

SAHAYA G. SELVAM

TOWARDS RELIGIOUS-SPIRITUALITY: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MATRIX
OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Sahaya G. Selvam

Tangaza University College, Institute of Youth Studies, Catholic University of
Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.
Email: selvam@donbosco.or.tz

Abstract: In the contemporary study of religion there seems to be an exaggeration of the distinction between religion and spirituality, not only to the point of separation, but worse still, in terms of a superiority-inferiority hierarchy that gives rise to a value judgement between spirituality and religion. Could this be a sign of the persisting Western hegemony in the study of religion? This article suggests that the consideration of religion and spirituality as disparate entities may be necessary in some societies but not sufficient for a global perspective. Could there be an integrative model that would lend itself for an inclusive exchange in the study of religion and spirituality? Basing itself particularly within the literature of the psychological study of religion, this essay develops a multidimensional matrix of religion and/or spirituality that attempts to be, at the same time, parsimonious and comprehensive, which includes constructs like 'religious-spirituality'. Religious-spirituality is suggested to be similar to Allport's concept of 'intrinsic religiosity', having a three dimensional movement marked by an upwardly-directed vertical spirituality, inwardly-directed interior spirituality, and outwardly-directed horizontal spirituality.

Key Words: Religion, Spirituality, Religious-spirituality, Intrinsic Religiosity, Pargament, Allport, Emmons, Quest, Secularism, Three-dimensional spirituality.

Introduction

Some people in Western society are developing a way of identifying their 'religious affiliation' in terms of being 'spiritual-but-not-religious.'¹ Results of a cross-cultural study indicate that 40% of American respondents and 20% of German respondents identify themselves this way.² Social sciences that study religion and spirituality have taken this phenomenon into account. Some academic journals and learned societies have been renamed to accommodate this development. For instance, after much debate,³ Division 36 of the American Psychological Association that used to be called, 'Psychology of Religion,' has been now renamed as 'The Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality'. Moreover, it has become a matter of routine in the introductory sections of the works of sociology and psychology of religion to draw the distinction between, and to define, religion and spirituality.⁴ Often these discussions get polarised, implying that religion and spirituality are not just distinct constructs, but also separate entities; and other times, even spirituality is favoured as being superior to religion, as pointed out by Pargament.⁵ In this article, basing myself particularly within the literature of the psychological study of religion, I would like to suggest that the distinction between religion and spirituality may be necessary in some societies, and at the same time, not sufficient for a global perspective. Is it yet another of the Western/Eurocentric constructs purporting to explain social phenomena that might be typically only Western, and in due course could become global just because the media (including the academic journals) are dominated by Western scholarship and agenda? Could there be a comprehensive model that would lend itself for an inclusive approach in the study of religion and spirituality? In attempting to answer these questions, I suggest that the entire human endeavour to search for meaning systems often centred on the sacred cannot be just limited to mutually exclusive constructs of religion and spirituality. If religion and spirituality are laid out in a spectrum, we might come up with other constructs like 'religious-spirituality'. The objective of this article, therefore, is to propose a model of religion and/or spirituality that would be parsimonious, and at the same time, comprehensive enough, to accommodate a global, multicultural and interreligious approach to the study of religion and spirituality. Despite the psychological bias of this essay, the discussion and the emerging model could provide a theoretical framework for any academic approach in the study of contemporary or traditional religions.

The Sacred and the Secular: Distinct or Separate Entities?

Some classical scholars of religion have gathered numerous definitions of religion,⁶ and others have avoided defining it.⁷ More contemporary authors begin by acknowledging the difficulty in defining religion, often also lamenting the plethora of definitions of religion, with typical statements such as the one by the anthropologist, Guthrie, “a definition of the term still eludes consensus;”⁸ or, “Religion is not a simple concept;”⁹ “Religion is hard to define in a way that is satisfactory to most people most of the time.”¹⁰ One reason for this difficulty is that we try “to describe a complex of beliefs, behaviours and experiences as ‘religious’”¹¹ and expect to find similar phenomena across the different religions and cultures. This one-word approach, or what Wulff called “reification of religion,”¹² makes the definition of religion difficult. That is why, Taves suggests that as a Western folk-concept ‘religion’ is a first-order term that is easily definable, whereas from a point of view of a particular discipline, ‘religion’ becomes a second-order term that defies definition.¹³ One traditional way of understanding religion was in terms of the sacred and secular. In the current situation, even this seems to be problematic as I will point out shortly.

