

Questionnaires from 12,146 Unitarian Universalist members of eighty churches in a representative denomination sample were used to explore the dimensions of religiosity in a post-traditional religion. Mean scores by churches on forty-five varied items were factor-analyzed, producing a large first factor made up of theological values, institutional values, and personal moral values. The second dimension contained all items reflecting social morality. Other dimensions proposed are church sociality, psychological development emphasis, esthetic-worship values, religious education, church as a friendship source, and intrasectarian affirmations. On this basis, modifications of the dimensionality of religiosity are proposed.

DIMENSIONS OF RELIGIOSITY IN A POST-TRADITIONAL GROUP

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INTRODUCTION. Previous studies of religiosity have focused upon a number of hypothetical dimensions and attempted to explore their interrelationships. Various dimensions have been proposed such as creedalism, devotionism, ritualism, organizational commitment, personal and social values, religious knowledge, and personal experience. The ambiguous relationships discovered between these "dimensions" have led almost all investigators to agree that "religiosity" is a multidimensional phenomenon. Dittes (1969) provides a survey of such investigations. One notable exception is the finding of Keene (1967) that members of the Baha'i religion share, to a high degree, several unique dimensions of religion.

Lis study explores the dimensions of religiosity among Unitarian Universalists. Like the Baha'i group, UU's can be regarded as related to, but hardly centrally within the Christian tradition, with which most factorial studies of dimensionality have been concerned; 57 percent of the members of this denomination do not regard their personal religion as "Christian". Like the Baha'i group, most members are converts-90 percent of the UU's. Unlike Baha'i or Theosophy, Unitarian Universalism is not a syncretism; nor is it a renewed form of a traditional religion such as Vedanta, or Reform Judaism. The group can be characterized as "post-traditionally religious" (Tapp 1967a, 1967b, 1968).

PROCEDURES

Self-administered questionnaires were obtained from 12,146 members of the Unitarian Universalist Association in the United States and Canada. The respondents were obtained through a representative sampling of churches and lay-led fellowships. This population of 1,110 groups was stratified into high-growth churches, ordinary churches, and fellowships. The large middle stratum was sampled on a proportional-to-size basis, and the other strata were sampled randomly. Questionnaires were mailed to all adult members, and the respective return rates were 67, 47, and 69 percent.

Forty-five items from this questionnaire were chosen for examination by factor analysis. Earlier examination had shown these items to be reflective of a variety of religious beliefs and values, personal and social beliefs and values, and institutional attitudes and expectations. Some items explored many of the previously reported dimensions of religiosity. Other items were developed to explore the particular religiosity of this group.

For computational simplification as well as to permit subsequent ecological examination of individual church milieus, each of the eighty churches entered the factor analysis as an "individual." The mean score for each church on each item was subjected to a principal components factor analysis.¹

In the initial principal components analysis, each of the first ten factors contained at least one item carrying a factor loading greater than .35. The first factor accounted for 36 percent of the variance, and the first ten factors accounted for 83 percent of the variance. To clarify the relationship between these factors, and in view of the present lack of consensus on the desirability of the rotation of factor loadings (Humphreys 1968), the initial loadings were orthogonally rotated, using varimax, biquartimax, and quartimax procedures. The ten initial factors received the highest loadings on the ten new factors extracted by varimax as well as by biquartimax rotations. On the quartimax rotation, the initial Factors VIII and V were interchanged. Closer analysis by item indicated that not only had the initial factors received similar loading on the rotated factors, but the individual items with high loadings upon each factor retained these loadings upon rotation. The results of the varimax rotation are reported in this article.

In the presentation of these results in table 1, the content of an item has been paraphrased to indicate the direction of Unitarian Universalist response. For example, item 1, the God question, is here paraphrased as "nontheism." In the actual instrument, the wording of items and the choice of response alternatives were randomly varied in "direction" so as to avoid response set.

Using .50 as the minimum criterion of significance for the loading of an item, only four overlapping loadings occurred, three between Factors I and II. These are indicated by footnotes to the table.

FINDINGS

DIMENSION 1. PERSONAL BELIEFS, STYLES, AND VALUES

The items comprising this dimension, loading high on Factor I, reflect traditional theological beliefs, a number of personal moral values, and certain values regarding the function and cultural stance of the church. This is a considerably wider range than

I am indebted to Professor David Wiley of the University of Chicago for suggesting this Unitarian Universalist religiosity, although it is somewhat unorthodox procedure, which takes account only of between-groups variance.

the first factor or dimension that was initially proposed by King (1967), "Creedal Assent and Personal Commitment." It is even wider than the amended first factor suggested on the basis of his subsequent analyses, "Creedal Assent" (King and Hunt 1969). Measures of belief appear here. So does prayer frequency, suggesting that ritualism or devotionalism is not a separate dimension within this population.

In so far as a rough distinction can be made between an individual's personal morality and his social morality, almost all the items dealing with personal ethics and values are in this first dimension. All five items on sex are included, as well as the gambling item. Some social issues items have secondary loadings on Factor I. That such ethical items appear in this first, dimension would indicate that at least some of the supposed "consequential" elements of religious belief and commitment are not, within this population, separate from beliefs and commitments.

