Research on "Spirituality":
New Perspectives from Reconsidering the Classics on Religion

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Psychologists of religion engage in a lively discussion about the proposal to rename their field of study, and at least to add "spirituality" to its designation. In 2003 Division 36 of the American Psychological Association (APA) "psychology of religion" hosted a discussion that included several past presidents of the division to debate the merits of a name change (Hathaway et al., 2004). In 2004 the board of Division 36 decided to have membership vote on whether or not to change the name of the division to "psychology of religion *and* spirituality." The majority of those returning ballots voted to change the name, but due to a technicality regarding the number of voters returning ballots the name remains "psychology of religion." However, in anticipating the name change, Ray Paloutzian and Crystal Park titled their handbook *"Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality"* (Paloutzian & Park, 2005). Likewise the division will launch a new journal that goes by the name "Psychology of Religion *and* Spirituality," edited by Ralph Piedmont with the first issue scheduled for the Spring of 2009. Can we imagine having a discussion about renaming AAR the "American Academy of Religion and Spirituality"?

Many articles use "religion" and "spirituality" side by side or use a slash between these words. In areas such as health, articles are now more likely to refer to spirituality rather than religion (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). The sympathy among health professional for spirituality is part of an empirically documented gap between all professionals and the larger lay public with respect to religious commitment. For instance, it is well established that academics are more sympathetic to oppositional forms of religious commitment (sects and cults) than the lay public at large.[1]

The tolerance for oppositional religious groups among opinion leaders is paralleled by the empirical fact that mental health professionals are among the least religious persons, preferring instead to identify with spirituality. Shafranske (1996) has reviewed the empirical research on the religious beliefs, associations, and practices of mental health professionals. Focusing primarily on samples of clinical and counseling psychologists who are members of the American Psychological Association, Shafranske notes that psychologists are less likely to believe in a personal God, or to affiliate with religious groups, than other professionals or the general population. In addition, while the *majority* of psychologists report that spirituality is important to them, a *minority* report that religion is important to them (Shafranske, 1996, p. 153). Shafranske summarizes his own data and the work of others to emphasize that psychologists are more like the general population than was previously assumed. However, Shafranske lumps together various indices as the "religious dimension," and this is very misleading. In fact, psychologists neither believe, practice, nor associate with the institutional aspects of faith ("religion") as much as they endorse what Shafranske properly notes are "noninstitutional forms of spirituality" (p. 154). One could predict that in forced-choice contexts they would be most likely to be "spiritual" but not "religious." This indicates ambivalence among psychologists regarding religion.

This uncertainty and ambivalence surrounding spirituality and religion concerns the level of conceptualization. Therefore we need to engage in serious reflection about the concepts. We will discuss this and add our own proposal. However, since no one in the field can ignore the spectacular increase in popularity which the self-identification of "being

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[1] This is evident from results of O'Donnell's (1993) study of tolerance for new religious movements in the United States for various opinion leaders and the lay public. On questions such as "There should be laws to prevent groups like Hare Krishna from asking people for money at airports", "It should be against the law for unusual religious cults to try to convert teenagers", or "There should be laws against the practice of Satan worship", and a rating scale of 1=No and 2=Yes, the lay public (n=1,708) scored 1.45, ministers as part of the religious elites (n=101) scored 1.58, but academics (n=155) scored 1.87 and thus indicated highest agreement.

spiritual" enjoys these days, we begin with the presentation and discussion of some recent data.

1 Situational Changes: Research on "Spirituality"

The Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study of Deconversion in which both authors of this article, Ralph Hood and Heinz Streib, directed teams in Chattanooga and Bielefeld that have worked together in a cooperative transatlantic research project,[2] we have interesting results not only on disaffiliation – which we call *deconversion* –, but also rather surprising results on self-identified "spirituality".

We have asked more than a thousand members of religious organizations and some 130 deconverts the following set of forced-choice questions: "Mark the statement which most identifies you. I am more religious than spiritual. I am more spiritual than religious. I am equally religious and spiritual. I am neither religious nor spiritual." Here are our results:

Figure 1. Spiritual/Religious Self-Identification of Members and Deconverts in the U.S. and Germany (Source: the Bielefeld-Based Cross-Cultural Study of Deconversion)
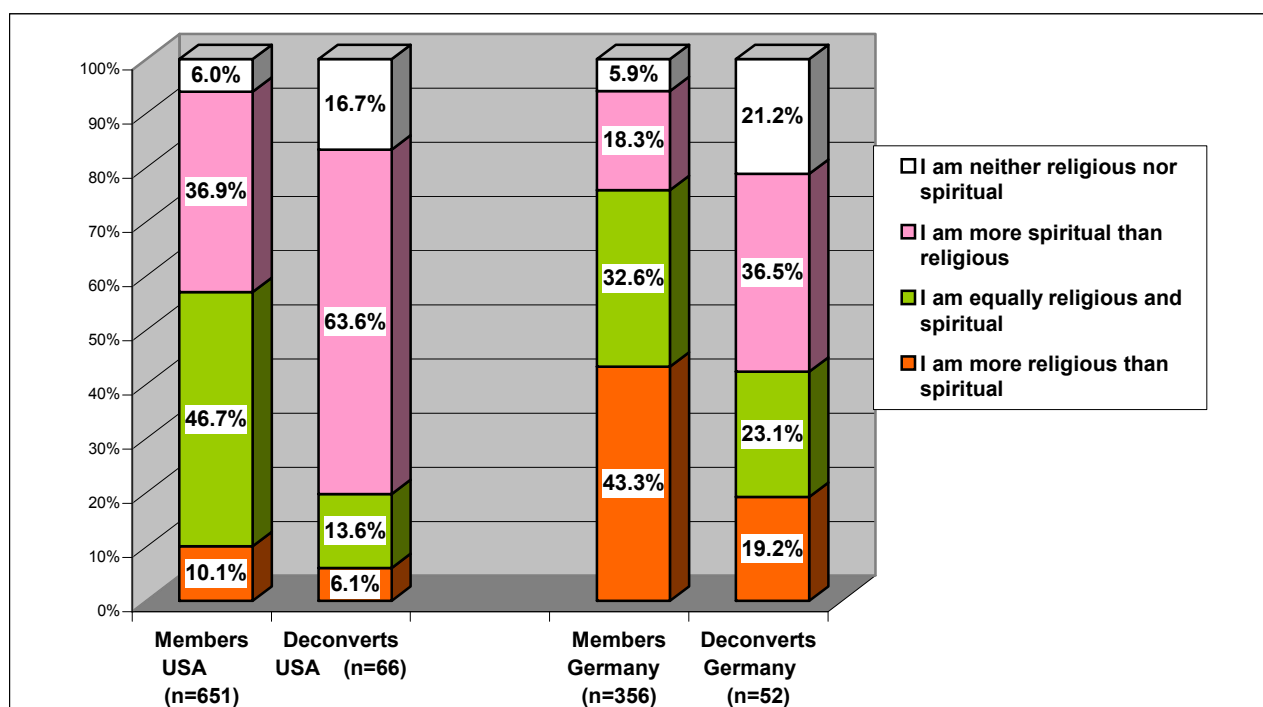
As Figure 1 shows, our results appear to reveal high numbers of people who self-identify as being "more spiritual than religious." When we do not separate out members and deconverts (as was done for the above Figure), we count about 20% "more spiritual" subjects in Germany, and about 40% "more spiritual" subjects in the United States. These numbers not

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only reconfirm the rather high preferences for the "more spiritual" self-identification of previous studies, but our results are even considerably higher in regard to the number of "more spiritual" self-identifying individuals.[3]

However, the real surprise are the *deconverts*: The deconverts' preference for the self-identification as being "more spiritual than religious" almost doubles – to the effect that we count 36.5% of deconverts in Germany who self-identify as being "more spiritual than religious"; in the United States the "more spiritual" deconverts group is even 63.6% which is almost two third of the deconverts.