To grasp reality sometimes there is a need to distinguish various dimensions of that reality. However, models and paradigms mislead us when the distinction within the same realm is exaggerated to the point of separation that does not perhaps universally exist. And worse still when this simulated separation soon lends itself for a superiority-inferiority hierarchy; moreover, sometimes the entities within this hierarchy begin to carry a negative-positive valence. There is a danger that this may be the case in the current discussions about religion and spirituality.¹⁴ Is there indeed a separation between religion and spirituality across cultures and religious traditions of the world? Is the implied separation in scholarship show certain hangover of the modernist enlightenment agenda? Perhaps here some insight from social anthropologists might be of help.

According to the French Sociologist Durkheim, the separation of the sacred and the profane constitutes the very essence of religion.¹⁵ For him, religion is the practice of marking off and maintaining distance between the sacred (that which is set apart and transcends the humdrum of daily life) and the profane (everything else that is mundane). However, Evans-Pritchard repudiates this assumption of Durkheim, basing himself on anthropological research:

“Surely what [Durkheim] calls ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ are on the same level of experience, and far from being cut off from one another, they are so closely intermingled as to be inseparable. They cannot, therefore, either for the individual or for social activities, be put in

closed departments which negate each other,
one of which is left on entering the other.”¹⁶

It could be suggested that Durkheim’s statement comes from his theorising on the social phenomena in the context of the post-reformation European Christianity and the urban capitalist culture of the West, whereas Evans-Pritchard’s is based on his anthropological participant-observation among the Zande and the Nuer peoples of the Sudan. Perhaps, some dose of this scholarly sensitivity and openness is needed even in the contemporary discussion on religion and spirituality today.¹⁷

In many non-Western societies, including some cultures in Eastern Europe, the separation between the sacred and the secular, between religion and society, between the church and the state, may not be obvious even in the present day. For instance, despite all the variety that is undeniable in the religious expressions found in Sub-Saharan Africa, one commonality that is acknowledged in African Traditional Religion is that there is no separation of the sacred and the profane.¹⁸ Because of the inseparability of religion and society among African peoples, scholars have often spoken about African philosophy and culture in conjunction with African religions.¹⁹ This is similar to the enmeshed relationship between Hinduism and the Indian society. Unable to fathom this dynamics within the Western modernist framework of the duality of the sacred and secular, some authors have preferred to list Hinduism as a culture rather than a religion.²⁰ If this reference to Hinduism as a cultural institution does not deny that it is also a religion and philosophy, as Jansen implies, this may exhibit a sophisticated scholarship. On the other hand, if such an observation simply eliminates Hinduism from the list of religions, then that could show a naïve attempt to fit the global variety in the straightjacket of Western scholarship of religion that has been largely influenced by the theology of Christianity and the history of Reformation. And this attempt could be simply an expression of what some authors have called, “academic imperialism.”²¹ This is also an exemplification of what was earlier referred to as, “the reification of religion.” However, if the psychological study of religion in particular, and religious studies in general, have to be globally relevant then it becomes imperative for them to have a model of religion and spirituality that is inclusive. In what follows, then, I list some of the possible models and evaluate them in the light of the earlier comments. This will, finally, pave the way towards evolving a model which could be globally relevant in the study of religion.

