with the environment.

Disengaged Liberal

The life of the Disengaged Liberal does not center on a religious or spiritual quest. One does not identify as an active, contributing member of a religious or a spiritual community, nor as having thorough knowledge of religious scriptures or texts. Rather, one participates in religious activities chiefly on special occasions. One believes in some way, but does not view oneself as

religious. The divine is viewed as a deep mystery that can be pointed to but never fully understood, but still also as a sheltering and nurturing parent with whom one can have a personal relationship. One becomes more religious or spiritual in times of crisis or need, and prays chiefly for solace and personal protection. One is profoundly touched by the suffering of others, and charitable acts or social action are the primary expressions of one's religiosity. One does not identify with claims that religion should play the central role in the ruling of the nation, or that one should remain loyal to the religion of one's nation. The Disengaged Liberal stresses that one can be deeply moral without being religious. One cannot see oneself letting a religious or spiritual outlook guide one's sexuality or giving up worldly or bodily pleasures for religious or spiritual reasons.

These findings indicate that some religious subjectivities can be considered prominent to varying degrees. The cumulative variance of the global prototypes accounted for 43 per cent, with rather significant differences between single prototypes. The factor score correlations presented in Table 2 provide a good measure of how distinct the global prototypes are, and how they are related.

Table 2. Factor score correlations for global prototypes

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. GP1	–				
2. GP2	-.27	–			
3. GP3	.03	.46	–		
4. GP4	.59	.17	.23	–	
5. GP5	.47	.12	.31	.54	–

Note: GP = Global prototype.

Traditional categories such as secular, religious, and spiritual are well reflected in these results. Only global prototype 1, Secular Humanist, and global prototype 2, Active Confident Believer, are negatively correlated ($r = -.27$). Most participants in our study tend to be persons of a prototype that indicates that the secular versus the religious divide is significant. To a large extent people see themselves as either religious or secular, and this is a meaningful distinction. We will return to the fact that this is an organizing aspect for the prototypes. Briefly examining details of how these are distinguished, we find the quite theistic statement about believing 'in a

divine being with whom one can have a personal relationship' (FQS53) and the statement on viewing 'religion as the illusory creation of human fears and desires' (FQS60).

Yet we cannot ignore the distinct nature of the additional prototypes. Global prototype 3, Noncommitted Traditionalist, stands out as a 'religious' prototype, yet differently from prototype 2, Active Confident Believer. Table 2 confirms that they are close to each other and strongly correlated ($r = .54$), but they are also divided on significant issues. The relevance of personal belief and the role of practice is positively emphasized by global prototype 2, and the relevance of religious identity, in terms of one's tradition and nation, is positively emphasized by prototype 3. The highest correlation is found between global prototype 1, Secular Humanist, and global prototype 4, Spiritually Attuned ($r = .59$). The correlation between global prototype 5, Disengaged Liberal and both global prototypes 1, Secular Humanist, and 4, Spiritually Attuned, are also high ($r = .47$; $r = .54$). One may ask if these three represent a secular trinity. In contrast, the correlation between global prototype 2, Active Confident Believer, and global prototype 4, Spiritually Attuned, is low ($r = .17$), indicating a distance between being religious and spiritual. Despite the affinity between prototype 4, Spiritually Attuned, and prototype 1, Secular Humanist, they are still divided about issues such as the extent to which one 'rejects religious ideas that conflict with scientific and rational principles' (FQS70) and 'views religion as the illusory creation of human fears and desires' (FQS60), and the relevance one attributes to experiences of a higher or spiritual reality or presence (FQS10; FQS44; FQS68).

Typologies vs multidimensional complexity

Our results reflect Wulff's (2019) original findings with the FQS. Data from our survey also confirmed notable differences between the prototypes across multiple characteristics such as different measures of being religious or nonreligious (Nynäs, Keysar, and Lagerström 2022). Both gender and cross-cultural contextual differences are also relevant for the configurations, as are levels of openness and trust. The three global prototypes, 1 Secular Humanist, 2 Active Confident Believer, and 4 Spiritually Attuned, stand out in their trust for other people. Persons of prototype 2, Active Confident Believer, are most likely to feel positively about themselves and their future. Social moral attitudes and basic human values also play a relevant role. Global prototypes 1, Secular Humanist, and 4, Spiritually Attuned, clearly express liberal social values in contrast especially with prototypes 2, Active

Confident Believer, and 3, Noncommitted Traditionalist. A similar pattern emerges from our analyses of differences between global prototypes and basic human values. It is apparent that there is a close affinity between the value types of 2, Active Confident Believer, and 3, Noncommitted Traditionalist. Generally, the global prototypes seem to be divided along an axis consisting of universalism and self-direction versus tradition and conformity.

