

The Structure of Religiosity:

A Cross-national Comparison of Japan and Germany

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I. Introduction

The study on religiosity discussed in this paper was a joint project prompted by an encounter with Wolfgang Jagodzinski, going back to the time I was invited to serve as a visiting professor at the University of Bonn in Germany (September 1997 to March 1998). Since then, I have taken many opportunities to conduct joint research with Jagodzinski, and together we have produced as many as six research papers (Manabe and Jagodzinski, 2000; Manabe, Jagodzinski, and Onodera, 2000; Manabe, Jagodzinski, and Onodera, 2002; Manabe and Jagodzinski, 2002 (Vol. 88); Manabe and Jagodzinski, 2002 (Vol. 92), and Jagodzinski and Manabe, 2003).

Building on previous research, this joint study was launched to examine whether “religion” in Japan and Germany, given the significant differences between the two countries, could be discussed as a single concept using the same word, “religion,” in both contexts. Our basic approach can be summarized in the following two points.

① The question of whether the countries are “the same” or “different” with regard to religion must not be viewed as one that requires them to be one or the other. That is, from the perspective of empirical

science, it is better not to look at the issue as a dichotomic one, whether they are “the same” or “different,” but instead to look at what kinds of similarities exist in some areas, and what kinds of differences exist in others.

② The significance of cross-national comparisons in the social sciences lies not in their “purpose,” but in their “methods.” The purpose is to more broadly and deeply describe some phenomenon—in this case, religion—and to analyze and better understand it. A comparison—in this case, a cross-national comparison—is the method used to achieve this purpose.

In keeping with this basic approach, we extracted from the existing literature information about the nature of what constitutes Japan’s unique “religiosity,” and constructed these components into questionnaire items. In other words, we attempted to conceptualize and operationalize a “religiosity” that is uniquely Japanese. We conducted a nationwide survey in Japan using a questionnaire we constructed using these procedures, and then conducted a nationwide survey using essentially the same questionnaire in Germany. Thus we obtained two sets of survey data. These two surveys were conducted as part of a collaborative study entitled “A Comparative Study of the Values and Religiosity of Contemporary People: From a Non-Western Perspective” (Number 17203036) with funding from a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, 2005–2007 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) (Kiban-Kenkyu (A)). Some of the results of the data analysis of the nationwide survey conducted in Japan have already been published (Kazufumi Manabe, 2008). This paper presents the results of the Japanese data analysis alongside the results of the German data analysis, from a comparative perspective. The comparative perspective is the perspective from which we will examine the “similarities” and “differences” in “religiosity” between people in Japan and Germany. Before proceeding with the analysis, however, the following three points must be noted.

(1) Thus far, the word “religiosity” has been used without any ex-

planation of its meaning. Its usage in this paper must be defined. The terms “social consciousness” and “political consciousness” are said to be distinctly Japanese. The word “religiosity” is used essentially in the same way as these phrases. For example, Junichi Kyogoku (1968) defined political consciousness as “people’s way of looking at or thinking about politics generally or about specific political issues, and their mode of behavior derived therefrom.” Thus, the word “religiosity” can be broadly defined as “people’s way of looking at, thinking about, feeling about, or acting with regard to religion generally or with regard to specific religious issues.” Defining the term broadly seems to be the most appropriate way to achieve the goal of understanding the overall concept of that which makes up the distinctive “religiosity” of the Japanese, as addressed in “Japanese Religiosity” Satoru Kaneko (1997), “The Religious View of Nature of the Japanese” by Ryo Nishiwaki (2004), and “The Simplistic Religious Feelings of the Japanese” by Fumi Hayashi (2007).

(2) I mentioned this paper would “examine the ‘similarities’ and ‘differences’ in ‘religiosity’ between people living in Japan and Germany,” but this can be done using a variety of methods. The questionnaire method was used in this cross-national comparative study of religiosity. Examining the similarities and differences between the two countries is done by conducting a data analysis of the survey results. When analyzing the results of a questionnaire survey on people’s “way of looking at, thinking about, feeling about, or acting with regard to” an issue, the research methods generally available can be categorized as (a) descriptive analysis, (b) conditional analysis, (c) structural analysis, and (d) change analysis (Saburo Yasuda, 1970). (a) Descriptive analysis is a method of trying to grasp the distribution of responses to individual questionnaire items. (b) Conditional analysis is a method of cross-tabulating and analyzing people’s responses to individual questionnaire items by demographic factors such as gender, age, educational background, occupation, and income. (c) Structural analysis is a method of analyzing the inter-relationships between responses to question items. (d) Change

analysis is a method that can be used with any of the above three methods, but focuses on changes over time.

Examining the similarities and differences in religiosity between people in Japan and Germany can be done from the three perspectives of (a) descriptive analysis, (b) conditional analysis, and (c) structural analysis (change analysis cannot be conducted because the national surveys were only conducted once in each country), but this paper will focus on (a) descriptive analysis and (c) structural analysis.

(3) Below I look at the specific methods involved in conducting a descriptive analysis and a structural analysis. First though, it is important to note that in this paper the former method, descriptive analysis, is a method of showing and examining the results of a simple-tabulation (marginal frequency distribution) of each questionnaire item created for the purpose of measuring the respondent's religiosity, in the form of a bar graph.

On the other hand, a variety of different techniques have been developed for conducting structural analysis. I have used Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), one of the methods of Facet Analysis developed by Louis Guttman, to analyze the results of national survey conducted in Japan. Thus, this is the method I will use here to analyze the survey results from Germany.

As a type of multidimensional scaling, SSA is a method of expressing the relationship between n number of question items shown in a correlation matrix by the size of the distance between n points in an m -dimensional ($m < n$) space. The higher the correlation, the smaller the distance, and the lower the correlation the greater the distance. Usually a 2-dimensional (plane) or 3-dimensional (cube) space is used to visually depict the relationship between question items. Unlike factor analysis, the output axis has no particular meaning in SSA. This shows that SSA is the most appropriate method of visually depicting the overall structure and relationships between the data (Kazufumi Manabe, 2001, 2002).

Next I would like to more fully explain the rationale for using this

technique to perform a structural analysis of the “religiosity of the Japanese.” I already discussed the process of constructing the questionnaire, the “Survey on Religiosity” used in this study. Before conducting this survey, we reviewed the literature on Japanese religiosity and tried to construct question items based on the propositions extracted. However, the question items thus constructed essentially focused a searchlight on individual components of the “aspects of religiosity” among the Japanese, and did so in such a way that prevents the individual analysis of question item responses from revealing an overall “structure” of religiosity comprised of linkages between those individual components. Thus, Smallest Space Analysis demonstrates its usefulness to exploratory analysis by visually depicting such an overall structure. This is the primary reason for using SSA in the structural analysis of religiosity.

I will now proceed with examining the similarities and differences in religiosity in Japan and Germany using (a) descriptive analysis based on the creation of bar graphs from simple-tabulations, and (b) structural analysis based on the creation of SSA maps from correlation matrices.

II. Survey Outline

National surveys were conducted in both Japan and Germany using essentially the same questionnaire. Overviews of the surveys follow.

1. Japanese survey

- (1) Respondents: Male and female adults aged 20 and older, nationwide.
- (2) Sampling procedure: Japanese research company Central Research Services was entrusted to conduct the sampling and surveying. The sample was obtained using a two-stage stratified random sampling of men and women aged 20 and older from the Basic Resident Registry as of March 31, 2006. The country was divided into 12 regions. These were divided by size into 16 large cities, other cities, and towns and villages, and surveys were conducted in 25 locations in the 16 large cities, 63 locations in the other cities, and 12 locations in the towns and villages, for

a total of 100 locations. 18 people were surveyed from each of these 100 locations, yielding a total of 1800 respondents.

(3) Survey method: Questionnaire leave-and-pick-up method

(4) Survey period: March 2007

(5) Valid response rate: 882/1800 (49.2%)

2. German survey

(1) Respondents: Male and female German-speaking adults aged 18 and older, nationwide.

(2) Sampling procedure: German research company Marplan was entrusted to conduct the sampling and surveying. Survey respondents were selected using the Kish Method, from randomly selected households chosen using the random walk method, based on the ADM sampling system developed by the German Market and Public Opinion Research Institute (Arbeitskreis Deutscher Markt und Meinungsforschungsinstitute, ADM) in the 1970s. Six residences were extracted from each of 129 ADM sample points nationwide (105 in West Germany, 24 in East Germany). Next, after subtracting from these 774 households those 42 where the survey could not be conducted due to vacancy or other reasons, survey respondents were selected using the Kish Method from the remaining 732 households. However, another 176 households were further excluded because “No one could be contacted after three visits” or because “The residents were unwilling to participate.” Respondents were extracted from the remaining 556 households, and valid responses were received from 515 individuals (subtracting 41 individuals who could not respond to the survey due to illness or unwillingness to participate).

(3) Survey method: Personal interview method using a questionnaire

(4) Survey Period: February to March 2008

(5) Valid response rate: 515/732 (70.4%)

III. Data Analysis

A detailed explanation of how the questionnaire items on the “Survey on Religiosity” are classified into (a) items based on substantively defined content and (b) items based on formally defined content (facets), is provided in a previous paper (Kazufumi Manabe, 2008). Using that approach, the questionnaire items on religiosity were classified into the following three categories:

① Question items related to whether the respondent is involved in religious behaviors.

② Question items related to whether the respondent believes in the existence of deities (God), an afterlife, reincarnation, souls, guardian souls (guardian angels), and UFOs.

③ Question items related to the respondent’s religious faith, beliefs, and feelings.

Below I discuss the results for each of these three question item groups using (a) descriptive analysis, based on the creation of bar graphs using simple-tabulations, and (b) structural analysis, based on Smallest Space Analysis using correlation matrices.

1. Religious Behaviors

(1) Descriptive Analysis

Earlier I noted that essentially identical questionnaires were used in the nationwide surveys conducted in Japan and Germany. I use the qualifier “essentially” here because the questionnaires used in both countries were not exactly the same, but had slight differences in sentence composition and verbal expressions based on the religious traditions of each country. They were designed so that the question items would have the same essential meaning, that is, functional equivalence, even if they used slightly different rhetorical expressions.

The specific correspondence between the question items on the Japanese and German survey are listed below.