An Either/Or Model: Religion or Spirituality

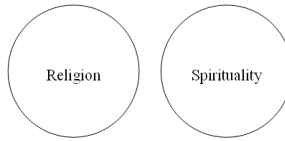


Figure 1: Either/Or model

The either/or model (Figure 1) conceives religion and spirituality to be separate entities. Put simply, in this model religion is associated with institutional affiliation, whereas spirituality refers to individual and personal experiences that may or may not be even related to the sacred. In a more sophisticated discussion, while religion may be identified with ritualism and formalised belief, spirituality is related to “a search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, and for the highest of human potential.”²² Without explicitly subscribing to an either/or model, Spilka and colleagues list the possible differences between religion and spirituality, by pointing out to the specific characteristics of spirituality: it does not require an institutional framework; it is personal; it is based on value commitments; and it is without a deity – a belief in and worship of a personal God.²³ In addition, Pargament sees spirituality as an attempt to free religion from the judgement of individuals as good or bad. Pargament maintains that spirituality does include a sense of the sacred.²⁴ But for Wulff, “What is conspicuously new in today’s spirituality is the frequent absence of an explicit transcendent object outside the self.”²⁵

To begin with, let the broad distinction between religion and spirituality be maintained, and let us examine if a separation is meaningful or not. The separation would simply affirm that there could be some individuals who are spiritual, but do not belong to any structured religion. Here already, we are beginning to define religion in a narrow sense in terms of structure and institution, and religion would be particularly understood in terms of the Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This may not be avoidable, if some part of humanity wants to be free from what they perceive as the ‘tyranny’ of institutional religion. However, it is important to be aware that this is not how religion has always been understood even in Western scholarship, nor is the institutional character intrinsic to most indigenous religions in Africa, Australasia or elsewhere. Though this distinction between religion and spirituality in terms of the institutional criterion is now largely found useful in the long history of religious studies, as Pargament has pointed out, religion has not always been defined as a purely institutional phenomenon. He recalls, as an example, William James’ definition of religion as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude...”²⁶

What about the concepts of the 'Sacred' and 'God'- implying that religion presupposes a belief in God and spirituality does not? There could be more than one way of talking about the sacred. Firstly, the Sacred could be personified in 'God', meaning that the Sacred becomes a person and is accessible to worship and prayer. A second way is to have a sense of the presence of the sacred in the cosmos and in individuals' lives. In this sense, the sacred remains a power or even a principle, as the concept of *dhamma* in Buddhism could be taken to imply. Here, even if there could be an acceptance of the existence of a greater power, this does not become an object of devotion. There is still the third way of relating to a sense of the sacred in an existential framework,²⁷ as that which provides meaning to one's existence.

In short, the rejection of 'religion' just because it appears to be institutional or that it entails a belief in a personal God, may not be justified. For example, African Traditional Religions are not institutional or authoritarian; they do not have well spelt out canons, priests, and written texts. Belief in *dhamma* in Buddhism is not comparable to the personal God of the Judeo-Christian traditions. Therefore, do we need to rewrite our text books to suggest that indigenous religions and other religions such as Buddhism have always been spiritualities rather than religions?

The argument which holds that value commitment and personal experience as specific characteristics of spirituality may not hold good either. As Spilka and colleagues²⁸ have pointed out, these are also included in most religions of the world. Religions have been inseparable from ethical systems, even if religions might defend what is morally good from a faith perspective rather than from a purely rational or humanist perspective. The integration of faith and reason in explicating the norm of morality has also been part of the philosophical systems of religious traditions like Christianity and Hinduism. Similarly, while Abrahamic religions tend to be largely communal their spiritual-mystical traditions have encouraged and even demanded a personal experience. For instance, a "trustful surrender to Jesus Christ, the *personal* Saviour and ever-living Lord" has been part of the understanding of salvation among many versions of Christianity.²⁹

Another area of contemporary study and practice where we see an apparent separation between spirituality and religion is in the rhetoric around 'mindfulness'. What is mindfulness? In popular understanding mindfulness is often referred to as "emptying of the mind." An absolute emptying of the mind may not be possible straightaway, therefore, techniques such as awareness of breathing and body sensation are used as anchors to relax the body while keeping the mind attentive. In the words of a report from the UK-based Mental Health Foundation, "Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment by using meditation, yoga and breathing techniques. It involves consciously bringing awareness

to our thoughts and feelings, without making judgments..."³⁰ Shapiro defines mindfulness as "the awareness that arises through intentionally attending in an open, accepting, and discerning way to whatever is arising in the present moment."³¹ Mindful awareness is the outcome of intentional attending.³² The other common definition is from Jon Kabat-Zinn: "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgementally."³³