On the one hand our bird's-eye viewpoint presents some familiar universal categories of religion such as being religious, secular, or spiritual. On the other we can see that the image is also complicated, and patterns are distorted by other aspects. In other words we need to conceive of any typology as a work in progress, noting that 'typologies are mainly intended, rather, as intuitively distilled "idealized" portraits, intellectual tools for discerning and analyzing patterns of variation' (Wulff 2019, 661). Typologies serve as theoretical or conceptual devices; they are important to the extent that they help us reduce complexity and identify abstract characteristics assumed to be exemplified within empirical reality. Scholars have made various attempts to classify and organize worldviews in types, ranging from deductive 'armchair typologies' to inductive empirically based studies. An extensive list of such typologies can be found in Wulff (e.g. 1985; 2007) and in Hood, Hill, and Spilka (2018, 26–56). As a unidimensional construct, religiosity-related worldviews can be construed either as dichotomous (religious or nonreligious) or a continuum in which individuals can be more or less religious. As a multidimensional construct, various types of religiosity have been enumerated by William James (1902), Erich Fromm (1950), and the well-known classification describing religious orientations by Gordon Allport and Michael Ross (1967), for example. Later, the major Bs of religion – Believing, Behaving, Belonging, and Bonding – are often considered central to the construction of religious typologies (Saroglou 2011).

In a separate study we explored the main global prototypes at a more detailed and systematic level with regard to some prevalent typologies (Nynäs, Novis-Deutsch, and Stenner 2022). Reviewing the statements that define the five prototypes (Table 3), we can again conclude that a religious–secular distinction is a strong organizing dichotomy in our findings. For example, we can see that GP1's outspoken trust in scientific reasoning, a view of religion as an all-too-human creation, contrasts with the rankings of GP2's Active Confident Believer, centred around the belief in 'a divine being with whom one can have a personal relationship' (FQS53). In many respects GP1 and GP2 reflect diametrically opposed views. Yet GP4, Spiritually Attuned, distorts this model. The distinction between spirituality and religiosity is

debated regarding religious typologies (see e.g. Hodge and McGrew 2006; Zinnbauer et al. 1997). Some argue that religion and spirituality are facets of the same construct (e.g. Miller and Thoresen 2003; Hood et al. 2009, 8f.), whereas others view spirituality as an independent construct (e.g. Saucier and Skrzypinska 2006; Huss 2014). In the latter perspective spirituality is considered to be differentiated from religion in a value-laden way, emphasizing individual outlooks, seekership, openness, and holism, and is often associated with practices and means to attain insights and a connection with progressive liberal values and activism (Woodhead 2013).

Factor score correlations between prototypes (Table 2) confirm this as a strong positive correlation between the secular and the spiritual prototypes, and a negative or weak correlation in relation to the two religious prototypes. Table 3 further draws attention to the fact that persons of this prototype tend to affirm statement 28, 'believes in some way, but does not view him or herself as religious' but distance themselves from things that are important to GP2, Active Confident Believer, such as the notions of being an 'an active contributing member of a religious or a spiritual community' (FQS97). In contrast, they tend to agree with statements that are more characteristic of a secular worldview, such as 'views religious content as metaphoric, rather than literally true' (FQS87) and 'considers all religious scriptures to be outdated or misguided' (FQS32). The distinguishing statements for GP4, Spiritually Attuned, are about openness, harmony, and inclusivity, connoting the centrality of nature. In other respects GP4 contrasts with GP2 (and comes slightly closer to GP3), affirming the idea of 'the ultimate as a life force or creative energy' (FQS9).

