

Reconsidering Religious Coping:
A Narrative Approach

Bachelor Thesis

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22th January 2020

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Abstract

Pargament's theory of religious coping has dominated the field of research on religion and coping. Using predominantly quantitative top-down approaches, it scarcely examined the context, dynamics of religious coping and its potential significance in construing identity. Especially older people tend to have higher levels of religious commitment when compared to other age groups. In contrast to the stereotypes in the western society, older adults can adapt to age-related changes and maintain subjective well-being. Hence, this study investigated whether religious coping might play a role in that. Since there is little knowledge about how older people themselves experience religious coping in relation to well-being, context, and identity, this study examined religious coping from a qualitative bottom-up approach and had three goals: the first goal was to examine religious coping in the individual's life context. The second goal was to investigate how older adults experience the relation between religious coping in maintaining or achieving well-being. The third goal was to figure out whether religious coping plays a role in the construction of narrative identity.

For the purposes of the study, the narrative approach chosen. A life-story interview based on McAdams (2008) was developed and applied to five older individuals aged 74 to 82. What we found out was that religious coping can have a dynamic as well as a static nature in relation to context. Hence, the context can shape religious coping, but also the other way around. Furthermore we found that religious coping and well-being can be experienced either as having a dynamic or a static relationship or can have no relation at all for some people. Another finding suggests that religious coping seems to have an important role in construing narrative identity. Certain reoccurring themes in the life stories that are related to religious coping experiences show that religious coping can either motivate the person to develop autonomy or a strive for social connectedness.

The narrative approach helped to see that the nature of religious coping in relation to context and well-being is person dependent. Furthermore it helped to see its importance for narrative identity construction. The approach of this study opens a new direction of research on religious coping and can inform interventions for its importance in late life.

Key words: Religion, Religious Coping, Well-Being, Stressful Situations, Narrative Identity, Life-Story Interviews, Older Individuals

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1. Introduction

In western society people tend to think that older adults suffer from age-related losses of roles and relationships and a growing decline of their psychophysical functioning (Westerhof & Barrett, 2005). Research has found that older people can adapt to age-related changes and maintain subjective well-being and meaning in life (Westerhof & Barrett, 2005; Lazarus & DeLongis, 1983). Since older people tend to have higher levels of religious commitment when compared to other age groups, it should be questioned whether religiosity plays a role in how older people maintain their well-being (McFadden, 1995). O'Brien, Shrestha, Stanley, Pargament, Cummings, Kunik, Amspoker (2018) and Ellison (1991) suggest that religious involvement (e.g. religious beliefs, practices and communities) can offer coping strategies for how older adults maintain their subjective well-being. Generally, religiosity is associated with psychophysical health benefits (O'Brien et al., 2018; McFadden, 1995). However, the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being is not consistently positive, since there are individual differences in how people use their faith and religion to cope with stressful life events (O'Brien et al., 2018). For instance, differences in context and identity might play a role in that (Ganzevoort, 1998a).

Most of the current research on religious was based on quantitative research methods, which allow to understand religious coping from a top-down approach. However, religious coping is scarcely investigated from a qualitative bottom-up approach, which could help to clarify how these individual differences emerge. Hence, qualitative research methods can enable to understand religious coping from the lens of an older individual, e.g. how the person experiences the relation between religious coping and context, well-being and identity (Xu, 2015; Ganzevoort, 1998a). The purpose of this study is to investigate religious coping from a qualitative bottom-up approach which enables to understand religious coping from the point of view of older individuals, e.g. whether religious coping methods can be recognized within the individual's context and how the individual sees the relation between religious coping and well-being. Furthermore it aims to understand whether and how narrative identity is constructed in relation to the religious coping methods.

1.1 Stress and Coping Theory

According to the stress and coping theory by Lazarus and Folkman, "*stress is contextual, meaning that it involves a transaction between the person and the environment, and it is a process, meaning that it changes over time*" (Folkman, 2010, p. 901). Depending on the dynamic transaction between the context and the person, a coping response emerges (Folkman, 2010). There are two main coping strategies, namely problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping described in the model of Lazarus and Folkman (Morrison & Bennet, 2006). Problem-focused coping focuses on altering or removing the stressor by for example reducing the demands of the stressor and expanding one's resources. Emotion-focused coping seeks to manage the emotional and physiological effects of stress

to feel better while still being confronted with the stressor by changing one's perception of the stressful event (Morrison & Bennet, 2006). Both coping strategies are correlated to psychological well-being (Park & Adler, 2003; Morrison & Bennet, 2006, Folkman, 2010).

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1980), religion is an emotion-focused coping strategy, which one uses "*as a source of emotional support and active coping*" (Rice, Overby, Boykin, Jeter, & Villarreal, 2014, p. 1255). In literature religion is reported to be a resource for coping which is correlated with well-being (Abu-Raiya, Pargament, Krause, 2016; Pargament, 1998).