(a) Q10 on the Japanese survey, “Do you visit a shrine on New Year’s

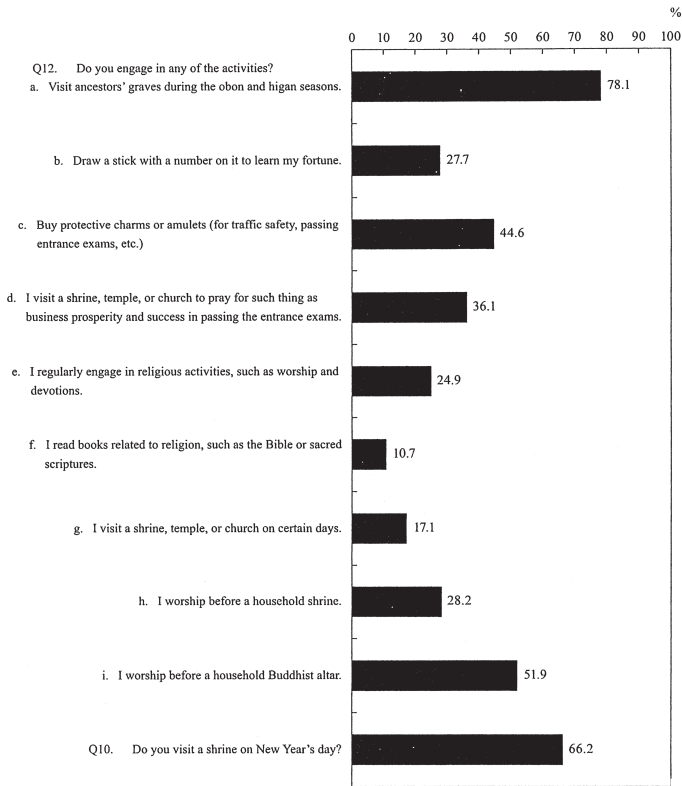


Figure1-① Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions on Religious Behaviors(Japan)

Day?” is correspondent to Q9 on the German survey, “Do you attend worship services on important church holidays?”

(b) Likewise, Q12a “Visit ancestors’ graves during the obon and higan seasons” is correspondent to Q11-1 “Visit ancestors’ or relatives’ graves on memorial days.”

(c) Since we could not think of a religious behavior that would directly correspond to the religious behavior expressed in Q12b “I draw a stick with a number on it to learn my fortune,” this question was excluded from the German survey.

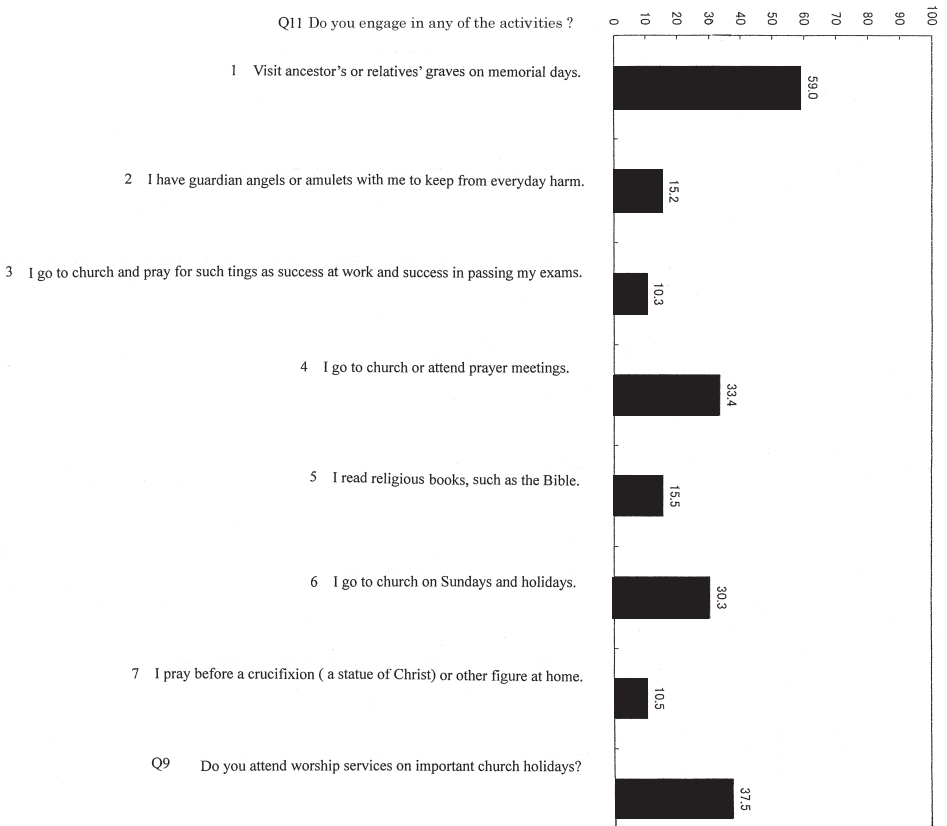


Figure1-② Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions on Religious Behaviors(Germany)

(d) Q12c “I buy protective charms or amulets (for traffic safety, passing the entrance exams, etc.)” is correspondent to Q11-2 “I have a guardian angel or protective charm with me to keep me from everyday harm.”

(e) Q12d “I visit a shrine, temple, or church to pray for such things as business prosperity and success in passing the entrance exams” is correspondent to Q11-3 “I go to church and pray for such things as success at

work and success in passing my exams.”

(f) Q12e “I regularly engage in religious activities such as worship and devotions” is correspondent to Q11-4 “I go to church or attend prayer meetings.”

(g) Q12f “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible or sacred scriptures” is correspondent to Q11-5 “I read religious books, such as the Bible.”

(h) Q12g “I visit a shrine, temple, or church on certain days” is correspondent to Q11-6 “I go to church on Sundays and holidays.”

(i) Q12h “I worship before a household shrine” and (j) Q12i “I worship before a household Buddhist altar” are correspondent in combination to Q11-7 “I pray before a crucifixion (a statue of Christ) or other figure at home.”

Thus prepared, a comparison of the results of the Japanese and German responses based on the height of the bar graphs reveals that there are (A) question items where the height of the Japanese bar graph is higher, indicating a higher percentage of Japanese respondents involving in that behavior, and (B) question items where the height of the German bar graph is higher, indicating a higher percentage of German respondents involving in that behavior.

(A) Activities with a higher percentage of Japanese participants

- Grave visits (approx. 20% difference)
- Buddhist altar/crucifixion statue of Christ (approx. 40% difference)
- Charms/guardian angels (approx. 30% difference)
- Pray for success (approx. 25% difference)
- New Year’s Day/church holidays (approx. 30% difference)

(B) Activities with a higher percentage of German participants

- Temple or Shrine/Church on Sundays (approx. 10% difference)
- Devotions/worship services, prayer meetings (approx. 10% difference)
- Religious books (approx. 5% difference)

How can these results be interpreted? One approach, which I have

used in previous analyses of Japanese religiosity, is to classify the religious behaviors into groups and assign meanings (characteristics) based on those groups. I classify the question items regarding religious behaviors into three types using Smallest Space Analysis: (i) Bible/sacred scripture reading, worship, devotions, shrine visits, (ii) grave visits, household shrine/altar worship, and (iii) New Year's Day shrine visits, fortune-telling sticks, protective charms and amulets, and prayer. I then further focus on the shared social characteristics of the activities in each group to describe them as (i) faith-manifestation behaviors, (ii) traditional or customary behaviors and (iii) event-specific behaviors.

Using this method of classification, the (a) religious behaviors with a higher percentage of Japanese participants tend to be traditional behaviors and event-specific behaviors, while (b) those with a higher percentage of German participants tend to be faith-manifestation behaviors. This is an important difference between the religiosity of the Japanese and the Germans. This will be discussed in greater depth later, but when “faith-manifestation behaviors” are used as the starting point, there is only a low correlation at the 0.2 level with “traditional behaviors” and a very low correlation of less than 0.1 with “event-specific behaviors.” That is, from a quantitative perspective, Japanese religious behavior tends to favor “traditional behaviors” and “event-specific behaviors,” which are a fair distance away from “faith-manifestation behaviors” in terms of meaning.

This finding has important implications for the observation—through a questionnaire survey in this case—and analysis of Japanese religiosity since cross-national comparative studies of religiosity have not adequately divided so-called “religious behaviors” into different types of behaviors, as has been done here. That is, there has been a lack of “dimension specification.”

For example, one of the studies that has attracted the most attention in this field is the Survey of Japanese Values, a nationwide survey conducted in Japan (Kisala, Nagai, and Yamada, 2007), corresponding to the European Values Study. However, this survey does not distinguish

between types of religious behavior. Nonetheless, they do lead to the generalization that “In Japan, although the percentage of people who have religious faith is low, there is a high rate of participation in religious activities.”

What we find from our Japan-Germany comparative survey is not that “participation in religious activities is high” in Japan, but that Japanese respondents have higher rates of participation in “traditional behaviors” and “event-specific behaviors,” and lower rates of participation in “faith-manifestation behaviors” than their German counterparts. Dimension specification efforts based on the empirical data regarding religious behaviors pose interesting challenges from the perspective of cross-national comparison.

Although I just discussed the differences between Japan and Germany, this is not to suggest an absence of similarities. For example, the percentage of respondents involving in grave visits (78.1% in Japan, 59.0% in Germany) was quite high in both countries.

One interpretation of this result can be explained using the term “memorialism,” a topic of increasing discussion in the field of sociology of religion. According to this approach, as religiosity in the form of ancestor worship, which is common among the Japanese, has been secularized, it is being transformed into personal emotions, like sentimental connections to and nostalgic memories of deceased family members. Although the ratio of people who involve in religious behaviors is gradually falling as society becomes more secularized, the percentage of people who involve in “grave visits,” precisely because they are not an expression of religiosity, continues to remain relatively high.

However, the results of data analysis suggest that, while I can reject neither that interpretation nor the effectiveness of the term “memorialism” (I even use this term in my interpretation of the SSA maps), the matter is more complicated than it might at first appear. As will be discussed later, one of the question items regarding “religious faith, beliefs and feelings” was “The souls of our ancestors are living on somewhere and are always watching out for us.” The correlation coeffi-

cient between this question item and the item “I have religious faith” is 0.19 in Japan (statistically significant at the 1% level) and 0.46 in Germany (statistically significant at the 1% level). The much higher correlation in Germany is an extremely interesting result. It suggests that some kind of “religious notions” is somehow mixed in with people’s feelings about their connections with deceased relatives.

Nonetheless, the human behavior of visiting graves holds something on the level of primitive human emotion, shared humanity, and universal sentiment, both east and west of the Pacific, and this clearly accounts for the high percentage of responses in both countries.