For an interpretation of these rather high percentages of "more spiritual" self-identifying deconverts, we need to take into account the variety of ways of exiting religious groups. The nature of the group being exited from is important. We identify three basic religious groups based upon their tension with their host culture: accommodating, integrating, and oppositional. We refer to exit strategies from these groups as, deconversion trajectories. These are best explored by qualitative interviews. We have summarized this in Figure 2.

In our sample, we have 29 deconverts who take a secular exit; they appear to terminate concern with religious belief altogether. The number of deconverts who exit the field of organized religion, however, is far greater: there are 24 deconverts who terminate affiliation, but continue practicing their religiosity in private (privatizing exit); also there is another group of 9 deconverts in our sample who after disaffiliation engage in a kind of patchwork religion (heretical exit). Thus almost two third of our deconverts leave the field of organized religion.[4] However, even among those who take secular exists, they only rarely self identify as atheists. This finding of ours is consistent with other research on secularists (Kosmin & Keysar, 2007). Even in the most unchurched areas of the United States such as the Northwest there are no more than 3% who self-identify as atheists (Keysar, 2007). Furthermore, despite low scores on both self identified religion and spirituality, secularists remain more spiritual than religious (Pasquale, 2007).

If we then take into account how these deconverts have self-identified in terms of spirituality or religion, it is rather interesting, but not really surprising that a majority of 15 out of 24 privatizing exiters self-identify as "more spiritual;" and even less surprising is it for the 5 out of 9 heretical exiters. But there are 8 out of 29 secular exiters who self-identify as "more spiritual." Taken together, 28 out of 62 deconverts who leave organized religion self-identify as being "more spiritual." Here we are able to identify and shed some light on a segment of the religious field which has been gathering increasing interest from social scientists – the spirituality outside the domain of the priest and the prophet, spiritual quest outside organized religion (Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, & Trusting, 2005; Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2008).

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[3] Some of the difference of our results to the previous research can be explained with reference to the structure of our sample which is characterized by an under-representation of mainline religions; furthermore, we need to take into account, for the U.S.A., a difference in asking the question ("more … than" in our research; "not …, but" in most previous surveys); Also the difference may in part be due to the time difference of one decade or more. And finally, for the German sample, we also should add that, when separating out the mainline members, the percentage of "more spiritual" respondents drops to 13.2%; thus here the difference can be seen as within tolerance. Taken together, our results for the members of religious organizations are roughly in line with and confirm the trend as indicated in the surveys – with an open question for the situation in the U.S.A..

[4] Numbers in the Figure do not sum up to the total of deconverts who were included in our qualitative analysis, because the religious switchers are not presented in the figure.

Figure 2. Deconversion trajectories in the Religious Field
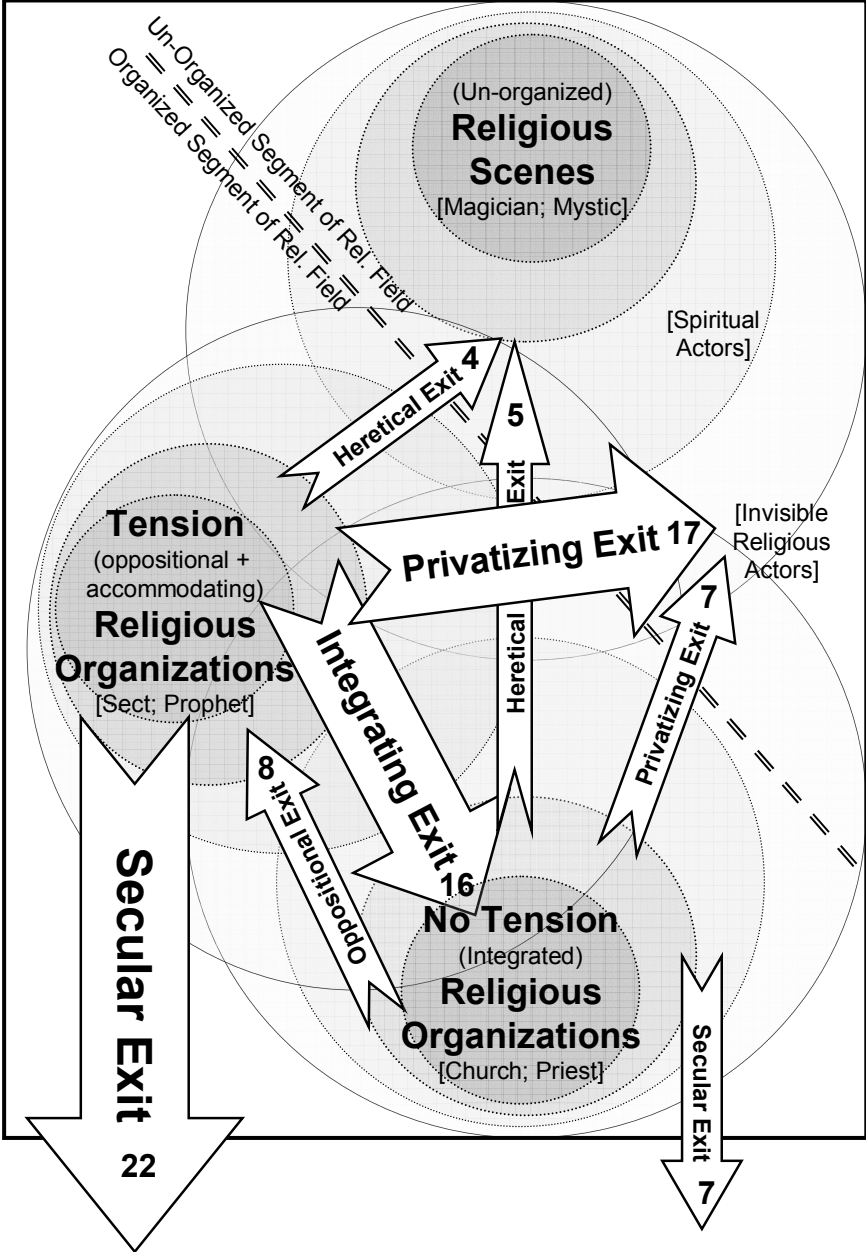
At least three major questions are raised by theses results: Fist, what do our exceptionally high numbers of "more spiritual" self-identifications mean? Was there a rapid increase over the last years? Second, how can we explain the cross-cultural difference between lower "spiritual" self-identification rates in Germany and higher rates for the United States? Third, why do the "more spiritual" preferences in the deconvert groups in both Germany and the United States double?

We also can turn the questions around and ask: What does it mean for an understanding of "spirituality" that preference for "spirituality" more recently is higher than it used to be, that U.S. respondents are higher than German respondents, and that deconverts are higher than in-tradition members – to the effect that almost two third of contemporary deconverts in the United States self-identify as being "more spiritual than religious"?

We will briefly address all three questions. As to the first question, what the rather high numbers of "more spiritual" self-identification mean and whether there is an increase over the last years, we need to attend to some recent empirical results. We also should address a related question: Is the attraction to self-identify as being "spiritual" a new phenomenon? What does previous research tell us here?

Houtman & Aupers' (2007) re-analysis of the huge amount of World Value Survey data (n=61,352) in a sophisticated (and generally plausible) procedure document a trend to, what they call, a "post-Christian spirituality" in the West. In their attempt to improve the fact that "there are embarrassingly few studies that systematically map the worldviews of the unchurched" (p. 308), Houtman and Aupers (2007) present longitudinal results about the spread of people who associate themselves with a spiritual worldview. They document this trend over a period of two decades in most of the 14 countries for which they have analyzed the data. Based on a selection of questions such as about the image of God (personal God; some sort of spirit or live force; etc.), New Age affinity, disagreement with traditional Christian beliefs, but simultaneous disagreement with secular rationalism, this re-analysis reveals a clear trend in most of these 14 countries. France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden most clearly reveal a pattern of decline of traditional moral values. This could be explained in part with cohort replacement. From Houtman & Auper's re-analysis, we have evidence for the religious fields in the United States and in Germany of a modest (U.S.A.) or recognizable (Germany) longitudinal trend of an increase of post-Christian spirituality over two decades from 1980 to 2000. But all of the survey data taken together do not allow to exactly quantify the emigration from organized religion(s) to the new segments in the religious field.

