

The Three-B Framework and Interpretation

Your homework for week 7 asked you to summarize the Three B Framework which is a framework that helps scholars of religion think about religiosity as nuanced and not solely based on belief, behaviour, or belonging, but rather a complex interaction between all three elements. I also discussed the Three B Framework in our lecture on Religious Belief. Your Interview Report now asks you to think about the framework in relation to your interview data.

Section 6 of the Interview Report specifically asks: **What conclusions can you draw about your interviewee's relationship to religion using the Three B framework?** To formulate your answer, you must engage Dr. Andrew M. Henry's video "What Does it Mean to Be Religious?".

There are several ways to answer this question. Perhaps your interviewee spoke about all three elements as being integral to their relationship to their religion. Perhaps only two elements are important to them. Or maybe they don't care much for two elements but are driven by a third. Below I demonstrate different ways to address the question from Section 6 of The Interview Report in order to guide you in formulating your own answers.

Example 1: Sarah

The following scenario would have appeared on the midterm for some of you on a question related to the Three Bs. We return to this example to demonstrate the application of the Three B Framework in order to formulate an interpretative paragraph:

Sarah, a woman in her mid-30s, is a Christian who does not attend Church regularly and has many of her own ethical commitments that do not necessarily align with certain Christian doctrines. In fact, she finds that her ideas sometimes contradict Biblical teachings, and she questions the existence of otherworldly beings like angels. However, every year, she enthusiastically immerses herself in Christian holidays and special occasions, such as Lent, Easter, and Christmas. To Sarah, these occasions hold a profound significance as opportunities for family togetherness and community building. Lent, for her, marks a period of reflection and self-improvement, a time when she sets personal goals for growth, observes days of fasting, and offers her time volunteering at a food bank. Easter is a celebration of rebirth and renewal, not just in a spiritual sense, but in the bonds she shares with her loved ones. Christmas, for Sarah, is the ultimate occasion for strengthening the ties that bind her family and community of fellow believers together, as she cherishes the joy of giving, sharing, and coming together with her neighbours and friends to create lasting memories over shared meals. For Sarah, these Christian rituals serve as a cultural and communal touchstone, enriching her life with shared values and shared moments of love and togetherness.

From the above scenario, I have come up with the following paragraph using the Three B framework to analyze Sarah's relationship to religion:

In the video "What Does it Mean to Be Religious?" Andrew M. Henry's introduces the Three B Framework as a way to think about religiosity and individuals' engagement with religion. Belief involves guiding theologies and doctrines, behaviour encompasses rituals, habits, and actions which are intertwined with daily activities. Belonging refers to being part of a shared religious community which can transcend time and cultures (Henry 2016).

Navigating Sarah's religious experience through the Three B framework reveals some complexity in her faith and identity. In terms of belief, Sarah diverges from conventional Christian doctrines, expressing skepticism about the existence of supernatural beings. Sarah reflected in our interview, "I find myself questioning the traditional aspects, like angels and certain doctrines, but my ethical compass is very much my own." My conclusion is that correct orthodox belief is not as important to Sarah as are other aspects of religion.

In relation to the other B's – behaviour and belonging - Sarah expressed a great attachment to Christian rituals and community. In contrast to her lack of commitment to certain doctrines and Church attendance, Sarah demonstrates great enthusiasm for Christian rituals, as seen in her observance of Lent, Easter, and Christmas. She remarks, "Lent is my time for reflection and self-improvement. It's not just about fasting but setting personal goals and giving back through volunteering at a food bank." And with respect to belonging, Sarah finds a profound sense of community and shared values during Christian celebrations. She emphasizes, "Easter and Christmas are about family and community building for me. It's the joy of giving, sharing, and creating lasting memories with neighbors and friends." Sarah's words show the communal and cultural significance of these rituals, serving as paths to fostering togetherness, love, and shared moments. Despite divergent beliefs, Sarah's engagement in Christian traditions exemplifies the complex nature of religious identity, demonstrating that religion and religiosity can involve a sense of belonging and enthusiasm for shared ritual, even when individual beliefs diverge from the norm.