(2) Structural Analysis

For both Japan and Germany, I created a correlation matrix showing the relationships between the question items about “religious behavior” (10 items in Japan and 8 in Germany) and conducted a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) using the Hebrew University Data Analysis Package (HUDAP), a computer software package for analyzing data. The results produced two 2D SSA maps (spatial partitions), as shown in Figures 2-① and ②. The original format of these SSA maps (computer output) had the number of each variable (question item) marking its position on the 2D space (Euclidean space). However, there were also four concentric circles drawn in the space. These are the result of my efforts to apply meaning to (interpret) the spatial partition of the question items based on the empirical law of L. Guttman’s “Facet Theory.” How can these results be interpreted? The SSA maps for both Japan and Germany consist of spatial partition in which the question items are plotted in four concentric circles centered around the item “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible,” based on the given question item’s relationship to the center item (expressed by the correlation coefficient), extending from the concentric circle closest to the center (containing items with larger correlation coefficients) to the concentric circle furthest away (containing items with smaller correlation coefficients). The reason circles are used rather than ovals for the space partitioning is be-

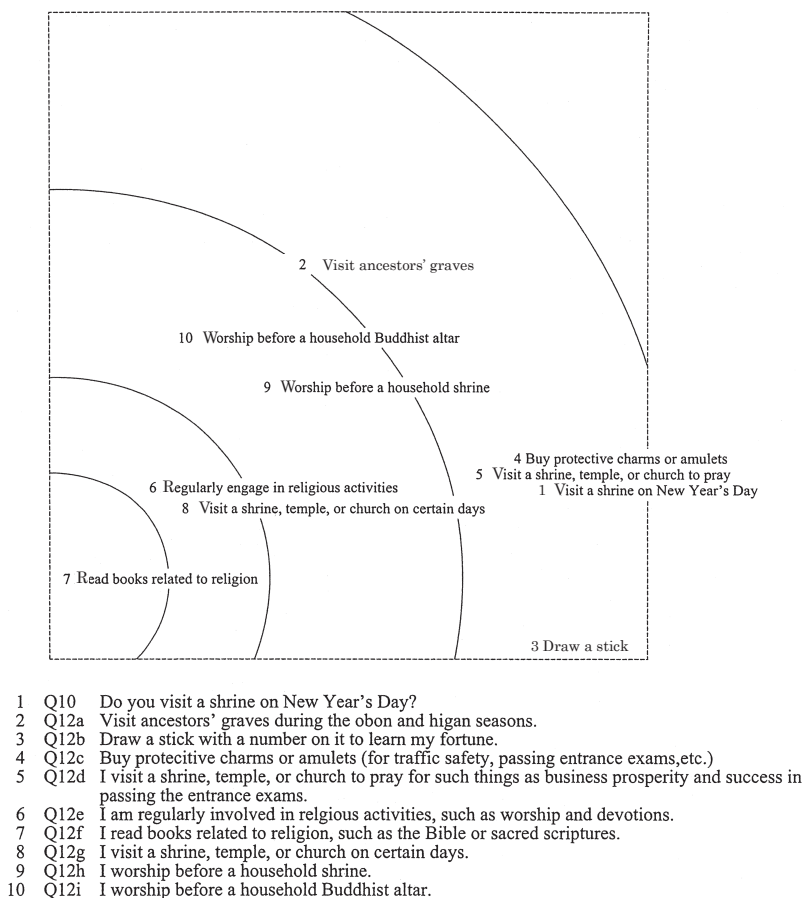


Figure 2-① Smallest Space Analysis of Religious Behaviors (Japan)

cause a circle expresses equidistance from the center (in this case, from the question item “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible”), thus reflecting that items have the same approximate size of correlation coefficients.

Of course, this spatial partition of question items is based on Guttman’s “contiguity hypothesis.” According to Guttman, if the ques-

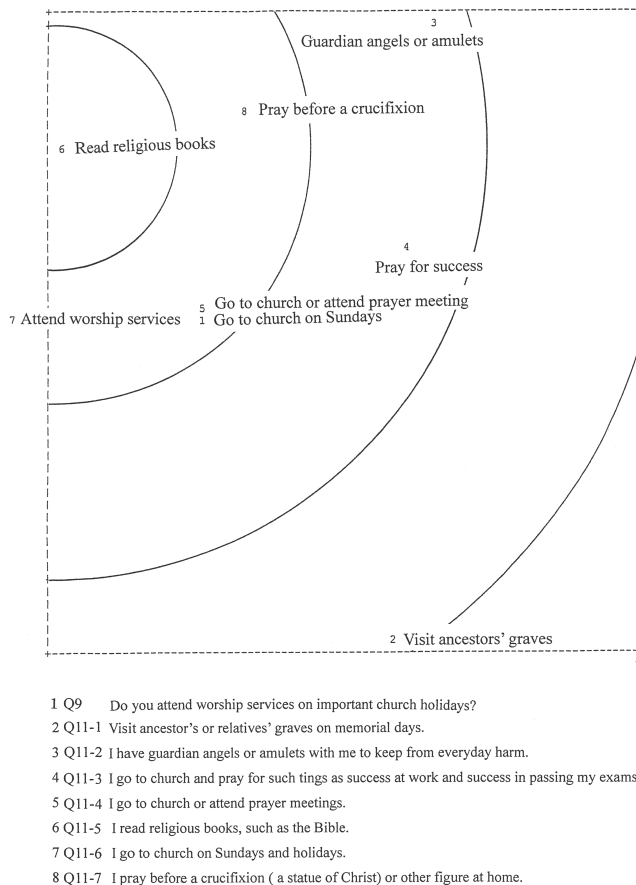


Figure2-② Smallest Space Analysis of Religious Behaviors(Germany)

tion items used in a survey are similar in meaning, they will be positioned close to one another (spatial distance) on the SSA map. Facet Theory was actually constructed based on a conceptual device regarding “spaces of meaning” and “relationships of meaning” (called “Facet Design”) and a method of data analysis (one of which is known as Smallest Space Analysis) for testing these “spaces of meaning” and “relation-

ships of meaning” (called “Facet Analysis”).

Thus, a comparison of the SSA maps regarding “religious behavior” in both Japan and Germany shows that when question items are plotted around the central question item “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible,” there are clear similarities between the two countries.

The shape of the SSA map described above, that is, the figure drawn with several concentric circles around a common center point (in this case, the question item “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible”) is referred to by Guttman as a “simplex.” When the relationships between items addressed in this kind of data analysis have the characteristics of a simplex, the performance of a “Scale Analysis” on those items will result in the formation of a unidimensional scale. This suggests that there is empirical verification that question items categorized a priori as “question items regarding religious behavior” are unidimensionally measuring “the same thing” (behaviors that must be regarded as religious behaviors).

The similarities evident on the SSA maps of Japan and Germany suggest that the question items regarding religious behavior used in this nationwide survey in both countries are appropriate, and that they comprise a so-called “Guttman Scale.”

What differences were found between the two countries? On the SSA maps of both Japan and Germany, four concentric circles have been drawn around the center point, “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible.” Of course, these were not drawn mechanically, but based on my own observations of the issue at hand. My interest lay in preparing what might be called a “common ground” for comparing the religiosity of two countries, Japan and Germany. Certainly, such methodological preparations made it possible to extract the “similarities” observed on the SSA maps of the two countries.

However, a more careful examination of this “common ground” reveals “differences” between the two countries as well.

i) Although it is not directly evident from the concentric circles of the

SSA maps (though it is clear in the correlation matrices upon which the SSA maps are based), the values of the correlation coefficients expressing the relationship between the question items on religious behaviors are larger overall in Germany than in Japan. For example, in Japan, the value of the correlation coefficient with the item “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible” was at the 0.5 level in one case, the 0.4 level in one case, the 0.2 level in two cases, the 0.1 level in one case, and less than 0.1 in four cases. In Germany, by contrast, there were two cases at the 0.6 level, two at the 0.5 level, two at the 0.3 level, and one at the 0.2 level. These results may suggest that the question items on the German questionnaire are measuring “the same thing” to a greater extent than those on the Japanese survey. This issue will be discussed in further detail below.

ii) How can the question items grouped in the four concentric circles drawn on the SSA maps of both Japan and Germany be interpreted? As discussed above, I have focused on the shared social characteristics of each group of items to label them as (a) faith-manifestation behaviors, (b) traditional behaviors, and (c) event-specific behaviors.

While this reflects the pattern that emerged in Japan, the pattern that emerged in Germany was as follows: (a) Bible reading, church/prayer meetings, Sunday and holiday worship services, prayer before a crucifixion (a statue of Christ), (b) prayer for success, guardian angels or amulets, (c) grave visits.

A comparison of the results obtained from Japan and Germany shows that there are similarities between the two countries insofar as the question items on religious behavior were able to be divided into three groups using three concentric circles, based on the size of the correlation coefficient between each item and the center item “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible”.

However, there are important differences between the two countries with regard to the content of the questions that were included in each of the three groups. Earlier I mentioned that when translating the Japanese questionnaire into German, efforts were made to translate the

material with an eye toward maintaining the “functional equivalence” of the questions. In spite of these efforts, however, there were still some significant differences in the content of the question items included on the Japanese and German questionnaires. The following section examines these differences in detail.

First, I already discussed why “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible” was used as the center point for exploring the “structure” of religious behavior in both countries. (A comparative perspective is possible because it establishes a “standard” for comparison, and the center of the concentric circles in this study is one of those “standards.”) In Japan, the concentric circles around the center point started from “faith-manifestation behaviors” to “traditional behaviors,” to “event-specific behaviors.” In Germany, however, there was doubt regarding the suitability of these labels.

Certainly, the question items in concentric circles first and second (from inside to outside) could be called “faith-manifestation behaviors,” as they are in Japan. However, they also included 1(Q9) “Holiday worship services” and 8(Q11-7) “Prayer before a crucifixion (a statue of Christ),” which were not included on the Japanese SSA map. This suggests that “Attending holiday worship services” in Germany and “New Year’s Day shrine visits” in Japan are quite different in meaning. In Germany, “Attending holiday worship services” refers to whether the respondent “attends church services on days of important religious meaning,” and this activity would have to be called a “faith-manifestation behavior.” Visiting a shrine on New Year’s Day in Japan, however, is a traditional activity, separate from matters of religion or faith” (Kei-ichi Yanagawa, 1989). Supporting this assertion is the fact that in the Japanese data, “New Year’s Day shrine visits” are plotted within the outermost concentric circle among the group of question items labeled as “event-specific behaviors” which include “charms and amulets,” “prayer for success,” and “fortune-telling sticks.”