Nevertheless, neither a religious secular divide nor a tripartite that includes spirituality sufficiently makes sense of our global prototypes, and how they are distinct. Being religious clearly unfolds in at least two different ways in this study's analysis. Global prototype 3, the Noncommitted Traditionalist, is primarily about the entanglement of religion and a moral order, with notions of nation and tradition. Like GP2, persons of this prototype believe 'the meaning of religious texts and teachings' is 'clear and true' (FQS15), whereas the notion of belief is more irrelevant. These observations echo the relevance of more general worldview typologies accounting for social attitudes or values (Saucier 2000; Schwartz 1992; 2012; Inglehart et al. 2014), for example. Such typologies tend to revolve around a primary axis which distinguishes between support for rules, norms, and traditions and support for human autonomy and rationality, potentially adding dimensions such as an emphasis on the needs of the self versus the needs

Table 3. The table shows the three statements (*) that most clearly distinguish each global prototype (GP) from other prototypes, and how they are ranked by: Secular Humanist (GP1); Active Confident Believer (GP2); Noncommitted Traditionalist (GP3); Spiritually Attuned (GP4); and Disengaged Liberal (GP5).

FQS statement	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4	GP5
70. Rejects religious ideas that conflict with scientific and rational principles.	4*	-2	0	0	1
60. Views religion as the illusory creation of human fears and desires.	4*	-3	-4	0	0
78. Is often keenly aware of the presence of the divine.	-4*	2	1	0	2
23. Engages regularly in religious or spiritual practices in private.	-2	4*	-1	0	0
16. Being religious or spiritual is central to whom he or she is.	-2	4*	-1	0	-1
84. Has a vague and shifting religious outlook.	0	-3*	-1	2	-1
46. Feels that one should remain loyal to the religion of one's nation.	-3	-1	4*	-4	-4
58. Feels that it is important to maintain continuity of the religious traditions of family and ancestors.	-1	-1	3*	-1	0
99. Takes comfort in thinking that those who do not live righteously will face suffering or punishment.	-2	-2	3*	-4	0
29. Is inclined to embrace elements from various religious and spiritual traditions.	1	-1	0	3*	1
11. Has a strong sense of a spiritual or higher order of reality in the midst of nature.	0	1	2	3*	0
86. Is committed to following a spiritual path that is in harmony with the environment.	1	0	0	3*	-2
17. Becomes more religious or spiritual at times of crisis or need.	0	1	1	1	4*
12. Participates in religious activities chiefly on special occasions.	1	-1	0	1	3*
76. Mainly associates with persons of the same religious tradition or outlook.	1	0	0	-1	-3*

Note: -4 to 4 refer to how the statements were ranked by respective prototype

of others (see Nynäs, Novis-Deutsch, and Stenner 2022). The relevance of other dimensions is also evident in other analyses conducted with the FQS. Non-religiosity was a predominant independent worldview in our findings, but it could also in practice be differentiated into several subtypes. Kontala et al. (2022) has compared these to recent typologies of ‘unbelief’ (see e.g. Lee 2014; 2015; Kontala 2016).

Finally, GP5, the Disengaged Liberal, seems neither secular nor religious, or situational, in moving between religion and secular views. This resembles Wulff’s (2019) findings, in which one prototype was considered situationally religious (cf. Stringer 1996). This gives rise to some reflections. On the one hand we can ask whether we need to bring into the discussion of worldview typologies notions of category fuzziness. For example, af Burén (2015) has addressed what she describes as ‘simultaneities of religious identities’ referring to the ‘both/and’ character of everyday religious and secular identifications, in which elements from various worldviews are combined in personal outlooks on life in different ways (Kalsky and van der Braak 2017). The dichotomy between the religious and the secular is not relevant to persons of this prototype; nor does spirituality contribute to how it is formed to any great degree. Analyses with the FQS not only make this evident but also systematically show how this is manifested.

Cross-cultural variations as family resemblance

The bird’s-eye view provided by the analyses of our global FQS data risks providing an overly simplified and stereotypical image of ways of being religious, nonreligious/secular, or spiritual. Exploring this from the perspective of different typologies also confirms the need for nuance. While identifying these key religious–spiritual types is important, we must maintain a critical awareness of its limits, and the universal dimensions or characteristics that are assumed. Given that much of the research conducted in this area has borne a Western bias and imposed a limited perspective, this is especially important. Nonetheless, at the other end, when we methodologically favour contextual differences and choose a closeup on particularities, we risk losing the opportunity to identify comprehensive categories.