There are however other attempts to quantitatively assess the amount of people who associate with "spirituality" as opposed to "religion." As a relatively simple, but nevertheless effective tool for identifying "spirituality" with some precision, a set of four questions has been designed and used in empirical research: Are you "religious but not spiritual," "spiritual but not religious," "religious and spiritual" or "neither religious nor spiritual." Alternatively some researchers use less oppositional language allowing for "more religious than spiritual," "equally religious and spiritual," "more religious than spiritual," or "neither religious nor spiritual" self-identifications. These latter options can also be easily quantified by having participants rate themselves on Likert scales indicating degree of religiousness and spirituality. However, the variation produced by slightly different methods are not our major concern in this paper (see Hood, 2003b; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

Marler & Hadaway (2002) report and discuss a considerable body of research in the United States in which the spirituality question has been asked; these studies have been completed in about a decade before the year 2001. From these studies, we have evidence that

there are between 18% and 20% who self-identify as being "spiritual, but not religious" (Marler & Hadaway, 2002).

More recently, namely in 2008, the *Religionsmonitor* (Bertelsmann Foundation) has revealed new – and higher – results which almost match our exceptionally high results in the Deconversion Study for the U.S. sample. The Religionsmonitor has included a self-rating scale for spirituality next to a self-rating scale for religiosity. The combination of both self-rating scales allows for an assessment of "more spiritual than religious" self-identifying participants. For the United States, the Religionsmonitor data reveal the following percentages of "more spiritual than religious" respondents: 25.9% Christians (n=710), 33.3% Jews (n=30), 39.0% members of other religions, and – surprisingly or not – 47.8% religiously not affiliated respondents.

In Germany, there was no research about "spiritual" preference, before we started to ask such questions in 2001 in a pilot study of the Deconversion Project questionnaire and in the study itself. In the meantime also the *Religionsmonitor* presents new results for Germany, including the "spirituality" question:[5] 10.1% in the Protestant churches, 8.7% in the Roman-Catholic Church, 5.3% in the Protestant "free churches" (e.g. Methodist Church) and 16.7% in other Christian traditions (such as Orthodox Church, Pentecostal and charismatic groups) can be identified as "more spiritual". Taken together, we count 9.3% members of Christian religious organizations (including all denominations, these are 68.7% of the population) who can be identified as being "more spiritual than religious." Surprisingly, there are 10.0% who have no religious affiliation at all, but self-identify as being "more spiritual than religious" – and to the group without religious affiliation belong 26.2% of the German population. We can conclude that in Germany, almost regardless of whether they are members of a religious organization, about 10% identify as being "more spiritual than religious," while in the United States we have about 20% or more.

Taken together, the data indicate an increase in preference for a "spiritual" self-identification in the last decade; but we do not have enough evidence to exactly quantify the increase.

To profile the preference for a "spiritual" self-identification that understands itself *in opposition to religion* and to discuss the question whether we have a completely new phenomenon here, we would be advised to look at some older studies. The opposition or even hostility to religion, but with a struggle and search for an individualized religiosity (however this is called by the individual religious seeker) is captured best by qualitative studies. We have evidence for this both from our deconversion project and from other sociological and psychological studies which we will briefly – and, of course, selectively – summarize.

At the sociological level, Roof (1993) has characterized the 76 million U.S. adults born in the two decades after World War II as a "generation of seekers" who are either "loyalists" (those who have stayed with their religious tradition), "returnees" (those who experimented with options before returning to their religious tradition), or "dropouts" (those who have left their tradition). Roof also noted that a distinguishing feature among the "highly active seekers" he interviewed was a preference to identify themselves as "spiritual" rather than "religious." Twenty-four percent of these had no religious affiliation. Such highly active seekers were but a minority (9%) of all Roof's participants, but they seem to have captured the interest of researchers in what we might identify as the "spiritual turn" in the scientific

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[5] The Religionsmonitor results reflect not only the relatively high number of secular self-identifications among church members in the German Protestant (33.4%) and Roman-Catholic (30.2%) churches, but also for the first time in a sample representative for the general population, the segment of "more spiritual" self-identifications.

study of religion. Roof's (1999) follow-up text reveals similar findings regarding self-identification. Asking, "Do your consider yourself religious?" and "Do you consider yourself spiritual?" in nonconsecutive places in open-ended interviews (but always in that order) revealed an overall weak association between the two identifications (gamma = .291). However, among "strong believers" the association was higher (gamma = .439) than among "highly active seekers" (gamma = .196). Other data, including the question "Which is best: to follow the teachings of a church, synagogue or temple, or to think for oneself in matters of religion and trust more one's own experience?" (Roof, 1999, pp. 320-321), suggested that those identified as seekers were least likely to rely upon institutional authority or to think that such authority should overrule their own conscience. An Asian American participant who was no longer active in the Methodist Church captured well: "You can be spiritual without being religious. I think religious . . . would be more specific. The faith is more specific, certain doctrines. Spiritual would be general, wider. I think that's how you can be spiritual without being religious. Maybe even religious without being spiritual. Show up for church and go through the motions" (Roof, 1993, p. 78).

Roof's work echoes the highly popular *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996) which became the second best selling sociological work in history (Yamane, 2007). In it the pseudonymous Shelia Larson gave rise to the term "Sheliaism" used by Larson to describe her own faith. Yamane has noted if she had today's language available to her during the interview she "surely would have offered up the contemporary mantra,' I'm spiritual, not religious"" (2007. p. 183). [6]

At the psychological level, James Day in his Sierra Project, which was specifically designed to advance students' stages of moral development, began with the 1979 class at the University of California–Irvine uncovered once again the dissatisfaction of many with a religious rather than a spiritual self-identification. A crucial aspect of this study (and its continuation since 1987 by researchers associated with Boston University) is the use of both traditional empirical and narrative-based qualitative methodologies (Whiteley & Loxley, 1980; Day, 1991; 1994). Day (1994) reported the results of in-depth interviews with three Sierra participants chosen by the Boston research team after listening to hundreds of hours of audiotaped interviews. Day wrote up the results of an interview with one participant, "Sandy," in an idiographic presentation rare in psychology.

The interview probed Sandy's views on both religion and spirituality – a tactic based upon researchers' belated recognition that earlier Sierra participants might have purposefully avoided discussion of religion, especially religious beliefs (Day, 1994, p. 160). Thus questions on religion and spirituality were strategically placed within the schedule on subsequent interviews. Sandy took great care to distinguish religion from spirituality. In her words, "Religion is organized, dogmatic, and social. Spiritual is individual, intimate, personal. Religion tells you what is good or true and tells you who is favored and who is not. It operates in fixed categories. Spirituality is developed. You have to work hard at it and to be conscious about it and take time for it. Sometimes, in order to grow spiritually, you have to go beyond or even against religious doctrine." (Day, 1994, p. 163). Sandy's concern with doctrine was important. Day noted that she would probably protest if identified as a "believer." She neither identified herself nor wanted others to label her as "religious" (Day, 1994, p. 165).

Therefore, we conclude for empirical research that we need to continue in developing and improving research designs and measures that allow the investigation of un-organized and

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[6] Thus, the emergence of the discussion of spirituality among sociologists of religion parallels our discussion of Troeltsch below by identifying a vocal minority of highly active seekers whose spirituality is most typically identified as mystical and unchurched (Hood, 2003b).

experience-oriented religion. And, if we do not want to foreclose of suppress unchurched research participants or those who oppose or hate religion, measures should not use the semantics that are associated with traditional religion, but rather allow for an indication of invisible or implicit religiosity. If Hood (2006) is right with his assumption that mysticism in contemporary empirical research can be identified by questions that elicit a "spiritual, but not religious" self-identification, supposedly, contemporary "spirituality" can be identified by scales measuring mysticism (Hood, 1975).