Next, the German question item “I pray before a crucifixion (a statue of Christ) or other figure at home” was developed as the functional

equivalent of “I worship before a household shrine” and “I worship before a household Buddhist altar” on the Japanese questionnaire. In Japan, the items about the household Buddhist altar and household shrine were located in the next concentric circle, separated from the items labeled “faith-manifestation behaviors,” and instead were characterized as “traditional behaviors,” which include “grave visits.” However, in Germany, the item “I pray before a crucifixion (a statue of Christ) or other figure at home” was located in the same concentric circle as “Attending holiday worship services,” “Attending church/prayer meetings,” and “Attending worship services on Sundays/holidays.” The context suggests that this item is indeed better characterized as a “faith-manifestation behavior” in Germany.

Next I explain the terms I have coined in this paper, “faith-manifestation behaviors” and “traditional behaviors.” These terms, including the third of the set, “event-specific behaviors,” would have to be so-called “ideal types,” and thus, I have employed an idea proposed by M. Weber. His idea was not only adopted with regard to the typology of “ideal types,” but also was used to define substantive content for each typology. That content is “faith-manifestation” and the content of “tradition.” The concept I want to express with the term “faith-manifestation” is that the activity willingly, deliberately and consciously expresses a person’s own faith in a salient format that can be easily understood. Thus, this is a different dimension than “depth of faith.” For example, consider the differences in the “religious behaviors” of Dogen and Ryokan. While Dogen expressed his faith in the form of Zen sitting meditation, Ryokan is said to have not even bothered to read the sutras. However, we cannot say that these kinds of differences indicate the “depth of faith” of either Dogen or Ryokan. Using the example of these two figures, the term “faith-manifestation behavior” focuses on the aspects of behavior more typical of Dogen than Ryokan.

The term “traditional behaviors,” as used by Weber, is used to refer to behaviors that a person engages in unconsciously, as a matter of tradition or custom. They are behaviors about which the individual has

not gone through a decision-making process. I am using all of these terms as “ideal types,” and thus they are ultimately all relative.

In any case, the fact that question items corresponding to the types of religious behaviors labeled as “traditional behaviors” in Japan did not fit the German context is a notable difference between the two countries.

The third concentric circle, which on the Japanese SSA map contains the question items on “traditional behaviors” (the concentric circle that includes question items expressing a correlation coefficient of 0.3 or higher, rounded), contains two question items for Germany: 4(Q11-3) “I go to church and pray for such things as success at work and success in passing my exams” and 3(Q11-2) “I have a guardian angel or protective charm with to keep me from everyday harm.” How are these two items characterized? While question items categorized as “faith-manifestation behaviors” tend to have a “consummatory” character, they have an “instrumental flavor,” that is, they describe advantages in this life, such as “success at work,” “success in passing exams,” and “avoidance of danger.” These two items on the Japanese survey, along with 1(Q10) “New Year’s Day shrine visits” and 3(Q12b) “Fortune-telling sticks,” are located in the outermost concentric circle, categorized as “event-specific behaviors,” and, though located in relatively similar positions on both the Japanese and German SSA maps, have very different meanings in the two countries.

For Germany, finally, 2(Q11-1) “Grave visits” are located in the fourth concentric circle.

An examination of the SSA maps for both countries suggests that there is a difference in the social meaning of individual question items in both countries. However, it nonetheless suggests that there are simultaneously shared “dimensions” in the spatial partition of these question items from the innermost concentric circle to the outermost concentric circle. That is, while question items in the inner concentric circles are more “conscious, deliberate, willing” religious behaviors, the question items in the outer concentric circles are more “unconscious, not deliber-

ate, not willing” behaviors.

Above I have conducted a comparative examination of the Japanese and German SSA maps regarding religious behaviors, but I would like to revisit the very first point, that is, the fact that the sizes of the correlation coefficients between the question items and the center point were higher overall in Germany than in Japan, and that those question items categorized as “event-specific behaviors” in Japan all had extremely low correlation coefficients of less than 0.1. The greatest difference between Japan and Germany is the position of question items on “event-specific behaviors.” A typical example is presented by “New Year’s Day shrine visits.” As I have mentioned, this is a “daily customary behaviors and beliefs on the occasions of special events, separate from the consciousness of religion or faith.” Certainly in the case of Japan, there is a large gap—what should actually be called a “discrepancy”—between “faith-manifestation behaviors” and “other behaviors, particularly event-specific behaviors,” and this is the most pronounced characteristic of the Japanese results. Can “event-specific behaviors” be absolutely described as being “separate from matters of religion or faith”?

Keiichi Yanagawa (1989) contends that “About half of the Japanese population, or about 50 million people visit a shrine on New Year’s Day. If this is not religion, surely it is something very close to it. Opinions will differ on the subject depending on the different ways that people define religion.” Along these lines, I hypothesize that in spite of the fact that people do not acknowledge (or recognize) “protective charms, fortune-telling sticks, and New Year’s Day shrine visits” as “religious behaviors,” these activities are linked to a kind of unconscious “sense of faith” that resides somewhere deep in people’s hearts. The results being discussed here come from using “I read books related to religion, such as the Bible” as the center point for multiple concentric circles to compare the SSA maps of Japan and Germany. However, if my hypothesis is confirmed, then just as the world maps used in Australia—in the southern hemisphere—are completely the opposite of the world maps we are

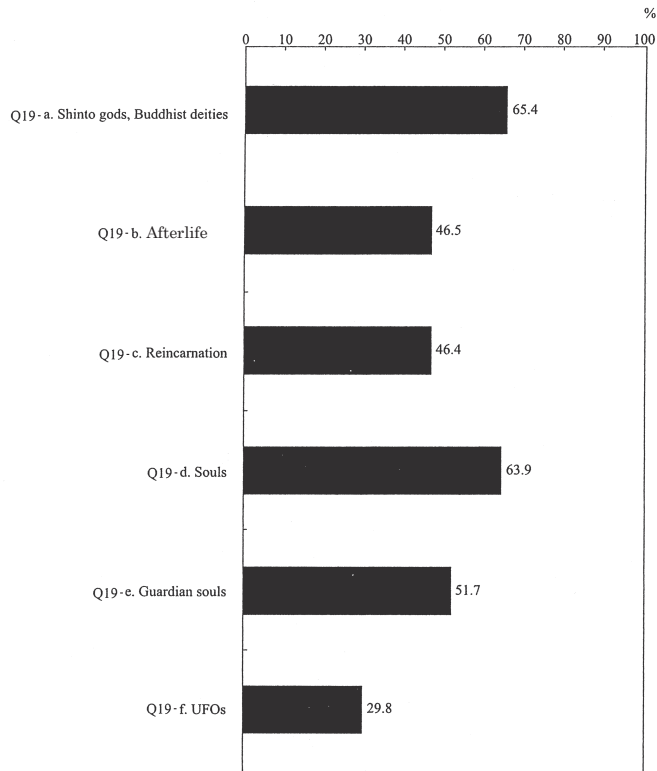


Figure3-① Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions on the Existence of God, Souls and Others(Japan)

accustomed to using in Japan, setting the center point at “event-specific behaviors” and focusing on the characteristics of Japanese religious behaviors would result in an entirely different interpretation of SSA maps.

2. Belief in the existence of deities (God), an afterlife, reincarnation, souls, guardian souls (guardian angels), UFOs

(1) Descriptive Analysis

The relationships between question items on the Japanese and Ger-

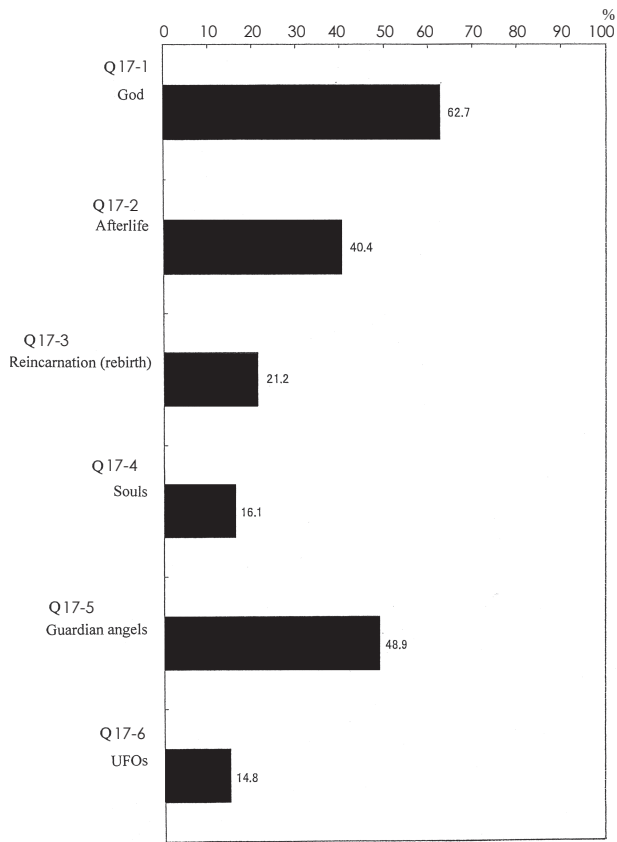


Figure3-② Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions on the Existence of God, Souls and Others(Germany)

man questionnaires are as follows.

〈Japan〉

- Q19a Buddhist or Shinto deities
- Q19b Afterlife
- Q19c Samsara (reincarnation)
- Q119d Souls
- Q19e Guardian souls

〈Germany〉

- Q17-1 God
- Q17-2 Afterlife
- Q17-3 Reincarnation (rebirth)
- Q17-4 Souls
- Q17-5 Guardian angels

Q19f UFOs

Q17-6 UFOs

Further examination is needed of just how correspondent the translations of the question items are in both countries. Leaving this aside for the moment, a comparison of the results of their simple tabulations suggests the following points.

(a) On all the items, the percentage of respondents affirming the existence of each phenomenon was higher among the Japanese. This is extremely interesting in light of the nature of Japanese religious behaviors that has been revealed thus far. That is, there is an inconsistency between the fact that a low percentage of Japanese respondents participate in “faith-manifestation behaviors” and the fact that a high percentage of respondents express belief in the existence of “Buddhist or Shinto deities, an afterlife, reincarnation, souls.” This also lends support for my above arguments about Japanese religious behavior. The percentage of respondents affirming their belief in “Buddhist or Shinto deities” (65.4%) was twice as large as the percentage indicating that they “have religious faith” (32.2%). This helps us understand that Keiichi Yanagawa’s expression about Japanese religiosity, “faithless religion,” is closely related to the fact that “the affirmation of the existence of deities is not connected to a sense of religious faith.”