Recognizing that the items comprising Dimension 1 are a selection drawn from an already selected and limited set of items, we may nevertheless perceive some of the outlines of the religiosity most common to most of the Unitarian Universalists.

The most striking aspect of Dimension 1 is the extent and coherence of post-traditionality that it reveals. There is a clear disaffiliation with Christianity, its Biblical sources, its God-beliefs and immortality beliefs, its reliance upon Jesus, its encouragement of the ritual of prayer. The content of the second highest loading item suggests the positive side of this, in the UU's' desire that their denomination reflect a universal or humanistic religiousness.

Almost equally striking is the consistent privatism or individualism exhibited on the items dealing with sexual morality and with other levels of moral behavior which, while often falling within the criminal statutes, reflect victimless "crimes" -abortion, gambling, drug addiction.

DIMENSION 2. SOCIAL-ETHICAL VALUES

Loading high on Factor II are those items dealing with social values and the responsibility of the church for social change. None of these items appears on King's original or amended listings of dimensions. That they distributed here between the first and second dimensions would indicate that this population differs considerably from the Methodist group that he studied.

We must note the consistent and coherent "liberal" direction of these items as they loaded Factor II. As distinct from the moral value items in Factor I, these items all deal with "social" ethics where the rights of other persons are involved. In contrast to the personal morality situations, there clearly are "victims" here, whether or not behavior toward them is socially defined as "criminal." Racism, war, poverty-all of these reflect other-inflicted rather than self-inflicted kinds of misery.

DIMENSION 3. CHURCH SOCIALITY VALUES AND PARTICIPATION

The two items exploring the "fellowship" function of church-going load this dimension heavily, and the self-estimate of activity within the local church also appears here, indicating that this need for a community of common values is a major dimension of religiosity.

TABLE I. Ten Factors of Unitarian Universalist Religiosity

Loading	Content	Loading	Content
	I. Personal Beliefs, Styles, and Values		III. Church Sociality Values and Participation
.91	Privatism on nonmarital sexuality	.85	Fellowship as high-order value in ideal church
.90	Post-Christian denominational thrust	.81	Fellowship as high-order church function
.88	Permissiveness on contraception	.69	Church activity and participation high
.85	Nonuse of personal prayer	.59	Celebrating common values as high-order church function
.84	Nontheism	.53	Worship as low-order church function§
.84	Personal religion not "Christian"		IV. Psychological Development Values
.84	Privatism on extramarital sexuality	.89	Personal psychological development as high-order church function
.83	Self-designation as theological "liberal"	.71	Favor increased psychological development material in church school
.81	Against increased Biblical material in church school		V. Esthetic-Reflective- Worship Values
.78	Gambling a low-order social problem	.73	Music and esthetic satisfaction as high-order church function
.75	Nonbelief in personal immortality	.69	Reflection as high-order church function
.70	Nonaffirmation of trans-human power for goodness	.65	Public worship as high-order church function
.69	Doubtful of truth or contemporary value of Jesus' teachings		VI. ReligiÖUS Knowledge (A)
.68	Permissiveness on grounds for divorce	.72	Jesus in Jewish prophetic tradition
.66	Permissiveness on abortion	.62	Doubtful that Jesus broke with Judaism to create a new religion
.57	Approve nonviolent civil disobedience;\:	.58	Motivating to serve others as low-order church function.
.56	Worship as low-order church function		VII. Intrasectarian Humanism
.56	Self-designation as social "liberal";\:	.81	Jesus d' d' not see h'Imse'f as MeSSl' or Christ
.53	Drug addiction as low-order social problem	.70	Human potential is stronger for love th'l' an eVl
.52	Jesus' eschatology reduces contemporary relevance of his teachings		VIII. Religious Education Stress
.50	Approve ministerial participation in demonstrations;\:	.78	Religious education as high-order church function
	II. Social-Ethical Values		
.83	Social action as high-order church function		
.81	Racial integration as high-order problem for church action		
.81	Denominational peace activities have high priority		
.80	Poverty as high-order problem for actiOn		
.74	Prefer doveish policy in Viet Nam		
.70	Approve ministerial participation in demonstratiÖns		
.69	Self-designation as social "liberal"		
.68	Approve selective conscientious objection		
.59	Approve nonviolent civil disobedience		

TABLE J (continued)

<u>Loading</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Loading</u>	<u>Content</u>
	IX. Religious Knowledge (B)		X. Church as Actual Source of Friend-
.85	Jesus' Messiahshipa creation of the early church		ships
.68	Intellectual stimulation as high-order <u>church function</u>	.83	Few close friends in church

• Based on orthogonal varimax rotation, by items, of principal components solution. Using .50 as a minimum criterion, four of these items also loaded second factors. Items 20, 32, and 33 loaded Factor J (.57, .50, and .56, respectively) and item 6 loaded .53 on Factor III.