Now to our second question. As we have seen, the rise in popularity to self-identify as "more spiritual" is visible in both the United States and Germany, but of course on different scale. We say "of course", because in the empirical study of religion we almost take for granted what in fact is an unresolved puzzle. This is our second question. Call it "Euro-secularity" or "extraordinary religiousness of US population" – the data on belief in God, church attendance, personal prayer and a row of similar religious items are exceptionally high for the US population compared to most European countries. Of course, we need to differentiate: Europe itself is a patchwork of highly religious and highly secular countries; and also in the United States a difference is evident between the more secular Northwest and part of the Northeast, on the one hand, and the Bible belt, on the other (Kosmin & Keysar, 2007). But no doubt the difference between the continents is extraordinary. What is the explanation? We certainly have some speculations, but if we knew the answer, we certainly would present it here – and get the applause from our colleagues in the field.

The research which is available does not help to finally resolve the Euro-secularity puzzle. Our theme here is "spirituality" and, surprisingly or not, such extraordinary transatlantic difference in religiosity is reflected also in the preference for "spirituality". What does this mean? It could indicate, especially for the US respondents, that religiosity and "spirituality" have a common ground. The majority self-identifies as being "equally religious *and* spiritual;" this supports the common-ground-hypothesis. We could then assume that the "spiritual, but not religious" or "more spiritual than religious" respondents simply reject organized religion, rather than the search for a transcendent or the sacred of some sort altogether. There is a documented history of this in America (Fuller, 2002).

This connects to the third question that we have raised: Why do the "more spiritual" preferences in the group of deconverts double? Our answer is simply this: The doubling of self-identified "more spiritual" subjects in the group of deconverts is due to the fact that leaving a tradition involves distance from at least one church or religious organization. A considerable part of the deconverts[7] is left with no more than their own individual religiosity, but will be reluctant to call this kind of individual religiosity a "religion", because, following a contemporary semantic tendency, the word "religion" is strongly associated with organization, membership and tradition. Religion has always be identified as multi-dimensional with religiosity or religious experience identified as one of it's dimensions. Thus to restrict religion to institutional norms and practices is but to reify religion with only some of its dimensions and to re-identify religiosity as spirituality with little gain in conceptual or empirical clarity (Hood, 2003b; Hood, Hill et al., 2008). Thus, perhaps, self-identified "spirituality" does not mean much more than "religion", namely *un-organized individualized religiosity*. The "spiritual" self-identification may indicate rejection of organized religion, but not of religiosity. This perfectly harmonizes with the common-ground-hypothesis, but suggests an explanation which is possible on the basis of our data from the cross-cultural study on deconversion.

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[7] We talk, to be sure, about the cases who did not terminate concern with religion altogether as we see this in secular exists.

2 Reactions on the Conceptual Level: Definitions and Changes of Terminology

Kenneth Pargament and his group of researchers have taken the lead not only in research on the spirituality/religion question, but also in the task of developing and discussing conceptualizations. Therefore we take this proposal as starting point.

Pargament (1999b; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005) defines religion as "a search for significance in ways related to the sacred" and *spirituality*, in almost the same words, as "search for the sacred". When Pargament immediately adds that spirituality is the "most central function of religion" and the "heart and soul of religion" (1999b: 12), we can conclude that religion and spirituality are closely related and intertwined. Both religion and spirituality are defined by the relation to the scared. The sacred, Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005: 34) state, is the "substantive core of both religiousness and spirituality"; the scared is the specific difference "that distinguishes these phenomena from all others".

The sacred thereby refers not only to God, higher powers and transcendent beings, but to a broad variety of aspects of life: "Virtually any dimension can be perceived as holy, worthy of veneration or reverence" (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005: 34). The critical question of Robert Emmons and Cheryl Crumpler (1999) in their response to Pargament's 1999 article, namely the question, "Can we leave God out?", has stimulated Pargament to be more explicit about his understanding of the sacred. While the sacred, he explains in his reply, is in certain cases "clearly derived from the divine" (1999a: 38), there are however other processes in which "perception of divine-like qualities in objects are not necessarily rooted in beliefs in God". And he goes on to explain that "for atheists and others as well, it might be useful to think of sacred objects as 'functionally autonomous' from God. The sacred object is no longer directly associated with the divine, however it continues to be imbued with divine-like qualities." (1999a: 39). We prefer to identify vertical and horizontal dimension of transcendence. The vertical dimension may reference God, but the horizontal need not. Horizontal transcendence may be purely secular (Elkins, 2001; Comte-Sponville, 2007). An example is many of the ecological movements based upon purely secular scientific assumptions in which the self is nevertheless seen as embedded in a unity larger than itself.

When it comes to clarifying the difference between religion and spirituality, Pargament argues that religion is the broader construct, a "broadband construct" which "encompasses the search for many objects of significance", while "spirituality focuses on the search for one particular object of significance – the sacred" (1999b: 13; cf. Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005: 36). Here, we may find the reason why 'significance' is included in the definition of religion, but is left out in the definition of 'spirituality'. Religion "addresses a wider range of goals, needs, and values than spirituality" (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005: 37). Pargament's argument goes on that the more "objects of significance in life are sanctified", the more the difference between 'religion' and 'spirituality' disappears (1999b: 14). In our reading, Pargament has in mind a model about the difference of religion and spirituality which, for religion, regards the definitional characteristic of "relation to the sacred" less important, while the "search for significance" serves as the key characteristic. Here we must point to a conceptual inconsistency: While, on the one hand, the sacred is assumed being the "substantive core of both religiousness and spirituality", when spirituality and religion are seen in comparison, on the other hand, this characteristic appears to apply only for spirituality in the full sense, while religion also includes a wide variety of non-sacred, i.e. secular goals.

What we find remarkable and whish to underscore as potentially helpful insights from Pargament are the following: First, religion and spirituality are closely related. Second, it is

the sacred which is "central to both religion and spirituality" (1999a: 37). Third, the sacred thereby is very broadly understood to include sacred objects which need not be associated with God or the divine.

However, while Pargament focuses upon the search for the sacred, we wish to balance this with a long tradition of relating religion to a response to the sacred. While the former places emphasis on the agent's action, the latter focuses upon the agent's response and places religious experience at the forefront. Two examples that can readily be cited are in the works of Rudolf Otto (1917) and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1799). Recently, Otto's work has been shown to help illuminate the numinous elicited by handling serpents (Hood & Williamson, 2008, pp. 113-114). Likewise, Hood (1985, pp. 571-574) has emphasized that a re-evaluation of Schleiermacher's concept of religious feeling centers upon a response to the sacred as integral to religiosity and shelters religious experience from a too strict social constructionism. Bettis (1969, p. 144) has suggested that Schleiermacher's notion of religious feeling has been misappropriated by social scientists and is better understood as a response that elicits an "immediate self-consciousness." We will return to Schleiermacher below. Here we merely emphasize that a *response* to the sacred can precede and even inform the *search* for the sacred. It also highlights religious experience or religiosity as an integral part of the study of religion without the necessity for identifying this as a separate filed of study called "spirituality".

The major question which we raise is this: Why at all do we need two concepts, when their difference is so marginal? Is it not a waste of time and energy to develop special measures of spirituality, if they, as Pargament (1999b: 8) himself notes, "look suspiciously like old measures of religiousness" and add little or no incremental validity to the study of religion. Most measures of spirituality operate empirically as measure of religious experience (Gorsuch & Miller, 1999; Hood, 2003b; Hood, Hill et al., 2008).

In an multi-author article (Hill et al., 2000), "Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality", in which Pargament is co-authored among others by Peter Hill and Ralph Hood, we find further assertions that religion and spirituality are the same. The authors define both spirituality and religion in exactly the same words, namely as "the feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred". Because of the identical wording of both definitions, it is in fact questionable whether spirituality and religion have any features distinct enough to suggest two concepts and justify two sets of measures. When, furthermore, the term sacred is defined as referring to "a divine being, divine object, Ultimate Reality, or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual", both religion and spirituality are conceptualized rather in the tradition of a substantial definition of religion, but very open in the variety of individual symbolizations. And in regard to these symbolic characteristics, the authors do not see any difference between religion and spirituality.