(b) A comparison of the ratios of people who believe in each of the phenomena listed reveals that in both Japan and Germany, belief in “Buddhist or Shinto deities (God)” was reported by the highest percentages, more than 60%. In Japan, about the same percentage of respondents affirmed their belief in “souls,” but this was only 16.1% in Germany, the second-lowest percentage behind those affirming UFOs (14.8%). Likewise, while 21.2% of German respondents believe in “reincarnation” (although about 40% of Germans believe in “an afterlife,” about the same as Japan, lower percentages of Germans report believing in “souls” or “reincarnation”), this figure is twice as high in Japan (46.4%). It seems that concepts of the “soul” and the “afterlife” are more commonly shared among the Japanese. This may be one clue for

unraveling the differences in the spiritual worlds of the Japanese and Germans.

(c) Those affirming a belief in “guardian souls (guardian angels)” account for a smaller percentage than those affirming a belief in “Buddhist or Shinto deities (God)” in both countries, but still nearly 50% of respondents affirm their existence.

(d) Respondents affirming a belief in the existence of UFOs had the smallest percentage of respondents in both countries. However, it is interesting even here that a comparison of Japan and Germany shows that the percentage of Japanese respondents indicating “UFOs exist, or I think they may exist” was 29.8%, double the percentage in Germany (14.8%). To reiterate, although the percentage of Japanese respondents indicating that they “have religious faith,” or the percentage of behaviors labeled as “faith-manifestation behaviors,” is lower among the Japanese than the Germans, larger percentages of Japanese than Germans affirm a belief in the existence of souls or other mysterious and transcendental phenomena —reflecting a kind of inconsistency in people’s attitudes. This is an extremely important finding in terms of a cross-national comparison of religiosity in Japan and Germany.

(2) Structural Analysis

To explore the structure of the relationships between question items regarding the respondent’s belief in the existence of deities (God), an afterlife, or souls, it is useful to look simultaneously at the SSA maps and the related correlation matrices. To describe them both in a word, the SSA maps are more geometric, while the correlation matrices are more arithmetic. That is, an SSA map has the advantage of being able to depict the relationship between variables in a visual, intuitive format through the shape, size, and position of the space. However, although the shape, size, and position of the space are relative expressions of the correlation coefficient values, the SSA map does not show differences in the precise sizes of the correlation coefficients. The correlation matrices therefore provide supplemental information to the SSA maps. The cor-

Table1-① Correlations among Questions on the Existence of God, Souls and Others (Japan)

| | 1. Deities | 2. Souls | 3. Afterlife | 4. Guardian souls | 5. Reincarnation | 6. UFOs |
|-------------------|------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|
| 1. Deities | — | | | | | |
| 2. Souls | 0.59 | — | | | | |
| 3. Afterlife | 0.55 | 0.63 | — | | | |
| 4. Guardian souls | 0.50 | 0.69 | 0.60 | — | | |
| 5. Reincarnation | 0.49 | 0.65 | 0.69 | 0.65 | — | |
| 6. UFOs | 0.18 | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.40 | 0.37 | — |

relation matrices for both countries are shown below.

First, the following observations can be made regarding the similarities evident in these two correlation matrices.

(a) All of the signs of the correlation coefficients are positive. This suggests that question items regarding the existence of “deities (God), an afterlife, and souls” are cumulative. Specifically, for example, it suggests that people who believe in the existence of deities (God) also believe in an afterlife. This confirms that these question items are measuring phenomena that are substantively “the same things.”

(b) The values of the correlation coefficients between belief in UFOs and other phenomena are relatively small, indicating that UFOs are substantively different from the other phenomena measured.

Next we will look at the differences evident in the two countries’ correlation matrices.

(a) An examination of the relationships between question items on

Table1-② Correlations among Questions on the Existence of God, Souls and Others (Germany)

| | 1. God | 2. Afterlife | 3. Guardian angels | 4. Souls | 5. Reincarnation | 6. UFOs |
|--------------------|--------|--------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|---------|
| 1. God | — | | | | | |
| 2. Afterlife | 0.59 | — | | | | |
| 3. Guardian angels | 0.45 | 0.53 | — | | | |
| 4. Souls | 0.33 | 0.38 | 0.50 | — | | |
| 5. Reincarnation | 0.30 | 0.61 | 0.39 | 0.49 | — | |
| 6. UFOs | 0.01 | 0.10 | 0.23 | 0.31 | 0.21 | — |

topics other than UFOs shows that the relationships between all items have very large values in Japan, between 0.5 and 0.7 (figures are rounded). However, the correlation coefficients are lower overall in Germany. They range from 0.3 to 0.6.

(b) In Japan, the relationships between belief in all phenomena except belief in “deities (God) and belief in UFOs cannot be said to be extremely high, but can be characterized as quite high (0.3 or larger).

Then, an examination of the Japanese and German SSA maps from a comparative perspective reveals that the observations made above are expressed visually on the maps. Here, the concentric circles have been drawn around “deities (God)” at the center, based on the size of the correlation with that question item in both countries.

(a) On the Japanese SSA map, all of the question items except that about UFOs are contained in the second concentric circle from the center (here indicating a correlation coefficient of 0.5 to 0.6) while the U-

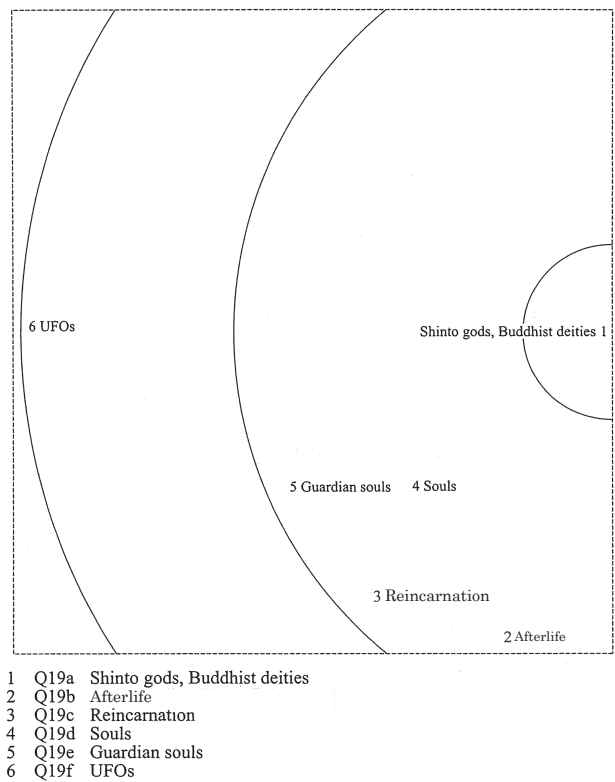


Figure4-① Smallest Space Analysis of Beliefs in the Existence of Deities, Souls and Others(Japan)

FOs item is positioned in the third concentric circle, located far outside the first two. This suggests that in Japan, the six question items examined here can be divided into three main groups.

(b) On the German SSA map, we start with concentric circles around the same center point, but find that “an afterlife” is located in the second circle (0.6 level), “guardian angels” in the third circle (0.4 level), “souls” and “reincarnation” in the fourth circle (0.3 level), and “UFOs” in the fifth circle (0.01 level). The ripples of the concentric cir-

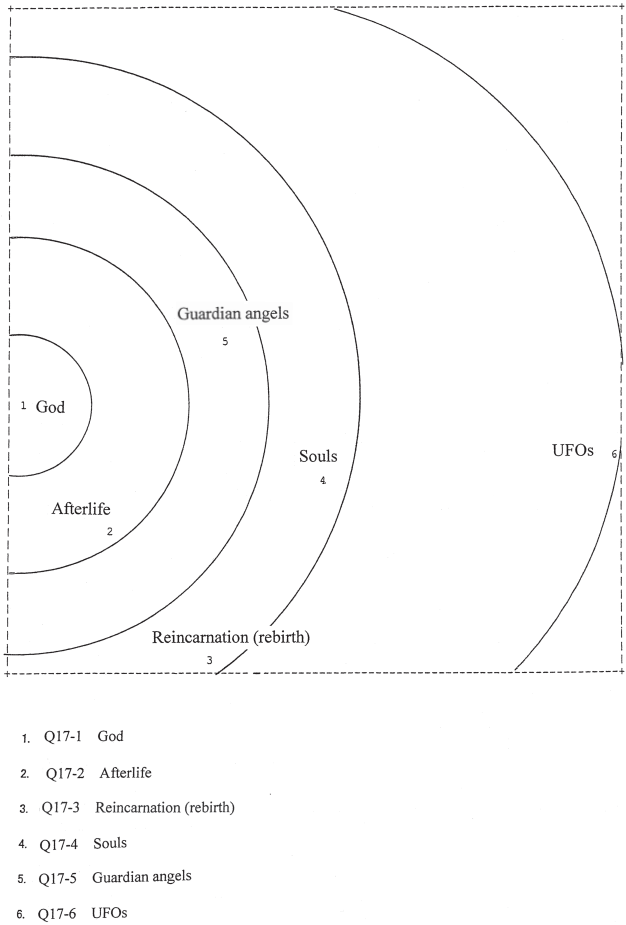


Figure4-② Smallest Space Analysis of Beliefs in the Existence of God, Souls and Others(Germany)

cles are drawn in a narrow range shape here than on the Japanese map. This suggests that the dimensions are more “specified, segmented, or stratified” in Germany.

The question of why these differences between Japan and Germany

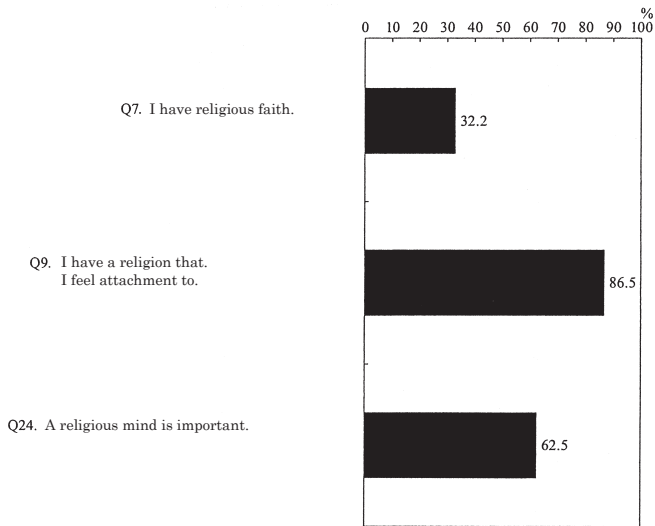


Figure5-① Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions
on Religious Faith, Beliefs and Feelings(1)(Japan)

exist, and what the origins of those differences are will have to wait for future analysis. For the moment, we can only point out that these differences exist.