† The content of these items, as indicated in the text, has been paraphrased for brevity in this table. The directions of these paraphrased responses embody the response-quality for the majority Unitarian Universalist responses on the questionnaire. A list of the actual items may be obtained from the author.

‡ Principal loading on Factor II.

§ Principal loading on Factor I.

DIMENSION 4. PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT VALUES

Whereas the previous dimensions have indicated needs for shared beliefs and values within a community, this dimension points to a more idiosyncratic value of personal development. This desire for "maturity" is an inward aspect of religion. With more traditional populations, questions relating to "spiritual growth" or "Christian perfection" might explore the same dimension.

DIMENSION 5. ESTHETIC-REFLECTIVE-WEBSHIP VALUES

The personality needs reflected here are equally inward and personal, but point to a communal context and illuminate an important religious function. The distinctiveness of this dimension from Dimension 4 is emphasized by the extremely low loadings of these items on Factor IV (-.09, .22, -.20, respectively).

DIMENSION 6. EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH (FACTOR VIII)

Given the convert-status of this group, and the fact that many members join these churches during the years when they enroll their children for religious education, the distinct emergence of this dimension may be predictable. This emphasis on education apparently cuts across most other ideological elements.

DIMENSION 7. THE CHURCH AS SOURCE OF PERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS (FACTOR X)

This item might have been expected to load Factor III, Church Sociality Values and Participation, but the loading there was only -.35. This apparent discrepancy between the desirable and the actual probably reflects the social, geographical, and religious mobility of these respondents. Within this population, at least, those who have more close friends in their local church are typically the less mobile persons who live outside of the urban or suburban areas.

DIMENSION 8. INTRASECTARIAN AFFIRMATIONS

Factors VI and IX, characterized here as Religious Knowledge (A) and (B), require special comment. The difficulties of delineating "religious knowledge" among mainstream religious populations are increased with Unitarian Universalists. Consider the first item on Factor IX. Is the belief that Jesus' divinity was a posthumous imputation simply a Unitarian heresy, or is it an historical judgment? In either case, should it be described as "religious knowledge"? King's analysis of Methodists did not initially show a religious knowledge factor, although his subsequent item-scale analysis yielded a homogeneous set of five items, three of them being simple identifications of Biblical authorship and the remaining two being noncontroversial descriptions of church history. The coefficient of homogeneity was admittedly low on these items and only rose slightly when another composite index was included.

It hardly seems useful to make much of the assimilation of essentially trivial factual information. The real issue would seem to be the kind of historical-creedal-mythological assertions that religious individuals make, and the inferences they draw from them and the uses to which they put them. To some extent, Factor VII reflects this. Within this population, a rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus is positively correlated with a humanistic assertion that man's potential for love can overcome his potential for evil, and these two items load together on this factor. We prefer to regard such items as "Intrasectarian Affirmations." These two affirmations, for instance, have typically gone together in the history of this religious group. Whether or not they reflect anything like a simple historical judgment or a clear bit of human knowledge, at the least, they provide an indication that one has interiorized certain assertions characteristic of this particular religious group. Insiders may say that they "know" these things to be the case, but from the standpoint of outsiders, that would be less than knowledge.

From the fact that such items form separate minor factors, we may conclude that they must be distinguished from the more central belief items of Dimension I, and regarded, at most, as secondarilycreedal. Only confusion would result from combining the items loading Factors VI, VII, and IX into an index for this dimension.

Further comparative data from other traditions may make it possible to work toward the full delineations of the parameters of human religiosity. In time, we might even be able to describe a "meta-religiosity" space, in which all religious groups and individuals can be located with reference to each other.

SUMMARY

Factors are an artifact of factor analysis, and insofar as the factors extracted resemble meaningful aspects of religiosity, it would appear that the religiosity of the Unitarian Universalist population is not unidimensional. Nevertheless, the number of items that received high loading on the first factor, the amount of variance controlled by this factor, and the wide-ranging content of these items suggest that this post-traditional religiosity is less multidimensional than more traditional populations, such as the Methodist sample analyzed by King. It seems clearly defensible to view the first five factors as five dimensions of this kind of religiosity.

Factors VI, VII, and IX seem to reflect different aspects of what we have called intrasectarian affirmation. In subsequent analyses, it may be possible to develop a composite index for these and similar items. Similarly, Factor VIII reflects a particular

intrasectarian stance, the salience within this population of transgenerational communication through religious education. Finally, Factor X provides a measure of the function of this religion in providing close personal friendships.

On this basis, an eight-dimensional model of religiosity is proposed

- 1). Personal beliefs, styles and values.
- 2). Social-ethical values.
- 3). Church sociality values and participation.
- 4). Psychological development values.
- 5). Esthetic-reflective-worship values.
- 6). Educational function of the church.
- 7). The church as source of personal friendships.
- 8). Intrasectarian affirmations.

Although these dimensions have only slight congruence with those proposed or reported for other religious groups, they make conceptual sense and furnish the basis for subsequent examination of variations within this post-traditional denomination.

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