The authors anyway suggest a difference between religion and spirituality by ascribing certain additional characteristics only to 'religion': first that only in religion, a potential "search for non-sacred goals" could take place; second, that (only) religion involves "the means and methods … of the search for the sacred that receive validation and support from an identifiable group".

Here is our critical reply: First, on the "non-sacred goals" which supposedly are included in religion: It is questionable, why this should occur only in the religious domain and not also in the spiritual domain. The authors provide no argument why spirituality is immune against secondary secular goals. It also is not plausible why secular (or not-yet-sanctified) goals should qualify as characteristics for the construct of religion proper. Second, the assumption that only in religion the search for the sacred receives validation and support from an identifiable group may refer to a specific difference that characterizes a certain type of

religion – or spirituality! – which has become an institution or an organization with higher legitimacy and tradition.

Generally this approach, taken by its words, suggests in our reading two things: First, a construct 'religion=spirituality' or 'religion/spirituality' and second two subordinate sub-constructs (one *with* and the other *without* certain additional characteristics which are due to the societal or organizational characteristics.

About two decades now we witness new developments in the religious field: a growing preference for "spirituality" which may have seeds in the Baby Boomers generation, but grows and blossoms in mainstream culture at the turn of the century. And we can not see or predict the decline of such development. We also have seen considerable attempts to come to terms with this spiritual turn, but still the new, which is "spirituality", is treated as the different, it is kept separate from religion or even understood as opposed to religion (Hood, 2003b; Hood, Hill et al., 2008). The time has come for conceptual clarification. In the scientific study of religion, there is no need to adopt the polarization or opposition between religion and "spirituality" which our research participants may have in mind. It is our duty in the academy to aim at conceptual precision and that we are able to find this by considering lines of thought of 19th century and early 20th century sociology, psychology and theology. Here are our suggestions:

3 The Contribution of the Classics

3.1 Bourdieu's Sociological Perspective: Spirituality in the Religious Field

Starting with sociology, we may consider the famous distinction between church and sect which had some prominence in the sociological discourse of which Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch were part.[8] The church-sect distinction has become one of the basic tools for understanding religion in sociological terms and for constructing the religious field. This distinction plays a role also in the sociology of new religious movements – even though the terminology has changed, since we avoid the term 'sect' in favor of 'new religious movements'. Could it be relevant also for understanding and locating "spirituality"?

Taking a closer look into Weber's work, especially in his analyses in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Weber, 1921), we find a distinction between *three* parties or *three* actors, rather than between two: not only the *sects* with their prophets compete with the churches and their priests; the third party are the *magicians*. What has been widely ignored, but is the longer the more "necessary and adequate" (Daiber, 2002: 329), is a reminder that also Troeltsch (Troeltsch, 1911; 1912) talks about *three* types. He called this third type *mysticism*.[9]

Troeltsch's theory, as developed in *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches,* was clearly using an expanded typology derived from Weber in which, besides church and sect as forms of religious organization, he identified a third type: mysticism. Ironically, Troeltsch was popularized among North American scholars by H. R. Niebuhr, especially in

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[8] Cf. e.g. the *Verhandlungen des Ersten Deutschen Soziologentages von 19.-22. Oktober 1910 in Frankfurt a. M.* (Simmel, 1911).

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

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

However this may be, a general theory of mysticism in the tradition of Troeltsch should differentiate even more clearly and incorporate two kinds of mysticisms – that within the church and what Parsons (1999, p. 141) has called "unchurched mysticism." According to both Bouyer (1980) and Troeltsch (1912), one form of mysticism is an inherent tendency to seek personal piety and an emotional realization of a faith within the individual; it serves simply to intensify commitment to a tradition. The other kind of mysticism emerges independent from, or as a reaction to, the church or the sect; thus it does become a new social force. In the widest sense, mysticism is simply a demand for an inward appropriation of a direct inward and present religious experience (Troeltsch, 1931, p. 730). It takes the objective characteristics of its tradition for granted, and either supplements them with a profound inwardness or reacts against them as it demands to bring them back "into the living process" (Troeltsch, 1931, p. 731). Concentrating among the purely interior and emotional side of religious experience, it creates a "spiritual" interpretation of every objective side of religion, so that this kind of mystics typically stay within their tradition (Katz, 1983).

However, Troeltsch also identifies a "narrower, technically concentrated sense" of mysticism (1931, p. 734). This is a mysticism that has become independent in principle from, and is contrasted with, religion. It claims to be the true inner principle of all religious faith. This type of mysticism breaks away from religion, which it disdains. It accepts no constraint or community other than ones that are self-selected and self-realized. This is what many today profess to be "spirituality" as opposed to "religion." It is essentiallly an unchurched mysticism.

To summarize Troeltsch's legacy: aside from the ideal types of church religion and sect religion – which both, within their realms, may embrace and nurture a kind of mystical inward orientation –, Troeltsch identifies mysticism as the type of Protestant religion that features religious individualism, develops outside of church and sect, and has no external organization (Daiber, 2002: 335). And this identification of religious individualism, including mysticism as a third ideal type, was thoughtful and perhaps ahead of his time. We witness today a global spread of just this kind of religious individualism. But the problem with Troeltsch's expertise is that he talks about mysticism in *Protestantism* and rather in *historical* perspective – which means that today we need some evidence of its contemporary and cross-religious validity. Second, there is a problem with sociological plausibility: Not only Simmel openly rejected Troeltsch's third type, and Weber only tolerated it politely (see the discussion of Troeltsch's lecture in 1910), but Troeltsch himself appears somewhat unclear about whether mysticism is a religion without any organization or whether it develops at least some organizational structures. Also this second question calls for clarification.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1971) mapping of the religious field sets the stage for a sociological analysis of the contemporary religious field – in which, finally, contemporary "spirituality" may find its proper place. The force field with its vector structure constituting the dynamics and the "rules of the game" in the religious field is (a) the competition between religious expert actors among each other and (b) the competition for influence on and attraction of (lay) people. Bourdieu's model of the religious field as published in 1971 is

rather close to Weber's in respect to the number of religious expert actors and their characterization. But it should be noted that it includes a third religious expert actor – which, for Bourdieu, in accord with Weber, is the *magician*.

Bourdieu's model is very helpful for understanding the relation between actors and the dynamics in what we, with Bourdieu, call the religious field. Two modifications however appear necessary to account for the most recent changes in the religious fields in the United States and most of Europe. First, the number and character of religious actors has to be seen in constant change. They have changed significantly over the last century, especially in the last decades. Therefore, it does not appear adequate to include only the magician as third religious expert actor in the religious field. At any rate, we need to include the mystic in the religious field.

Second, in certain segments of the religious field, the difference between religious experts and lay people has declined or disappeared together with the contours of what used to be called an *organization.* Not all forms of religion give rise to the formation of a church. In contemporary sociology, we have a number of proposals for characterizing social units which are *neither* institutions *nor* organizations, but form *milieus*, *networks* or *scenes* (Gebhardt, 2002). This, of course needs to be developed further as cultures changes, including increasing individualization, migration, social mobility, internet use and the like. The market structures have changed: monopolists, small entrepreneurs, shopkeepers and even street traders are marginalized by supermarkets and internet shops. Contemporary "more spiritual, than religious" actors cannot easily be identified as either lay people or self-entrepreneurs. Many of them dwell in scenes or milieus in what we came to call the un-organized segment of the religious field.