3. Religious Faith, Beliefs and Feelings

The question items in Japan and Germany on religious faith, belief-
s, and feelings differ slightly in how they are worded (for example,
“shrine, temple, or church” in Japan was replaced with “church” in
Germany, “Shinto or Buddhist deities” was replaced with “God,” and “I
do not commemorate my ancestors” was replaced with “I do not pay at-
tention to memorial days”), but they were designed to fundamentally
measure the same thing in both countries. Of course, this does not nec-
essarily mean that the content of the question items was, in fact, under-
stood by respondents in both countries in exactly the same way. As was
done with the previous question items, I will again examine these items

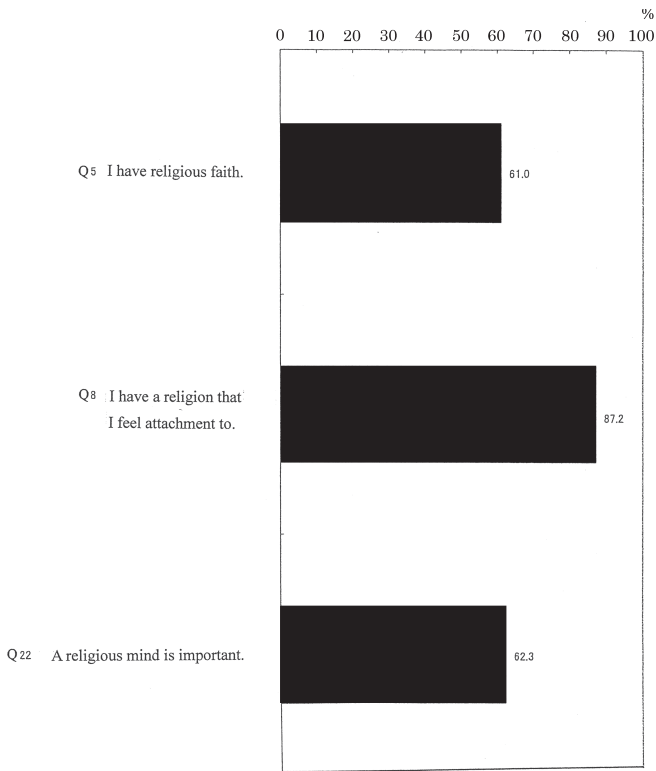


Figure5-② Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions on Religious Faith, Beliefs and Feelings(1)(Germany) using (1) descriptive analysis, and (2) structural analysis.

(1) Descriptive Analysis

The bar graph used to conduct this descriptive analysis was created by dividing the question items into two types.

The first group contains three items: “I have religious faith,” “I have a religion that I feel attachment to” and “A religious mind is important.”

Japan and Germany clearly differ on one of these items, “I have religious faith.” While 32% of respondents in Japan indicated that they

have religious faith, nearly twice as many (61%) indicated the same in Germany. The ratios of respondents indicating that they “have religious faith” in both Japan and Germany are approximately the same as the results obtained from previous surveys. This suggests that the rate of faith is, in fact, rather low among the Japanese. However, there were no differences between the Japanese and Germans on the items “I have a religion that I feel attachment to” and “A religious mind is important.”

Two initial hypotheses for these trends are presented below.

(a) It has been said that “Japanese religions are non-exclusive while German religions are exclusive.” While Japanese respondents may therefore indicate that they “often feel attachment to” religions other than their own sect or denomination, German respondents may indicate that they “rarely feel attachment to” other religions.

(b) The question item “A religious mind is important” was an idea proposed as part of the “Japanese National Character” project of the Institute of Statistical Mathematics, led by Chikio Hayashi, to serve as a type of methodological criticism against the expression “non-religious Japan” which is grounded in the previously mentioned low rate of faith. That is, although the rate of “I have religious faith” responses is low in Japan, the high rate of affirmation that “A religious mind is important” suggests that there is some inconsistency in the two dimensions of religiosity among the Japanese. In Germany, by contrast, there is no inconsistency in these two dimensions.

The results of the descriptive analysis do not support hypothesis (a) above, but do support hypothesis (b). Thus we must ask: why was hypothesis (a) not supported? One explanation is that even in Germany, religions are becoming less exclusive. That is, religion is becoming less an issue of “A or B” than of “A as well as B.” This is reflected in the emergence of ideas of religious pluralism, referred to by Dobbelaere (1981, 1995, and 2002) as “religious bricolage” or “religion à la carte.”

There is one more piece of evidence in the results of the current survey that supports this notion of religious pluralism. The question

item Q19-6 “The gods of various religions are all ultimately the same thing,” was worded as follows on the Japanese survey: “Shinto gods and Buddhist deities are all the same thing.” While 40% of Japanese respondents agreed with this statement, that figure was 60% in Germany. This also does not support the initial hypothesis, and rather suggests the exact opposite. One of the reasons for this may be the spread of “the notion of religious pluralism” in Germany.

Next, we will look at the other 26 question items that were categorized into the second group.

First, one of the most obvious similarities is the high rate of response on certain questions —about 70%— in both countries. These question items are: “I cannot litter near or contaminate a shrine, temple, or church,” “Memories of family members who have died are precious,” and “When I visit family graves, I think more about my deceased parents and grandparents than about my ancestors.” Setting aside the first item for a moment, the latter two question items can be characterized as reflecting attitudes toward “memorialism,” discussed earlier.

However, unlike the cases above, some question items only had high response rates in one country or the other. For example, the Japanese response rate was high for “When I visit a shrine, temple, or church, I instinctively want to put my hands together” (just under a 30% difference with Germany) while the German response rate has high for “I think that this very moment here and now is an important time” (just under a 20% difference with Japan).

The following points can be made regarding the differences between the two countries. First, let us look at the differences from the perspective of the percentage of people in each country who “have religious faith.” About 30% of Japanese respondents affirm that they “have religious faith.” More than 30% gave affirmative responses on all but two of the question items on “religious beliefs, feelings and attitudes”. This suggests that in Japan, a considerable number of people who “do

The Structure of Religiosity

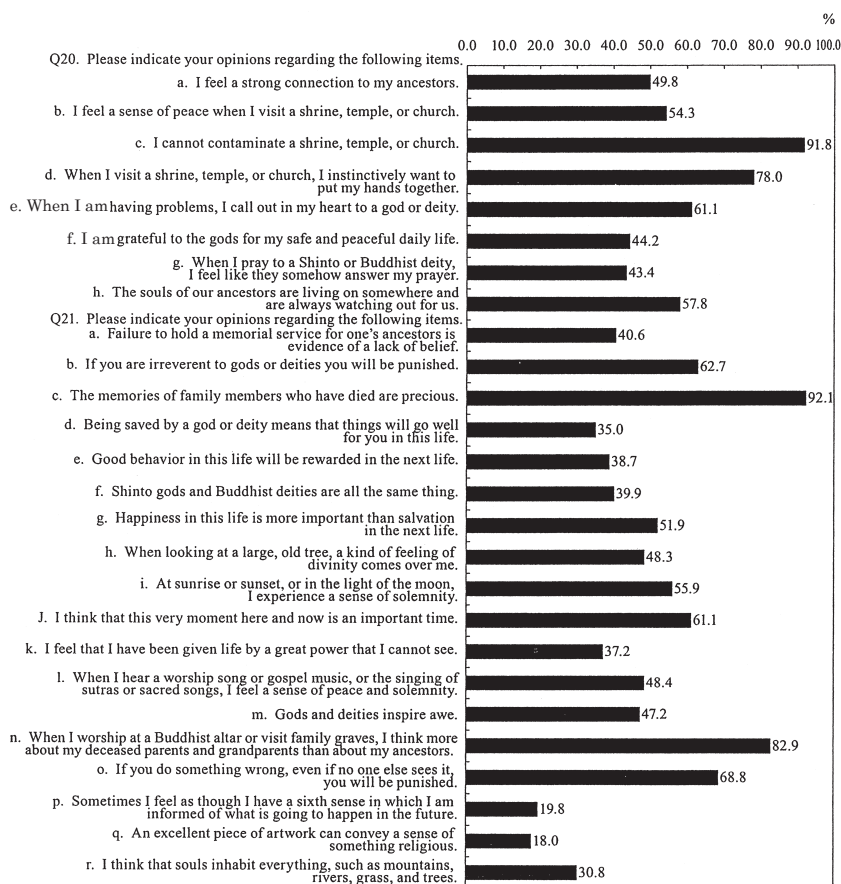


Figure6-① Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions
on Religious Beliefs, Feelings and Attitudes (2)(Japan)

not have religious faith” nonetheless report having “religious beliefs, feelings and attitudes.” In Germany, by contrast, 60% of respondents affirm that they “have religious faith.” However, affirmative responses were also given by just under 60% of German respondents to all but four of the question items on “religious beliefs, feelings and attitudes.”