Mindfulness is increasingly being used in clinical contexts to improve physical and psychological health, and it is also used extensively by people who claim to be spiritual-but-not-religious. Though mindfulness is often used in these contexts without any religious connotation, its roots in religious and spiritual traditions cannot be denied. The MHF document further states, "Mindfulness is most commonly linked with Buddhist practices, although similar ideas and techniques are found in ancient Greek philosophy, contemplative Christianity, Judaism and Islam, Gestalt and humanistic psychologies and today's 'slow movement'."³⁴ The word 'mindfulness' itself is borrowed from 'Right Mindfulness' which is the seventh step in the Eightfold Path, which in turn is the final component of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths. Even in the Christian tradition, there are methods of prayer which are comparable to techniques that are referred to as 'mindfulness' as described above.³⁵ Sometimes, the way of 'praying' with these Christian methods is referred to as contemplation. It is important to note that, often in literature, 'mindfulness' itself is simply referred to as 'contemplative practice'. One method that most resembles mindfulness is the "Jesus Prayer" or also known as, 'Hesychasm', because it integrates body posture, breathing techniques and the use of a 'mantra'. As Appel and Kim-Appel have rightly pointed out, "Many have also compared the [Christian] Eastern Orthodoxy tradition of the hesychast practice of focusing one's attention on an individual object to a direct form of meditation or mindfulness. Philokalia [read: hesychasm] can be seen as a form of a meditation of the heart ... whose goal is to ignore the senses and achieve an inner stillness."³⁶ The purpose of this digression, examining the rhetoric around mindfulness, was to demonstrate in a concrete manner how some of the practices that are currently classified as "spiritual" may actually have their origin in religion.

From the above discussions, it emerges that religion and the contemporary "spirituality revolution"³⁷ could be really enmeshed. It is not clear, therefore, what is really unique about spirituality that it should be a separate entity from religion. Therefore, an attempt to understand spirituality as separate from religion might offer difficulties in defining spirituality itself. This lack of good definition of spirituality in turn, as Spilka and colleagues point out, could create psychometric problems in measuring spirituality. In a similar vein, in tracing the lexical history of 'spirituality', Wulff maintains that the word 'spirituality' itself has its

origin in religion, and that “the separation of spirituality from religious tradition is a modern development.”³⁸

A Both/And Model: Religion and Spirituality

Due to the overlap between religion and spirituality, at least for the sake of scholarship, a both/and model could be considered.³⁹ In this model one is seen to be contained within the other, or presupposing a degree of interaction between religion and spirituality. If one is contained within the other, then, another point of debate follows: which of them is more generic than the other? Pargament prefers to consider spirituality as a dimension of religion (Figure 2).

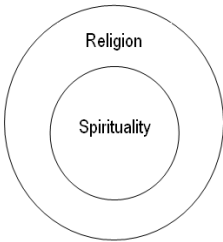


Figure 2: Both/and model 1.

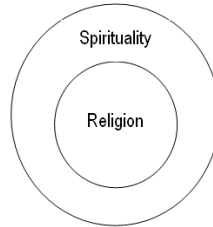


Figure 3: Both/and model 2.

Some of the reasons cited in the section above form part of his argument, that not all religious traditions have been institutional, and that fundamentally both are searching for the sacred. To him, spirituality is in fact a specific way of relating to the sacred. However, Pargament does not define what is meant by ‘sacred’, nor does he define religion itself. According to this position, spirituality becomes one approach among others within religious sentiment. However, there are also some counter arguments for this position.⁴⁰ For instance, Stifoss-Hanssen suggests that in the Scandinavian countries the choice of affiliation may not be between being ‘religious’ or ‘spiritual’, but being ‘Christian’ or ‘religious’, where the word ‘religious’ carries the same meaning as the American use of ‘spirituality’. It should be noted that the discussion we are engaged in, in this paper, is more than mere semantics. In any case, instead of using the concept of the sacred as the connecting link between religion and spirituality, if we used existentiality (search for meaning of life) then spirituality could be a generic construct and religion would be one particular way of seeking meaning of human existence in relation to the sacred (Figure 3).⁴¹ On the other hand, the narrowing of religion could be attributed to the fact that spirituality has claimed all the good things that were previously within the domain of religion, and making itself superior to religion.⁴²

Stifoss-Hanssen goes on to suggest also an interactive model (Figure 4).