Concluding from this, we have developed a sketch of the religious field which includes the distinction between an organized and an un-organized segment (Figure 3). Understanding the figure, one should keep in mind that, in Bourdieu's sociological terms, a 'field' is a force field of interests – of special importance in our case, a field of interest in attracting religious clients which functions though mutual exchange of benefits. Centers of gravity in the religious field are different types of religious institutions, organizations or scenes (which only for the sake of clarity are indicated by a single circle in the figure, but are a variety in themselves – and, the more we move to the upper left corner, the more we have to deal with a plurality of small, un-organized and individualistic circles. Religious actors are indicated by square brackets. Inside the organizations or scenes, we have the priests, the prophets, the magicians and the mystics as ideal types. Different types of religious actors, on the side of the clients or potential customers, are attracted in different intensity by different types of religious organizations or scenes. The two axes that are used here to differentiate the types are decidedly sociological, but open to and include a theological perspective. The religious field can be characterized by two axes: vertical difference according to the "degree of organization" (from bottom to the top), horizontal according to the "mediation of the divine presence" (from the left to the right) – whether we have institutions, traditions, established religious bodies, whether religiosity is focusing on rather particular persons or beliefs (this can be understood with reference to Weber's notion of charisma, thus be called charisma-oriented, and finally marginal mediation or even the absence of any mediation featuring immediacy of the individual to the transcendent or the divine presence.[10]

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[10] This pattern of two axes correspond to the way, Heinrich Schäfer (1992) has used to classify churches and religious groups in Central America.

Figure 3. The Contemporary Religious Field in Western Societies
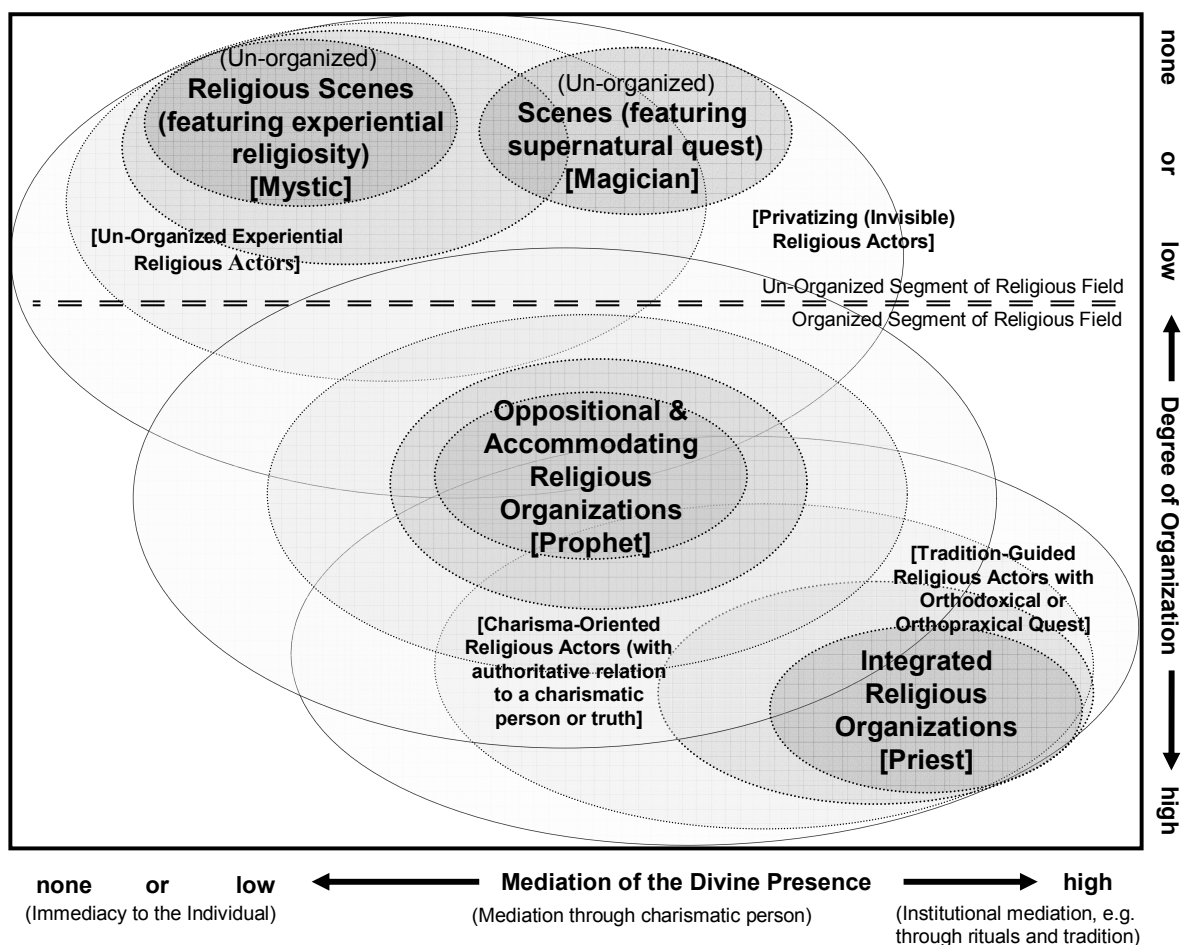
Now, where does self-identified "spirituality" find its place in the religious field? It is in the upper left corner where the preference for immediate individual experience of the divine presence comes together with low or zero degree of organization. But – and this is the core of our argument – "spirituality" finds its place *within* the religious field, it is part of the religious field, even though belonging to its un-organized segment.

3.2 James' Psychological Perspective: Spirituality and the Psychological Region of Religion

William James' work is another classic which should be regarded an authority especially for a psychological perspective on religion. James' famous definition of 'religion' "feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (James, 1902, p. 72) has been influential and inspiring for psychology of religion. It is our thesis that this definition of religion embraces and includes "spirituality" already and we try to add some plausibility to this thesis.

Certainly, "spirituality", as it is used today, is not James' term; he rather speaks of mysticism and other forms of relation to the divine. But certainly for him, "spirituality" does not stand in contrast or opposition to religion. On the contrary, James suggests understanding

the "godless or quasi-godless creeds" which he finds in Emmerson or in Buddhism *as religion* – and immediately adds that, for an adequate understanding, the 'divine' needs to be understood "very broadly":

"We must …, from the experiential point of view, call these godless or quasi-godless creeds 'religions'; and accordingly when in our definition of religion we speak of the individual's relation to 'what he considers the divine,' we must interpret the term 'divine' very broadly, as denoting any object that is godlike, whether it be a concrete deity or not." (James, 1902, p. 77)

Consistent with such broad understanding of the divine is a surprisingly broad variety of forms of relation to whatever the individual may consider the divine. The interesting point in the context of our argument is not so much the variety of religions experiences, but the fact that, for James, all of them go by the name *religion.*

The conclusion in face of such variety of forms which are all embraced and included *in religion* is James' suggestion of a common ground of all religious experience:

"When, in addition to these phenomena of inspiration, we take religious mysticism into the account, when we recall the striking and sudden unifications of a discordant self which we saw in conversion, and when we review the extravagant obsessions of tenderness, purity, and self-severity met with in saintliness, we cannot, I think, avoid the conclusion that in religion we have a department of human nature with unusually close relations to the transmarginal or subliminal region. … [This] region, then, is obviously the larger part of each of us, for it is the abode of everything that is latent and the reservoir of everything that passes unrecorded or unobserved. It contains, for example, such things as all our momentarily inactive memories, and it harbors the springs of all our obscurely motived passions, impulses, likes, dislikes, and prejudices. Our intuitions, hypotheses, fancies, superstitions, persuasions, convictions, and in general all our non-rational operations, come from it. It is the source of our dreams, and apparently they may return to it. In it arise whatever mystical experiences we may have, and our automatisms, sensory or motor; our life in hypnotic and "hypnoid" conditions, if we are subjects to such conditions; our delusions, fixed ideas, and hysterical, accidents, if we are hysteric subjects; our supra-normal cognitions, if such there be, and if we are telepathic subjects. It is also the fountain-head of much that feeds our religion. In persons deep in the religious life, as we have now abundantly seen— and this is my conclusion— the door into this region seems unusually wide open; at any rate, experiences making their entrance through that door have had emphatic influence in shaping religious history." (James, 1902, pp. 927-929)

In our reading of this conclusion of William James, we find strong arguments for an inclusion of what we today call "spiritual" experiences into the domain of *'religion'.* Or the other way around: to define 'religion' so broadly to include all so-called "spiritual" experiences.