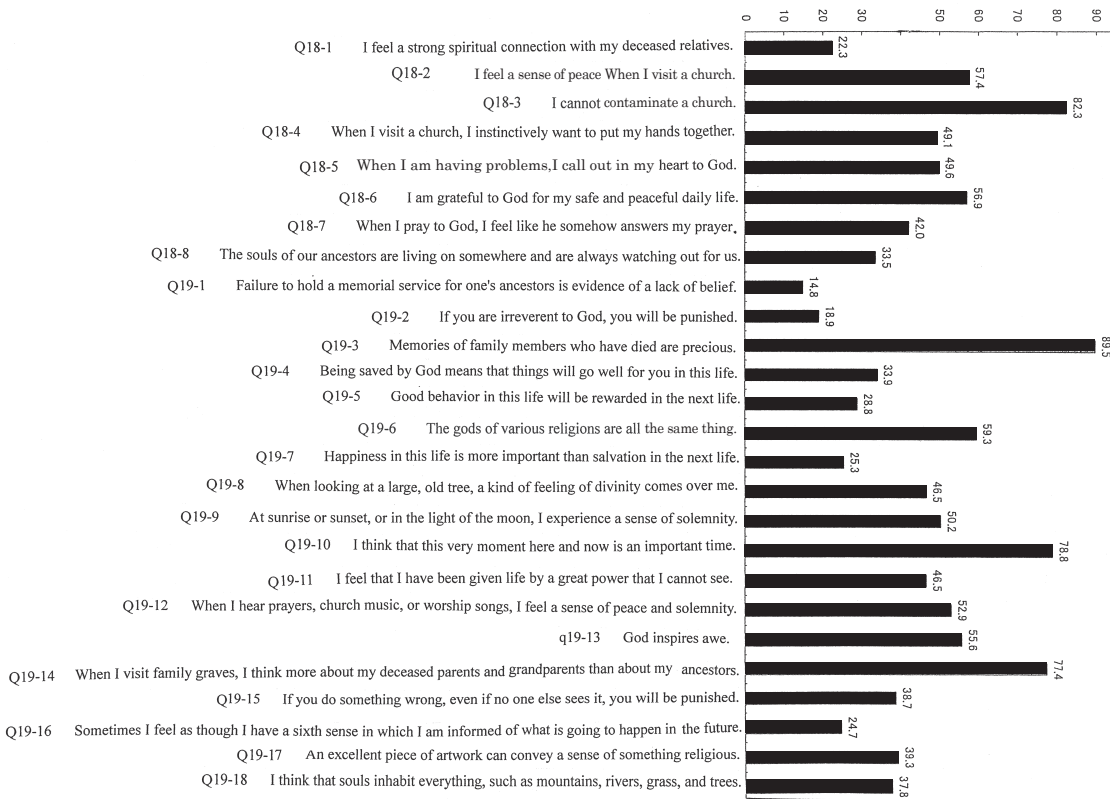


Figure6-② Percentage Distributions of Responses to Questions on Religious Beliefs, Feelings and Attitudes (2) (Germany)

This suggests that in Germany, a considerable number of people who “have religious faith” report that they do not have “religious beliefs, feelings and attitudes.” This is a really interesting result. Until now, the characterization of Japan as a “non-religious country” has been a result of focusing all the attention on whether respondents report having religious faith. However, once again, even those who indicate that they “do not have religious faith” nonetheless report having “religious

**Table2 Percentages of Affirmative Responses to Questions
on Religious Beliefs, Feelings and
Attitudes—Comparisons of Japan and Germany—**

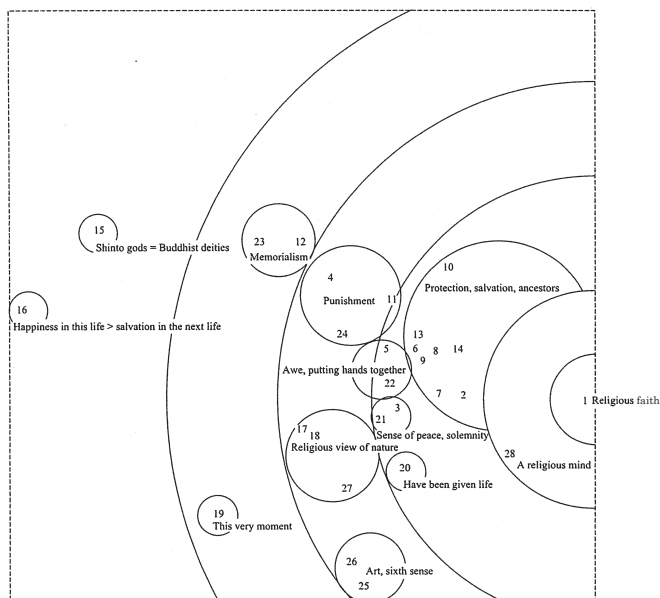
| | | |
|--------|--|--------------------|
| Q18-1 | I feel a strong spiritual connection with my deceased relatives. | Japan > Germany |
| Q18-2 | I feel a sense of peace When I visit a church. | Japan = Germany |
| Q18-3 | I cannot contaminate a church. | Japan > Germany |
| Q18-4 | When I visit a church, I instinctively want to put my hands together. | Japan > Germany |
| Q18-5 | When I am having problems, I call out in my heart to God. | Japan > Germany |
| Q18-6 | I am grateful to God for my safe and peaceful daily life. | Japan < Germany |
| Q18-7 | When I pray to God, I feel like he somehow answers my prayer. | Japan = Germany |
| Q18-8 | The souls of our ancestors are living on somewhere and are always watching out for us. | Japan > Germany |
| Q19-1 | Failure to hold a memorial service for one's ancestors is evidence of a lack of belief. | Japan > Germany |
| Q19-2 | If you are irreverent to God, you will be punished. | Japan > Germany |
| Q19-3 | Memories of family members who have died are precious. | Japan = Germany |
| Q19-4 | Being saved by God means that things will go well for you in this life. | Japan = Germany |
| Q19-5 | Good behavior in this life will be rewarded in the next life. | Japan > Germany |
| Q19-6 | The gods of various religions are all the same thing. | Japan < Germany |
| Q19-7 | Happiness in this life is more important than salvation in the next life. | Japan > Germany |
| Q19-8 | When looking at a large, old tree, a kind of feeling of divinity comes over me. | Japan = Germany |
| Q19-9 | At sunrise or sunset, or in the light of the moon, I experience a sense of solemnity. | Japan = Germany |
| Q19-10 | I think that this very moment here and now is an important time. | Japan < Germany |
| Q19-11 | I feel that I have been given life by a great power that I cannot see. | Japan < Germany |
| Q19-12 | When I hear prayers, church music, or worship songs, I feel a sense of peace and solemnity. | Japan = Germany |
| Q19-13 | God inspires awe. | Japan < Germany |
| Q19-14 | When I visit family graves, I think more about my deceased parents and grandparents than about my ancestors. | Japan = Germany |
| Q19-15 | If you do something wrong, even if no one else sees it, you will be punished. | Japan > Germany |
| Q19-16 | Sometimes I feel as though I have a sixth sense in which I am informed of what is going to happen in the future. | Japan = Germany |
| Q19-17 | An excellent piece of artwork can convey a sense of something religious. | Japan < Germany |
| Q19-18 | I think that souls inhabit everything, such as mountains, rivers, grass, and trees. | Japan < Germany |

beliefs, feelings and attitudes.” This finding essentially follows the same line as the fact that even those who indicate that they “do not have religious faith” nonetheless say that “A religious mind is important.” There is definitely room for new proposals to be made regarding the measurement of the religiosity of the Japanese.

With regard to aspects of religiosity in Germany, R. Kisala argues that “in Europe, ‘whether one has faith’ is really a question of ‘whether one belongs to a religious organization,’ and it is viewed more as a ‘social custom’ than ‘the independent intent of an individual’” (Kisala, Nagai, and Yamada, 2007).

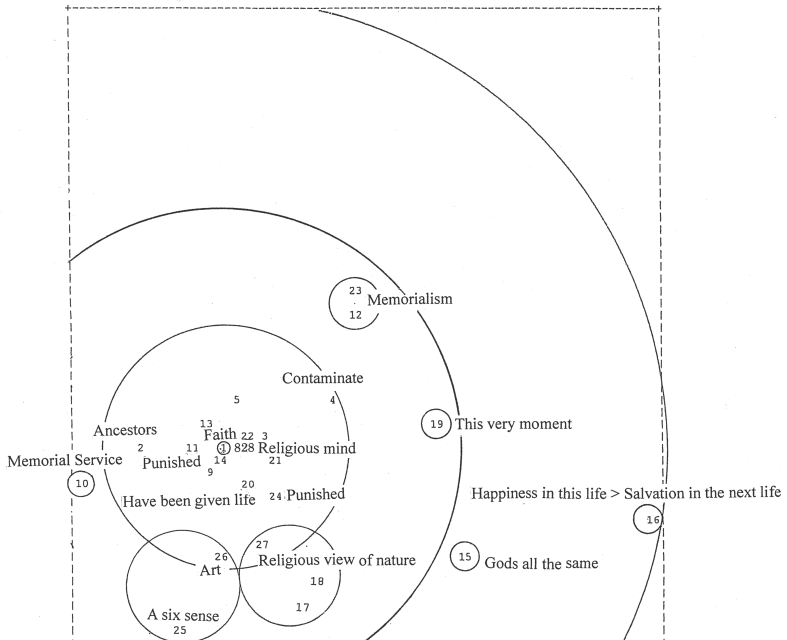
To facilitate further examination of the similarities and differences that exist between Japan and Germany, I have created a table showing those questions on which the percentage of affirmative responses was (a) higher in Japan, (b) higher in Germany, and (c) the same in both countries.

This table shows that situation (a) describes 10 cases, (b) describes 7 cases, and (c) describes 9 cases, with no extreme biases shown on any items. This alone is a very important finding since the question items regarding “religious beliefs, feelings and attitudes” were originally constructed based on a review and ordering of the existing literature on the unique religiosity of the Japanese, and then used as tools for comparing the religiosity of people in Japan and Germany. However, the results discussed here do not necessarily mean that there were no substantive differences in the essential meanings of several of the question items in both countries, for example, with regard to “ancestor commemoration” in Japan and “memorial days” in Germany. Overall, however, it seems fairly safe to say that the question items discussed here may differ slightly in “degree” in both countries, but do not address entirely different “dimensions.” Further exploratory analysis of this issue is certainly needed.