The FQS helped us depart from the more one-sided bird’s-eye view and dig more deeply into the variations. In another study we extracted prototypes from each country case separately (Nynäs et al. 2022b). In some countries we could identify only three prototypes (Finland, Peru, and Sweden), whereas in others (China, India, and Israel) the internal diversity was

more apparent, and we could identify up to six or eight prototypes (Table 4). We identified 57 different prototypes, and none of these was identical. In some way they all represented unique narratives and life-view positions, while also reflecting recurring patterns.

Table 4. Number of prototypes globally and per country

Case	prototypes	<i>n</i>	case	prototypes	<i>n</i>
Global	5	562			
Canada	5	37	Peru	3	43
China	6	46	Poland	4	45
Finland	3	50	Russia	5	45
Ghana	4	45	Sweden	3	30
India	8	45	Turkey	5	37
Israel	6	90	USA	5	49

At first glance there did not seem to be any good way to compare the 57 different prototypes we identified. However, a closer examination of our results from each country indicated that they could be seen as reflections of the five global prototypes – something like musical variations on a theme. A brief examination of two of the nonreligious prototypes, India 1 and Israel Main 2, exemplifies this. The short prototype narratives reveal that on the one hand they both distance themselves clearly from religion and tend to emphasize progress or change. On the other hand they are still configured differently with notions of nationalism and traditionalism involved in the Indian case, for example, whereas the Israeli case is more about knowledge and the authorities.

India 1

Rejecting religion, India 1 is positive towards both personal and worldwide human progress. One views religion as an illusory human creation and feels foreign to ideas about being aware or sensing the presence of the divine, spirits, demons or patron saints. One is critical of the religious tradition of one's people and one does not believe that religion should influence the ruling of the nation. Consequently, one cannot see the point with dedicating one's life to serving the divine or identifying with some holy figure. One's

sexuality is not guided by a religious or spiritual outlook and one does not think that men and women are intended for different roles. One supports individual freedom of choice in matters of faith and morality and believes that one can be deeply moral without being religious. One sees personal self-realization as a primary spiritual goal in life and believes that human progress is possible on a worldwide scale.

Israel Main 2

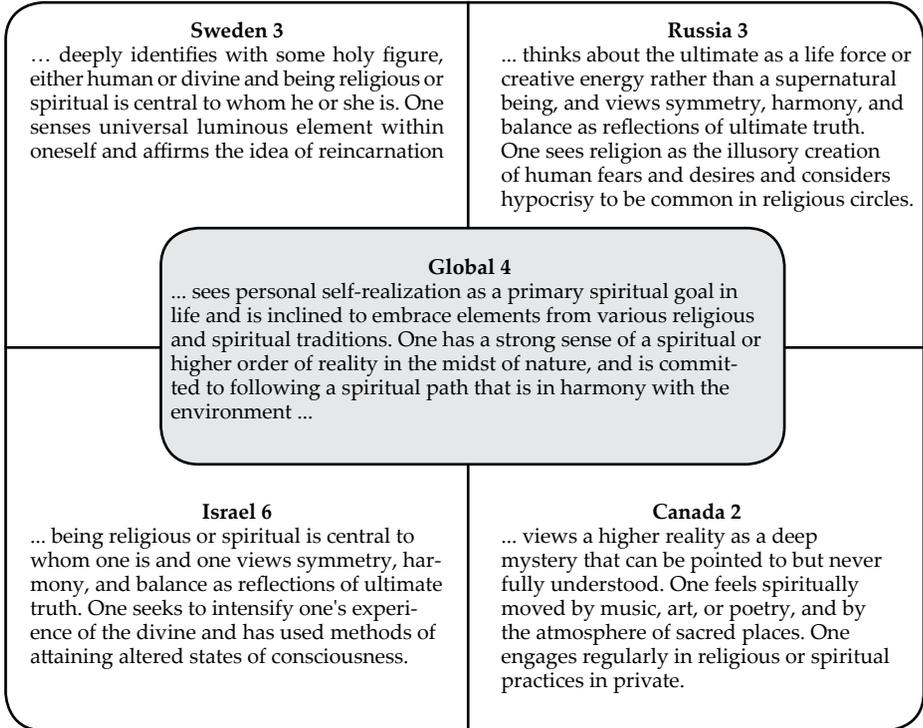
Israel Main 2 expresses a clear distance to religion. One rejects religious ideas that conflict with scientific and rational principles and views religion as the illusory creation of human fears and desires. One considers hypocrisy to be common in religious circles and one does not rely on religious authorities for understanding and direction. Religious scriptures are considered to be of human authorship. One takes a distance to ideas about experiences of the divine and one does not observe religious practices and laws. One rejects the idea that religion should play the central role in the ruling of the nation. One has not dedicated one's life to serving the divine. Instead, one believes in being moral without being religious and supports individual freedom of choice in matters of faith and morality, and embraces an outlook that actively seeks to change societal structures and values.