We must remember that, for James, the natural assumptions he restricted himself to in the *Principles of Psychology* (James, 1890) were superceded by the phenomenal facts of experience documented in the *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). For James the switch from the natural science assumptions of the *Principles* gave way to the rich phenomenological description of the *Varieties* where religion is centered on religiosity. The territory now claimed for "spirituality" among contemporary scholars is already well marked out *as an integral part of the study of religion* for James. The problem we have created with large portions of research and instruments for research in the scientific study of religion is this: it is locked in the Procrustean bed of a limited and narrow concept of religion.

3.3 Schleiermacher's and Tillich's Theological Perspectives: Definition of Religion and the Place for Spirituality

Finally, we turn to philosophy of religion and theology. As a conceptual avenue of including the spiritual quest into the concept of religion, we think, psychology of religion would also stand on solid ground by re-considering Schleiermacher's (1799) definition of religion in his speeches *On Religion. Speeches to its Cultured Dispisers*.

In approaching his new concept of religion and paving his way toward it, Schleiermacher, in his Second Speech, contrasts religion with two prominent ways of understanding religion which he energetically opposes: the definition of religion by morality or acting, on the one hand, and the identification of religion with metaphysics or thinking, on the other. The new way Schleiermacher suggests is understanding religion as "intuition and feeling" or, more specific, as "sensibility and taste for the infinite." Religion, Schleiemacher goes on, "wishes to intuit the universe, wishes devoutly to overhear the universe's own manifestations and actions, longs to be grasped and filled by the universe's immediate influences in childlike passivity."

Schleiermacher, in his Third Speech, beautifully explicated this concept of religion, when he talks about his appreciation and fascination for the magic quest of the very young.

"With great attentiveness I can observe the longing of young minds for the miraculous and supernatural. Already along with the finite and determined, they seek something different that they can oppose to it; they grasp in all directions after something that reaches beyond the sensible phenomena and their laws; and however much even their senses are full of earthly objects, it is always as if they had besides these yet other objects that would have to waste away without sustenance. That is the first stirring of religion. A secret, uncomprehended intimation drives them beyond the riches of this world; therefore every trace of another world is so welcome to them; thus they take delight in the stories of superterrestrial beings, and everything about which it is most clear to them that it cannot exist here, they embrace with all the zealous love one dedicates to an object to which one has an obvious right that one, however, cannot assert." (Schleiermacher, 1799: 59)

It is our interpretation that this concept of "religion" describes exactly what many contemporaries mean when they use the word "spirituality". But, note: it is contained in Schleiermacher's conceptualization of *religion*.

What does this mean for our discussion? Attending to *knowledge*, beliefs about the metaphysical realm, or attending to *action*, to religious conduct of life, means attending to *derivates* of religion, but not to religion itself. If we want to find religion in research, we have to attend to feelings and intuitions. Religion is not about grasping something, but about being grasped; religion is not a search for significance – and does not include secular aims, as Pargament would like to have it –, but a "letting go" and letting oneself be impressed and intuited by an incomprehensible realm: by the "infinite" or the "universe" in Schleiermacher's terms. Schleiermachers term "feeling" ("Gefühl"), to be sure, is a pre-psychology and pre-psychoanalysis term; it can not be translated with emotion or affect. Instead, it is closely related to "intuition". Perhaps the most adequate contemporary term would be "experience" – in the literal Latin meaning of going on an expedition to encounter new phenomena, with the connotation, however, that this expedition may lead into an never-heard before territory of an other, incomprehensible world, the infinite.

Ralph Hood (1995, pp. 571-576) has emphasized that Schleiermacher's concept of religious feeling has both mystical and numinous characteristics; it is less a search for than a response to the sacred. In a similar fashion, James (1902, p. 481) refers to a sense of "more" that is integral to religious experience. Much of religion is concerned with articulating what this "more" is. James's often erroneously seen dismissal of this "more" as mere overbeliefs fails to appreciate that James's insistence was on an empirically grounded theology in human experience. In a similar fashion, Schleiermacher's "sensibility and taste for the infinite" is a form of consciousness identified with the infinity of God consciousness which can be elicited by a variety of finite objects, but is always in need of some theological clarification. Here again is more than ample room for the range of experiences which many would treat as "spiritual," but which have classically been acknowledge as the proper domain of *religion*.

Let us add another insight from the philosophy of religion and theology: Paul Tillich's understanding of religion. It has much in common with Schleiermacher's conceptualization, but Tillich's definition works with the concept of "ultimate concern" and thus highlights another aspect more clearly. Interesingly enough, Tillich introduces the phrase of "what

concerns us ultimately" in his reflections about "The Reality of God" in Volume One of his Systematic Theology (Tillich, 1951: 211ff.). He explains that "(t)his does not mean that first there is a being called God and then the demand that man should be ultimately concerned about him. It means that whatever concerns a man ultimately becomes god for him, and, conversely, it means that a man can be concerned ultimately only about which is god for him." Here we encounter a rather constructivist conceptualization at the heart of a substantive understanding of 'religion'.

What we think is important and should be considered in our work on the conceptualization of 'religion' is the notion of *ultimacy*. Tillich explains (cf. also Tillich, 1957) that humans are concerned about many things, but there is a hierarchy of concerns – and (only) what concerns us ultimately is God (for the individual person). Tillich's way of conceptualizing religion could help the scientific study of religion in the social sciences to come to terms. And we are not the first to suggest this. Robert Emmons (1999) has published a book with the title "The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns." The problem however with Emmon's proposal is the that he made a plural for a concept that does not allow for a plural; thus the contradiction is already in the title of the book – foreshadowing a problematic construction of measures and research design. The reason for referring to Emmon's misreading of Tillich is our intent to strongly underscore an aspect in the definition of religion which is widely forgotten or ignored in social scientific approaches to religion: *ultimacy*. To be sure: the ultimacy is not – and does not need to be – specified; and it is different for each of us. But without this hierarchy of concerns that melts in a vanishing point or in a horizon, theory and research about religion is left with a scattered plurality of functional and substantive characteristics.[11] And we should not be surprised that people on the street and scientists invent new names now and then.

From this perspective, we would dare to say: "spirituality" is perhaps a new attempt to re-claim and re-consider what used to be meant by the old word "religion". This rather sympathetic interpretation of the contemporary semantic trend, however, needs to be balanced by conceptual scrutiny whether theory and research in the scientific study of religion should go with the flow of contemporary semantics. Our suggestion, from our reading of the classics, is this: stop, think twice and clarify concepts using the logics of definition.

4 Conclusion: The Clarification of Concepts

In the first part of our paper in which we have unfolded the question and the task, we have suggested, on the basis of empirical results, the hypotheses that "spirituality" and "religion" share common ground. Further, from the doubling of self-identified "more spiritual" subjects in the group of *deconverts* in our own cross-cultural study on deconversion, we could advance the more explanatory assumption that also, for many deconverts, self-identified "spirituality" may not mean much more than "religion", namely *un-organized individualized religiosity*. The "spiritual" self-identification may thus indicate no more or less than rejection of organized religion, but not rejection of individual religiousness. Now, after presenting some fundamental lines of thought on the conceptualization of religion, it is possible to draw conclusions for the conceptual level.

Our conclusions for conceptualization are simple, but, if they are true and would find acceptance among our colleagues, they would change the semantics in the field considerably.

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[11] Such vanishing point of horizon is also indicated and contained in Schleiermacher's term of the 'universe,' but often this notion of ultimacy is not well understood.

Here are our theses. Our first thesis says: Self-identified "Spirituality" is (nothing but) religion. Our second thesis says: This "spirituality" is part of religion. The third thesis says: "Spirituality" is un-organized, experience-oriented religion.

We could use a different adjective for this third thesis and say: "Spirituality" is mystical religion – in the sense of Troeltsch's mysticism of the unchurched. Another adjective which may qualify here is "lived" religion. Streib has proposed this elsewhere (Streib, 2008). And we may be even more encouraged using this adjective after having read Meredith McGuire's (2008) new book *Lived Religion*. The problem with adjectives such as "mystical" or "lived" in association with religion is this: they must clearly and unambiguously specify a *differentia specifica*. And for this purpose, we think, sociological terms are most helpful, as we will explain shortly. And we can refer to more empirical results that profile this unchurched mysticism or uncurched "spirituality."