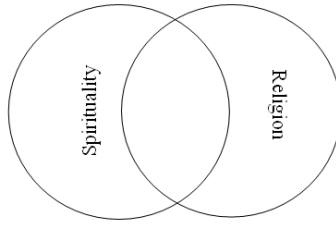


Figure 4: Interactive Model

This model looks at “independent forms of spirituality more as complementary to than alternative to religion.”⁴³ He still maintains existentiality as the connecting link. However, while there is a large overlap, there are some areas of both domains that are different. As he points out, some people may identify themselves as spiritual but might have recourse to religion when life-cycle rituals are involved as in the occasions of naming ceremony, weddings and funerals. While this model offers an interesting alternative, it does not adequately represent the possible varieties within spirituality and religion. Besides, Stifoss-Hanssen does not give a name to the overlapping area, and his proposal that spirituality be represented by a larger circle, suggesting that more people may be spiritual rather than religious, again might show a bias emerging from Northern Europe. On the contrary, the empirical work of Palmisano has shown that in Italy, for instance, among the representative sample of 2,171 individuals aged from 16 to 74, 64% could be considered religious and spiritual, 23% are said to be not religious nor spiritual; 5% would be religious not spiritual; and only 8% could be identified as spiritual-but-not-religious.⁴⁴ This simply suggests that the social situation across nations with regard to religion and spirituality is indeed very sophisticated. Such a situation calls for a comprehensive multidimensional model.

A Multidimensional Matrix: Towards Religious-spirituality

The multidimensional matrix is represented in Figure 5. It is not the intention of this model to deny the possibility of a distinction or even a separation between religion and spirituality. It only points out that it is not academically helpful to talk about just two polarised constructs. The model draws attention to different possibilities both within religion and within spirituality, and as a result of the interaction between the two. It integrates the other models discussed above.

High Spirituality	3	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual-but-not-religious • <i>Spirituality of Quest</i> • Sacred or secular search for significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious-spirituality • <i>Intrinsic Religion</i> • Sacred and secular search for significance
Low Spirituality	2	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neither religious nor spiritual • <i>'Secular' worldview</i> • Searching or no search for significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Empty' Religion • <i>Extrinsic Religion</i> • No serious search for significance
	Low Religiosity	High Religiosity

Figure 5. Multidimensional Matrix

Let me begin by acknowledging that religiosity (columns in Figure 5) and spirituality (rows in Figure 5) are two possible ways of searching for significance and/or the sacred.⁴⁵ Religiosity here could be described as being open to the creed, code and cult that encapsulate the experiences and expressions of a community of people in their search for the transcendent.⁴⁶ Creed is a set of possible explanations for the mysteries of the origin, nature, meaning of the world, human life, and the transcendent. Code refers to the set of rules and guidelines flowing from the creed that regulate the community of believers and their functioning in the larger society. Cult is the way humans express their relationship with the transcendent through rituals and celebrations. Community gathers the adherents into a structure, which could become an institution. In addition to whatever has been said in the discussions above, spirituality could be said to be marked by a search for significance or meaning in terms of the sacred, or apart from the sacred that could be understood as a personal deity.

The interaction between religiosity and spirituality creates various possibilities of positions within a matrix (Figure 5). These positions could be characterised as shades in a spectrum typified by various degrees of interaction, which, only for the sake of clarity, have been represented here in Figure 5 as four distinct quadrants. Individuals might find themselves, or choose to be, in a specific location within a particular quadrant. They might also constantly relocate themselves during their life-span development. Quadrant-1 shows a high level of religiosity and low level of spirituality, in which there may be an exaggerated focus on the sacred to the neglect of the secular. It runs the risk of becoming an