Factor loadings, item factor scores, distinguishing statements, and so on for the prototypes provide additional systematic possibilities for a detailed comparison of prototypes in a cross-cultural perspective. Through this we observed that our prototypes were constituted by several statements that varied from one context to another while reflecting the global prototypes (Nynäs et al. 2022b). For example, being religious or spiritual was not defined by a few specific statements that would all have been replicated from country to country. Rather, we came across an open-ended multidimensional character of what these meant to the respondents. A non-exclusive set of statements tended to be replicated in different ways with different emphases. Sometimes some statements were included; sometimes some statements were excluded or were accorded different relevance. This resembled a play of theme and variations, presenting relevant variations regarding genres or orchestration.

Spirituality is an interesting case in this respect, and the variation and multidimensional character is well reflected in GP4, Spiritually Attuned. Figure N shows some of the variations of spirituality in a simplified way, with a focus on defining elements from the prototypes in Canada, Israel,

Russia, and Sweden. Their emphasis shifts between sensing a universal luminous element within oneself, thinking of the ultimate as a life force or creative energy, viewing symmetry, harmony, and balance as reflections of ultimate truth to viewing higher reality as a deep mystery.

Figure 2. *Examples of cross-cultural variety of being 'spiritual'*



In this study of cross-cultural variations (Nynäs et al. 2022) we could identify how prototypes could also include seemingly conflicting or incompatible elements such as being both religious and secular or associating spirituality with nationalism. A strength of the FQS is its sensitivity to such ambiguities, liquidities, and simultaneities in how patterns are configured while maintaining a systematic approach. This helped us capture the open-ended multidimensional variations of patterns and propose the term 'family resemblance' as a way to describe this. The term was originally introduced by Ludwig Wittgenstein as part of his philosophy of language (Wittgenstein

1998; Andersen 2000), and it offers a fruitful way to conceptualize the dynamic we found in the data. On the one hand it accounts for how religion and spirituality respectively are constituted by overlapping shared features in our case, without any of them necessarily being common to or defining all manifestations on the other. This means that the taxonomies of being religious and spiritual are dynamic, open, and subject to change. They are evasive multidimensional categories, often constituted by simultaneity and ambiguity and confluence but also contradictions.

Concluding remarks

The use of the FQS as a method 'to maximize the expression of qualitative variation' (Stenner et al. 2008, 218) was decisive for finding important patterns, resemblances, and connections within our international sample. It showed how being secular, religious, and spiritual was replicated globally, but that this was a matter of an open-ended family resemblance, in which both context and additional dimensions beyond the religious secular dichotomy came into play. We need to account for a more diverse reality than this taxonomy allows. The FQS provides a systematic approach to this and has also been central to addressing the 'contextual, historical and ideological template that continues to inform' how what we think of as religion emerges in our studies, and this should be taken seriously (Bender et al. 2013b, 287).

Every reader is very aware that scholars in the study of religion have been paying increasing attention to other prominent worldview patterns such as being nonreligious or spiritual, and this research is productive. Yet how long can we keep religion at the centre? Do we need to rethink the primacy of the term 'religion', and how the field of study is accordingly named and constituted (see Droogers and van Harskamp 2014)? Using terms like the study of religion, religious studies, comparative religion, and so on distorts what is emerging within the field of study for which we need to account. The current terminology misrepresents the relevance of other worldviews such as the spiritual and nonreligious, deeming them invisible. We need a broadening of the horizon that explicitly recognizes the current diversity. Religious or not, all people have a worldview of some kind that is essential to them in various ways (Holm 1996).

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