Example 2: Omair

Here is another scenario that is very relevant to the topics "Lived Religion" and "Religious Identity." Many of your interviewees may sound like Omair, who does not think of himself as particularly religious, yet retains a connection to religion in interesting ways.

Omair, a young man who was raised in a Muslim household, found himself at a crossroads when it came to his beliefs. Despite not attending community events or going to the mosque, Omair's connection to Islam surfaced in a unique way – through his food choices.

In a casual conversation with a friend, Omair explained, "I grew up with Islamic teachings, but I'm not sure about all the articles of faith anymore. It's a journey of self-discovery for me." Although Omair didn't actively engage in religious practices like praying or reading the Qur'an, his subconscious beliefs (or affective beliefs) reflected in his dietary preferences. Omair shared, "I don't pray or read the Qur'an regularly, and I don't think of myself as religious, but I can't

bring myself to eat pork or drink alcohol. It's like there's an ingrained respect for these dietary restrictions." Despite his distance from formal religious activities, Omair found a connection to the communal spirit of Ramadan. "I don't always fast, but when I do, it's not just about following the rules. It's the sense of accomplishment that comes with fasting and the community feeling during Ramadan that draws me in. It's a way to connect with my roots."

From the above scenario, I have come up with the following paragraph using the Three B framework to analyze Omair's relationship to religion:

Omair's relationship with religion is a complex interaction of belief, behavior, and belonging within the framework of the Three B's. In the video titled "What Does it Mean to Be Religious?" Andrew M. Henry introduces the Three B Framework as a way of thinking about the complex nature of religiosity. The first component, belief, incorporates guiding theologies and doctrines. Behaviour encompasses rituals, habits, and actions woven into daily activities. Belonging pertains to the sense of being a part of a collective religious community that can extend beyond historical and cultural boundaries (Henry 2016). When understood together, I can analyze Omair's connection to religion in a more holistic way.

Omair expresses uncertainty about embracing all of Islam's authoritative beliefs saying, "I grew up with Islamic teachings, but I'm not sure about all the articles of faith anymore" and "I don't think of myself as religious." Despite his disconnection from formal religious practices, such as community events and mosque attendance, Omair's adherence to dietary restrictions reveals a level of respect for certain aspects of his Islamic upbringing and an unconscious belief about what should and should not be consumed. He expresses that "I can't bring myself to eat pork or drink alcohol. It's like there's an ingrained respect for these dietary restrictions." These words demonstrate that his aversion may come from an unconscious place, but the behaviour still stems from an affective belief. Furthermore, Omair's food choices and fasting in Ramadan reflect a unique expression of his adherence to religiously-guided behaviour which helps him retain a connection to his faith and to the community. This is particularly evident when he speaks about Ramadan and his explanation of why he chooses to fast: "I don't always fast, but when I do, it's not just about following the rules. It's the sense of accomplishment that comes with fasting and the community feeling during Ramadan that draws me in. It's a way to connect with my roots." Omair's connection to behavioral and communal aspects of Islam, particularly with fasting in Ramadan and through his food restrictions, suggests an enduring connection with his religious heritage on a more personal and informal level. Omair's story reflects a nuanced relationship with his faith, where food choices become avenues for expressing and maintaining a connection to his Islamic upbringing.

Reflections:

Note that the above examples:

- **Summarize the Three B Framework from Andrew Henry's video and include proper citations in Chicago in-text format**
- **Integrate examples from the interviews**
- **And make interpretations based on the Framework (discussing the meanings behind religious beliefs and actions, and drawing conclusions based on evidence). Though**

neither Sarah or Omair show strong adherence to orthodox beliefs within their respective religions, they still retain important connections to their religions. The Three B Framework helps us to see the nuances of religiosity in each scenario.