empty religion and remaining naïve, fixed on an institution bereft of meaning and heuristic approach, in what Allport called, 'extrinsic religion'.⁴⁷ Quadrant-2 exhibits low levels of both religiosity and spirituality. Some people in this quadrant could be still searching for significance, perhaps even in terms of the sacred, but not able to locate themselves in any particular direction, while others in this quadrant may not be interested in the search at all. Quadrant-3 is the type of high spirituality and low religiosity that would emerge from the Either/or Model or a certain degree of Both/and Model that have been discussed above. This is characterised by a personal and experience-oriented search for significance. Several authors have explored this type of spirituality in terms of 'quest'.⁴⁸ Typically, Emmons has considered the psychology of spirituality in terms of "quest for ultimate concerns."⁴⁹ The present article has sufficiently explored this quadrant in the earlier discussions. Finally, quadrant-4 in the matrix shows a possibility of being religiously affiliated while maintaining high level of spirituality. The discussion below elaborates further the interaction between the quadrants, and finally focussing on Quadrant-4.

Spirituality, even the strand that tends to polarise itself against religion in scholarship or in the larger society, rings an alarm bell for religion (Quadrant-3 in Figure 5). It calls attention to some aspects of religion with which not everyone might feel comfortable. Without making a value judgment on individual adherents it is possible to look at some possible unhealthy tendencies of institutional religion. In this context, I find Allport's distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religion still meaningful. Initially he had talked about mature and immature religion. The main reason why researchers have been wary of Allport's distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic religion is the value judgement implied in this distinction.⁵⁰ Despite the critique, this terminology clarifies what Allport originally meant. I do think that it is better to openly acknowledge that there is good religion and bad religion, rather than to consider all religion to be bad, and throw the baby out with the bathwater, as some contemporary approaches of spirituality have attempted to do. Religion can simply be considered good or bad on the basis of their role in human flourishing and providing meaning to human existence. Human flourishing itself can be operationalised in terms of wellbeing and authentic happiness,⁵¹ or within the framework of quality of life.⁵² Moreover, human flourishing can also be considered in its collective and individual dimensions. Ryff and Keyes satisfactorily conceptualise subjective wellbeing (individuals who enjoy wellbeing acknowledge so), psychological wellbeing (they are free from mental disorder), and social wellbeing (they function well in their society).⁵³ Therefore, there could be indeed a difference between the religion of the likes of Osama bin Laden, and the religion of Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. Incidentally, the individuals in the latter group have been highly religious,

and at the same time their contribution to human flourishing has been recognised by the award of Nobel Prize for Peace.

The religion that jeopardises human flourishing could be termed as extrinsic religion (one possible approach within Quadrant-1), using the terminology of Allport. Extrinsic religion in its extreme form could not only be seen as a negation of intrinsic religion, but as having its own dimensions: naïve religiosity and religious fundamentalism. It is important to note that not all the contents within quadrant-1 might be negative. Within the literature of the psychology of religion, 'religiosity' is measured in terms of simple belief in the tenets of a particular religion (creed), observance of the directives of the religion (code), frequency of attendance in religious practices (cult), and sometimes also in attitudes towards the believing community.⁵⁴ Some studies have shown that religiosity could be correlated to wellbeing. For example, religiosity is seen to be providing a protective element against addictive behaviour.⁵⁵ Whereas in naïve religiosity, there is a certain level of intellectual lethargy and social exclusivity about individuals' attitude towards creed, code, cult and the community. When exaggerated radically, this type of religiosity tends to become religious fundamentalism.⁵⁶ Some authors suggest a strong relationship between fundamentalism and 'orthodoxy'.⁵⁷ This relationship is very fuzzy, because 'orthodoxy' is a relative term. It is so much determined by historic times and the in-group/out-group social psychology. In fundamentalism, however, creed, code, cult and the community of a particular faith-system get petrified, and sometimes hierarchical judgements arise, that is, considering 'our' faith-system as being superior to 'their' truth-claims. In more precise terms, the expression of the latter attitude would be fanaticism.⁵⁸ That is, while fundamentalism is a radicalisation of one's own faith, fanaticism is making negative judgement on another system of faith or truth-claim. It is at these extreme levels that religiosity begins to threaten human flourishing.