Quantitative empirical support for qualitative studies in psychology that have identified a minority of persons intensely opposed to religion while identifying themselves as spiritual is readily available. For instance, Zinnbauer et al. (1997, p. 553) used a modified form of Hood's M Scale (unity items only) and found that in their overall sample, self-rated religiousness did not correlate with mystical experience ($r = -.04$), but self-rated spirituality did ($r = .27$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, there was a significant difference between the mean mysticism scores for the "equally spiritual and religious" group and the "spiritual but not religious" group, with the latter scoring significantly higher. The percentages of self-identification into groups ("neither religious nor spiritual,") "religious but not spiritual," "spiritual but not religious," and "equally religious and spiritual" in Hood's data reasonably parallel Zinnbauer et al.'s (1997) data for mainstream college students. The scores on the M Scale, as well as the group comparisons, are also consistent with Zinnbauer et al.'s data. However, use of the complete M Scale provides further clarification. As with Zinnbauer et al.'s (1997) data, the means for the two experiential factors were greater for the "spiritual but not religious" group than for the "equally spiritual and religious" group. However, the difference was not significant for the introvertive factor (one that is quite compatible with classical Christianity), but it was significant the extrovertive factor (an experience less traditional within Christianity) (see Hood, 1985). The truly significant difference lay between the "spiritual but not religious" and "equally spiritual and religious" groups on the one hand, and the "religious but not spiritual" and "neither" groups on the other. A crucial point, consistent with previous research, was that both "spiritual-only" and "equally religious and spiritual" persons reported mystical experience more often than "religious-only" or "nonreligious" persons. Also important was that on the interpretative factor, the "equally religious and spiritual" group scored higher than the "spiritual but not religious" group; again, however, the real difference was between these two groups and the "religious but not spiritual" and the "neither" groups.

Thus we can summarize these data by stating that mystical experience ("spirituality") is commonly reported by individuals who identify themselves as spiritual rather than religious, and by those who identify themselves as equally religious and spiritual. In other words, there is a mysticism ("spirituality") both within and outside of religious traditions. This ought not to surprise us. Perhaps, as Katz (1983) reminds us, there are mystics who, even when struggling against their faith tradition, stay within their traditions. Religious mysticism, for them, is inherently conservative in this limited sense. For theses religious people, belief serves to adequately express their mystical experiences, and their religious rituals facilitate them (Hood, 1995). But for some "independent" mystics, spirituality is only constrained and choked by belief. These independent mystics are those who consider themselves spiritual but not religious.
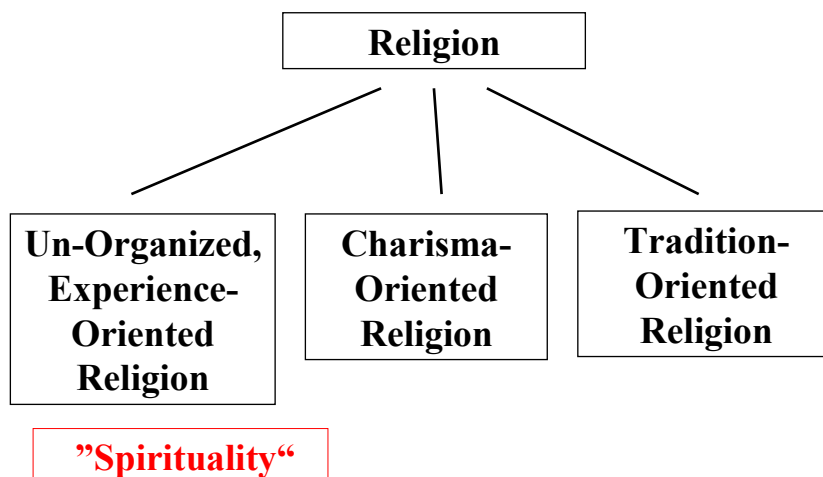
Hood (2003a) has reviewed several empirical studies using various indices of mysticism. Overall, a clear pattern emerges: Spirituality is more closely identified with mystical experience, whereas religion is more closely identified with a specific religious interpretation of this experience. Thus the current debate on religiousness and spirituality is really neither new nor theoretically unexpected. It has been more than three decades since Vernon (1968) noted that those who answered "none" to questions of religious preference were ignored in the scientific study of religion. He argued that perhaps a parallel could be drawn to those in political surveys who identify themselves as "independents." Such person, he noted, are not without political convictions (Vernon 1968, p. 223). "Spiritual but not religious" persons, or "nones," are perhaps religious independents, paralleling political independents. In response to the question "Have you ever had a feeling that you were somehow in the presence of God?", Vernon found that those who rejected membership in formal religious groups (the "nones") answered either "sure" (5.9%) or "I think so" (20%). Thus 26% of the "nones" nevertheless thought or were sure they had had an experience of God. This percentage closely matches survey reports of mystical experience across a wide range of populations, religious and otherwise, as discussed above. They are also congruent with psychological research indicating that "nones" often score higher on measures of the minimal phenomenological properties of the experience than on the religious interpretation of the experience (Hood & Morris, 1981). Vernon also noted the problem that his religious "nones" had with using religious language to describe mystical experiences.

So there is not simply the finding of spirituality emerging in opposition to religion, but the persistent failure by social scientists of religion to study the experiences of those who do not primarily identify themselves as religious. If these people are more willing to identify themselves as "spiritual" than as "religious," it has been a social-scientific oversight to think that they have nothing to do with "religion." Perhaps it is only the lack of semantic alternatives that triggers the preference for identification with "spirituality".

The conclusion from our three theses is this: There is no necessity for a conceptualization of 'spirituality'. We could, of course, define this term and include it into the theory of religion; but there is not need for this. The concept of religion is sufficient. In more technical terms: "spirituality" as an emic term needs to be taken seriously and we need to engage in research that clarifies the meanings of "spirituality" for those who identify themselves as either "more spiritual than religious" or as "spiritual, but not religious" (Belzen, 2008). However, as an etic term, 'religion' is sufficient, the concept of 'spirituality' as an etic term can go.

To be more precise, we propose a definition tree as visualized in Figure 4: 'Religion' is the general term (genus proximum) for various forms of religion. One way of defining different forms that are included in 'religion' is to define the specific difference (*differentia specifica*) according to sociological aspects: we could use adjectives 'tradition-guided', 'charisma-oriented' and 'un-organized-experience-oriented' to indicate the specific differences (*differentiae specificae*). Taking into account the changes in the religious fields in Western cultures, it has become a necessity to use additional signifiers in combination with religion. The adjectives which we have mentioned may be sufficient for the contemporary religious fields in the United States and most of Europe.

Figure 4. A Definition Tree of 'Religion'

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │    Religion     │
                    └─────────────────┘
            ╱                 │                 ╲
 ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
 │ Un-Organized,│   │  Charisma-   │   │  Tradition-  │
 │ Experience-  │   │  Oriented    │   │  Oriented    │
 │  Oriented    │   │  Religion    │   │  Religion    │
 │  Religion    │   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
 └──────────────┘
 ┌──────────────┐
 │ "Spirituality"│
 └──────────────┘
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The conclusion for scientific conceptualization and terminology would thus be the following: It does not make sense to invest time and energy in conceptualizing 'spirituality'. This term is unnecessary for the scientific discourse and for the conceptualization of etic terms in empirical research. On the contrary, it is a waste of energy to develop parallel concepts, scales and measures. Furthermore, it is confusing to use the terms 'religion' and 'spirituality' parallel and interchangeably (which we see in many recent publications); thus it does make sense to add 'spirituality' in names of divisions or journals. And finally, it would be a mistake – even though this would be a conceptually sound option – to replace 'religion' with 'spirituality', because it is not necessary to re-invent the wheel and cut-off a century of conceptual discourse.

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