- 1 Q7 I have religious faith.
- 2 Q20a I feel a strong connection to my ancestors.
- 3 Q20b I feel a sence of peace when I visit a shrine, temple, or church.
- 4 Q20c I cannot litter near, or contaminate a shrine, temple, or church.
- 5 Q20d When I visit a shrine, temple, or church, I instinctively want to put my hands together.
- 6 Q20e When I'm having problems, I call out in my heart to a god or deity.
- 7 Q20f I'm grateful to the gods for my safe and peaceful daily life.
- 8 Q20g When I pray to a Shinto or Buddhist deity, I feel like they somehow answer my prayer.
- 9 Q20h The souls of our ancestors are living on somewhere and are always watching out for us.
- 10 Q21a Failure to hold a memorial service for one's ancestors is evidence of a lack of belief.
- 11 Q21b If you are irreverent to gods or deities you will be punished.
- 12 Q21c The memories of family members who have died are precious.
- 13 Q21d Being saved by a god or deity means that things will go well for you in this life.
- 14 Q21e Good behavior in this life will be rewarded in the next life.
- 15 Q21f Shinto gods and Buddhist deities are all the same thing.
- 16 Q21g Happiness in this life is more important than salvation in the next life.
- 17 Q21h When looking at a large, old tree, a kind of feeling of divinity comes over me.
- 18 Q21i At sunrise or sunset, or in the light of the moon, I experience a sense of solemnity.
- 19 Q21j I think that this very moment here and now is an important time.
- 20 Q21k I feel that I have been given life by a great power that I cannot see.
- 21 Q21l When I hear a worship song or gospel music, or the singing of sutras or sacred songs, I feel a sense of peace and solemnity.
- 22 Q21m Gods and deities inspire awe.
- 23 Q21n When I worship at a Buddhist altar or visit family graves, I think more about my deceased parents and grandparents than about my ancestors.
- 24 Q21o If you do something wrong, even if no one else sees it, you will be punished.
- 25 Q21p Sometimes I feel as though I have a sixth sense in which I am informed of what is going to happen in the future.
- 26 Q21q An excellent piece of artwork can convey a sense of something religious.
- 27 Q21r I think that souls inhabit everything, such as mountains, rivers, grass, and trees.
- 28 Q24 A religious mind is important

Figure7-① Smallest Space Analysis of Religious Beliefs, Feelings and Attitudes(Japan)



- 1 Q5 I have religious faith.
- 2 Q18-1 I feel a strong spiritual connection with my deceased relatives.
- 3 Q18-2 I feel a sense of peace When I visit a church.
- 4 Q18-3 I cannot contaminate a church.
- 5 Q18-4 When I visit a church, I instinctively want to put my hands together.
- 6 Q18-5 When I am having problems, I call out in my heart to God.
- 7 Q18-6 I am grateful to God for my safe and peaceful daily life.
- 8 Q18-7 When I pray to God, I feel like he somehow answers my prayer.
- 9 Q18-8 The souls of our ancestors are living on somewhere and are always watching out for us.
- 10 Q19-1 Failure to hold a memorial service for one's ancestors is evidence of a lack of belief.
- 11 Q19-2 If you are irreverent to God, you will be punished.
- 12 Q19-3 Memories of family members who have died are precious.
- 13 Q19-4 Being saved by God means that things will go well for you in this life.
- 14 Q19-5 Good behavior in this life will be rewarded in the next life.
- 15 Q19-6 The gods of various religions are all the same thing.
- 16 Q19-7 Happiness in this life is more important than salvation in the next life.
- 17 Q19-8 When looking at a large, old tree, a kind of feeling of divinity comes over me.
- 18 Q19-9 At sunrise or sunset, or in the light of the moon, I experience a sense of solemnity.
- 19 Q19-10 I think that this very moment here and now is an important time.
- 20 Q19-11 I feel that I have been given life by a great power that I cannot see.
- 21 Q19-12 When I hear prayers, church music, or worship songs, I feel a sense of peace and solemnity.
- 22 Q19-13 God inspires awe.
- 23 Q19-14 When I visit family graves, I think more about my deceased parents and grandparents than about my ancestors.
- 24 Q19-15 If you do something wrong, even if no one else sees it, you will be punished.
- 25 Q19-16 Sometimes I feel as though I have a sixth sense in which I am informed of what is going to happen in the future.
- 26 Q19-17 An excellent piece of artwork can convey a sense of something religious.
- 27 Q19-18 I think that souls inhabit everything, such as mountains, rivers, grass, and trees.
- 28 Q22 A religious mind is important.

Figure7-② Smallest Space Analysis of Religious Beliefs,
Feelings and Attitudes(Germany)

(2) Structural Analysis

A comparison of the two countries' SSA maps shows that while the spatial partition of several question items do not indicate complete agreement in the religiosity of the Japanese and Germans (these will be discussed later), the major overall patterns are quite similar.

As has been done in previous analyses, I have tried to read the SSA map spatial partition based on the size of the correlation coefficients between the various question items and the center item, "I have religious faith." Again, several concentric circles have been drawn around that center point on each SSA map, with the innermost circle containing question items with the largest correlation coefficients with "I have religious faith" and the outermost circle containing question items with the smallest correlation coefficients with that item. Let's look at the similarities that can be seen in the two countries' maps.

(a) Responses to most of the question items plotted in the second concentric circle in Germany and in the second and third concentric circles in Japan (counting outward from the center) are similar in both countries.

(b) Question items on "religious views of nature," "memorialism," "the importance of the here and now," "art," and "sixth sense" are plotted in the fourth and fifth circles in Japan, and in the third circle in Germany.

(c) On both countries' SSA maps, the two items "All gods are the same" and "happiness in this life > salvation in the next life" were plotted in the outermost concentric circle.

This suggests that the structures of religiosity in Japan and Germany are similar overall, and should not be viewed as completely different. This is not to say that there are no differences, however, and those that do exist are outlined below.

(a) The question item about "a religious mind" which was thought as a unique question in Japan was plotted all on its own in the second concentric circle on the Japanese map, quite far away from the question items contained in the third circle, but it was plotted in the second concentric

circle on the German map, along with other question items in that sector.

(b) Of the question items plotted in the second concentric circle on the German map:

(i) “I feel a strong spiritual connection with my deceased relatives” is located more centrally in Japan, but more peripherally in Germany.

(ii) The three question items “I cannot litter near or contaminate a church,” “If you are irreverent to God, you will be punished,” and “If you do something wrong, even if no one else sees it, you will be punished” were plotted fairly close to one another on the Japanese map, all within a single concentric circle, forming a kind of subgroup. On the German map, however, these three are distributed in scattered locations throughout the circles. Clearly there is little relationship of meaning between these three items.

(iii) On the German map, the question items “When I am having problems, I call out in my heart to God,” “I am grateful to God for my safe and peaceful daily life,” and “When I pray to God, I feel like he somehow answers my prayer,” were all plotted in the exact same location. As a result, we had a technical problem since the item numbers marking each item were all overlapping, leaving the last item number the only one visible. This means that the relationship of meaning between these three items is extremely strong.

(c) The item “Failure to hold a memorial service for one’s ancestors is evidence of a lack of belief” was plotted in a concentric circle near the center point of “I hold religious beliefs” on the Japanese map, but was plotted in a circle located quite far from the center point on the German map. This reflects a substantive difference in meaning between “ancestor commemoration” in Japan and “marking memorial days” in Germany.

IV. Conclusions: Summary and Future Research Challenges

This paper has examined the similarities and differences in religi-

osity in Japan and Germany using (1) descriptive analysis, based on the creation of bar graphs from simple tabulations, and (2) structural analysis, based on the creation of SSA maps from correlation matrices. The results can be summarized as follows.

(1) Religious Behaviors

(a) Simple tabulation: Based on the results of surveys conducted in Japan, I divided religious behaviors into “faith-manifestation behaviors,” “traditional and customary behaviors,” and “event-specific behaviors.” This method of classification yields an interesting difference between Japan and Germany. The religious behaviors with a higher percentage of Japanese participants tend to be traditional behaviors and event-specific behaviors, while those with a higher percentage of German participants tend to be faith-manifestation behaviors. At the same time, however, the two countries are similar insofar as the percentage of respondents involving in “grave visits” is much higher than other activities in both countries.

(b) Smallest Space Analysis: Similarities can be seen insofar as the religious behavior items are plotted in several concentric circles around the central point of “I read books related to religion,” but there are considerable differences with regard to the character (content) of the items located within each concentric circle. For example, there seem to be major differences in meaning between “New Year’s Day shrine visits” in Japan and “Attending holiday worship services” in Germany, and between “I worship before a household shrine or Buddhist altar” in Japan and “I pray before a crucifixion (a statue of Christ) or other figure at home” in Germany.

(2) Belief in the Existence of Deities (God), an Afterlife, Reincarnation, and Other Such Phenomena

(a) Simple tabulation: The two countries differed insofar as the percentage of people affirming belief in these phenomena was higher on all question items in Japan than in Germany. On the other hand, Japan and

Germany are similar insofar as the largest percentages of belief indicated in both countries were for belief in “deities (God)” (more than 60%).

(b) Smallest Space Analysis: Japan and Germany are similar insofar as multiple concentric circles can be drawn around the center point of belief in deities (God), based on the size of the correlation coefficients between this item and the other question items. They differ, however, in that the ripples of the concentric circles are drawn in a narrow range shape on the German map than on the Japanese map, suggesting the specification, segmentation or stratification of these kinds of beliefs.

(3) Religious Faith, Belief and Feelings

(a) Simple tabulation: The question items were divided into two categories for analysis. The first group contained three items: “I have religious faith,” “I have a religion that I feel attachment to,” and “A religious mind is important.” Among these three, Japan and Germany were different on the item “I have religious faith,” which received affirmative responses from 32% of Japanese respondents and 61%, nearly double, of German respondents. However, there were no differences between the Japanese and Germans on the items “I have a religion that I feel attachment to” and “A religious mind is important.”

The second group consisted of the other 26 items in the survey. I will avoid recounting here the details of the differences between Japan and Germany, but must point out the following. While Japanese respondents replying that they “do not have religious faith” nonetheless often reported “having religious beliefs, feelings and attitudes” German respondents replying that they “have religious faith” often reported that they do not “have religious beliefs, feelings and attitudes.”

It must be noted with regard to the similarities between the two countries, that in about 1/3 of the cases, there were no differences between Japanese and German respondents in their percentage of affirmative responses.

(b) Smallest Space Analysis: Similarities are evident insofar as multiple concentric circles can be drawn around the center point “I have reli-

gious faith,” but a more detailed examination of the items located in each concentric circle reveals some differences in the positions of the items.

Based on these analytical results, what are the issues that will need to be addressed in the future? When reporting on the findings discussed above, I tried to develop several hypothetical arguments based on what would have to be called the “sociological imagination” of each piece of knowledge.

Many of these arguments addressed not only substantive problems related to religiosity in both countries, but also methodological problems, such as the wording of the question items used in the surveys. As has already been mentioned, when preparing the German translation of the national questionnaire conducted in Japan, efforts were made to maintain the greatest degree of “functional equivalence” possible on the question items. Still, some problems undeniably remained. The data analysis of the national surveys conducted in both countries revealed that the substantive meaning of question items used in Japan and Germany were in some cases quite different. Careful investigation of the equivalence of meaning of the terms used in international comparative surveys is the greatest research challenge remaining to be addressed in the future.

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