On the other hand, Allport described 'the mature religious sentiment' in terms of the following attributes:⁵⁹

- Differentiation: arriving at a multiplicity of religious sentiments (beliefs and expressions) through a reflective and even critical process. The individual expresses an internal order of religious sentiments which are maintained in a multiplicity.
- Dynamism: the mature religious sentiment exhibits a willingness to break out of the comfort zone of magical thinking and self-justification.
- Consistent morality: when intense religious sentiment is able to transform character, "producing moral zeal, engendering consistency upon men's purposes."⁶⁰
- Comprehensive: mature sentiment is ordered and coherent, infused with motive. Since mature faith just knows 'God is' and does not

narrowly insist ‘God is precisely what I say He is’, it is tolerant and inclusive.

- Integral: related to being comprehensive, mature religious sentiment expresses harmony that engenders freedom.
- Fundamentally heuristic: “An heuristic belief is one that is held tentatively until it can be confirmed or until it helps us discover a more valid belief.”⁶¹

This list bears a lot of resemblance to the description of spirituality as developed by some scholars. For instance, Spilka and colleagues point out among other things that “a spiritual person is deeply concerned about value commitments.”⁶² And Emmons defined spirituality as “a search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, and for the highest of human potential.”⁶³ Beck, quoting heavily from various religious texts, describes the characteristics of a spiritual person with the help of following items: they possess high level of awareness and breadth of outlook; “spiritual person is aware of the interconnectedness of things;” they are “integrated in body, mind, soul, and spirit, and in the various dimensions and commitments of their lives;” they have a due sense of awe and mystery; and many other tangible qualities like gratitude, detachment and love.⁶⁴ Therefore, it is possible to consider spirituality as being related to mature religious sentiment. There is also some empirical support for this. Genia had reported a high correlation between her measure of Spiritual Support factor and Allport’s measure of intrinsic religion.⁶⁵ The Spiritual Support subscale included items that are univocal with spirituality. She developed her Spiritual Experience Index (SEI) based on theoretical framework drawn from Allport, James, and Fromm⁶⁶, basically to measure spiritual maturity.

It is this type of religion that I refer to as religious-spirituality: the mature religious sentiment or intrinsic religion that is exhibited by someone who belongs to a structured religion. The term ‘religious-spirituality’ is not totally new.⁶⁷ The contrary term, ‘non-religious-spirituality’ is also in use,⁶⁸ which in Figure 5, has been referred to as ‘Spiritual-but-not-religious’. The construct of Religious-spirituality has been corroborated by the findings of a recent online qualitative study that succinctly summarises my own argument: “religiousness is an external tool through which individuals can access their spirituality and relationship to the divine.”⁶⁹

A Three Dimensional Religious-spirituality

For a deeper understanding of what I have called, “religious-spirituality,” besides the characteristics of mature religious sentiments as listed by Allport, which has been cited above, we could also turn to James Fowler’s stages of faith development.⁷⁰ Fowler envisaged life-long

development of faith in six stages. Mature faith could emerge in the last two stages of development as Conjunctive Faith and Universalising Faith, which could also be reached within the context of structured religion.⁷¹ Conjunctive Faith often emerges during mid-life as the recognition of the paradoxes of one's faith that go beyond reason. There is a graceful movement towards bringing together the apparent paradoxes of faith. Although one may not uncritically accept contradictions, "God" is seen to include mystery and paradox. At this stage, there is also an attempt to integrate religious symbols and the truths that the symbols signify. This is achieved by embracing the symbol as meaningful expressions of mystery of reality. This stage may be marked also by a desire to expand one's boundaries through social inclusiveness. Finally, at the stage of Universalizing Faith, which is reached by a tiny minority of population, Fowler posits a movement toward a state of faith that seeks inclusiveness while still maintaining firm and clear commitments to values of universal justice and love. They are able to live their lives to the full in the service of others. Individuals who reach this level in faith within religious contexts express the prophetic dimension of religion challenging the status-quo of structured religion.

Looking at religious-spirituality in terms of the description of mature faith provided by Allport and Fowler, it is possible to recognise a three dimensional spirituality which can be enumerated in terms of three movements: a movement towards the self, a movement towards the transcendent (God), and a movement towards others and the world. Interestingly, the three dimensions of spirituality have been also suggested by Joanna McGrath in relation to posttraumatic growth after brain injury. She talks about "upwardly directed 'vertical spirituality'", "inwardly directed 'interior spirituality'", and "outwardly directed 'horizontal spirituality'."⁷² Fowler himself acknowledges this possibility when he says, "I would like to point out that faith, and the development of faith, has a triadic structure. There is the self, there are the primal and significant others in the self's relational matrix, and there is the third center of relational engagement—the ultimate Other, or the center(s) of value and power in one's life structure."⁷³ I would like to further add that, the belief in a personal God offers the possibility for a precise relationship with the ultimate Other, while the dimension of community in religion contributes a concrete connotation to the horizontal dimension of religious-spirituality.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to propose a model of religion and spirituality that would be comprehensive enough, to accommodate a multicultural and interreligious approach to the study of religion and spirituality. The multidimensional model (Figure 5), when taken to be a

spectrum of constructs that interact with some distinction and not absolute separation, could serve as a framework for religious studies globally. As pointed out earlier, in Africa, where the separation between the sacred and the secular is almost non-existent, the study of Abrahamic religions as well as the exploration of the traditional indigenous religions is possible within this framework. Similarly, in South Asia, the home to nearly 18% of the world's population, the term 'spirituality' is generally understood within the context of religion. Even the way the term 'secularism' is used in India is an interesting case of the global variety. There, secularism is not opposed to religion, but it embraces the great variety of religious traditions proper to that society.⁷⁴ The multidimensional model proposed in this paper could serve as a meaningful framework in such contexts. Even in Western societies where the study of religion has taken diversified trajectories, as discussed throughout this paper, the multidimensional model could be significantly functional.

I would like to suggest at least three ways of taking this discussion forward in order to develop further the construct of religious-spirituality. Firstly, the triadic dimension of religious-spirituality needs to be explored at an empirical level: do the people who exhibit simultaneously high level of religiosity and spirituality express these in terms of deepened relationship with the self, the others and God? Secondly, the distinction between spirituality outside religion and spirituality within religion (religious-spirituality) needs to be empirically examined: for instance, do the people who claim to be spiritual-but-not religious express their spirituality distinctively from those who are religiously spiritual? Thirdly, to carry out these empirical studies, the development of an instrument of measure of religious-spirituality may be crucial.

The objective of the above discussion, therefore, was not to deny that some people might identify themselves as being "spiritual but not religious," just as there are others who identify themselves as being indifferent to both religion and spirituality, and still others who are aggressively atheistic. The intention was to present a comprehensive model within which the different attitudes could have a place, without claiming one to be superior to the other.⁷⁵ More importantly, it also aimed at pointing out that when it comes to the human search for meaning, together with or apart from the sacred, there are not just two watertight entities but there is a whole range of approaches that fall in a spectrum. This multidimensional model, I hope, will provide a matrix and the taxonomy for an inclusive approach in the study of religion and spirituality across the globe.

Notes:

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⁶ For instance, James Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

⁷ For example, George Coe. *The Psychology of Religion* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 1916).

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¹⁷ See, Peter C. Hill and Ralph W. Hood, *Measures of Religiosity* (Birmingham, Ala: Religious Education Press, 1999), 10; Spilka et. al, 3.

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- ²³ Spilka et. al, 10-11.
- ²⁴ Pargament.
- ²⁵ Wulff, 7. Italics original.
- ²⁶ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Glasgow: Fountain Books, 1977), 50.
- ²⁷ H. Stifoss-Hanssen, "Religion and Spirituality: What a European Ear Hears", *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 9,1 (January 1999):25-33; also Gordon Lynch, *The Sacred in the Modern World: A Cultural Sociological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
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- ³⁸ Wulff, 5.
- ³⁹ Hill et. al.
- ⁴⁰ Stifoss-Hanssen.
- ⁴¹ Stifoss-Hanssen.
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