1.2 Religion as a Resource for Coping

Among certain groups, especially older people, religion is reported as a resource for coping when dealing with major stressful life events (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Conway, 1986). According to the stress and coping theory by Lazarus and Folkman, religion is regarded as a cognitive act that operates through the emotion-focused coping. However, researchers debated whether the role of religion in coping processes could be classified to a higher-order coping factor such as emotion-focused coping (Pargament, 1997; Krägeloh, Chai, Shepherd, 2012). For example, Krägeloh et al. (2012) claimed that it is hard to classify religious-coping as either emotion-focused or problem-focused coping since religious coping can be both. Praying for guidance or resolution could be solution-seeking coping that would fit problem-focused coping or as a way to gain comfort from religion, which could be classified as emotion-focused coping (Pargament, 1997).

Since religious coping is neither recognized as emotion-focused nor problem-focused coping (Pargament, 1997; Krägeloh et al., 2012), Pargament and colleagues proposed a model which integrates religion into the model of Lazarus and Folkman as a higher order coping factor. Hence, "*Religious Coping*" is a broad construct defined as "*a search for significance in times of stress in ways related to the sacred*" (Pargament, 1997, p. 32). Pargament, Koenig, & Perez (2000) described several religious coping methods, which are described as "*ways of understanding and dealing with negative life events that are related to the sacred*" (Pargament, & Raiya, 2007, p. 23).

Religious coping methods are measured and introduced in the RCOPE, a theoretically based instrument made to understand how the person is making use of religion when dealing with major stressful life events (Pargament et al., 2000). In total, the instrument consists of 21 subscales. Each subscale consists of 5 items to which the participants can respond on a 4-point Likert Scale. Some items were generated based on clinical literature, existing scales, and self-reported measures of people who are facing stressful life events (Pargament et al., 2000). Table 1 presents the RCOPE scales and definitions.

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Table 1.

Religious Coping Methods in terms of RCOPE Scales and Definitions

Religious Coping Methods	Definition
Benevolent Religious Reappraisal	Redefining the stressor through religion as benevolent and potentially beneficial
Punishing God Reappraisal	Redefining the stressor as a punishment from God for the individual's sins
Demonic Reappraisal	Redefining the stressor as an act of the Devil
Reappraisal of God's powers	Redefining God's power to influence the stressful situation.
Collaborative Religious Coping	seeking control through a partnership with God in problem-solving
Active Religious Coping	an active giving up of control to God in coping
Passive Religious Coping	Passive waiting for God to control the situation
Pleading for Direct Intercession	Seeking control indirectly by pleading to God for a miracle or divine intercession.
Self-Directing Religious Coping	Seeking control directly through individual initiative rather than help from God
Seeking Spiritual Support	searching for comfort and reassurance through God's love and care
Religious Focus	engaging in religious activities to shift focus from the stressor
Religious Purification	searching for spiritual cleansing through religious actions
Spiritual Connection	Experiencing a sense of connectedness with forces that transcend the individual
Spiritual Discontent	Expressing confusion and dissatisfaction with God's relationship to the individual in the stressful situation
Marking Religious Boundaries	Clearly demarcating acceptable from unacceptable religious behaviour and remaining with religious boundaries
Seeking Support from Clergy or Members	Searching for comfort and reassurance through the love and care of congregation members and clergy
Religious Helping	attempting to provide spiritual support and comfort to others
Interpersonal Religious Discontent	expressing confusion and dissatisfaction with the relationship of the clergy or members to the individual in the stressful situation
Seeking Religious Direction	Looking to religion for assistance in finding a new direction for living when the old one may no longer be viable
Religious Conversion	Looking to religion for a radical change in life
Religious Forgiving	Looking to religion for help in shifting from anger, hurt, and fear associated with an offence to peace

Note. From Pargament et al. (2000), pp. 522-524

Researchers who have started to investigate specific religious coping methods in greater breadth found that different coping methods have different implications for adjustment to stressful life events (Pargament et al., 1998). Furthermore it was found that religious coping methods were not used singly, but in combination (Pargament et al., 1998). Hence, Pargament and colleagues have decided to focus on the patterns of interrelationship and its implications on health and well-being. Religious

coping was associated with various positive mental health outcomes, as lower rates of depression and stress-related growth (Pargament et al., 2000). These outcomes remain significant even when controlling the possible contaminating factors as nonreligious coping measures or socio-demographic measures (Pargament et al., 2000).

1.3 Positive and Negative Religious Coping

Since the focus in religious coping research was no longer laid on the depth of religious coping methods but rather on the breadth, certain *religious coping patterns* were found (Pargament, Smith, Koenig, Perez, 1998). In order to find these religious coping patterns, the original 100-item version of the RCOPE was reduced to 14-items through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The 14-items belong to distinct religious coping patterns, namely: positive and negative religious coping (Pargament et al., 1998). The pattern of positive religious coping methods includes e.g. benevolent religious reappraisal, seeking spiritual support, collaborative religious coping, religious purification, spiritual connection, religious forgiving. It expresses "*a sense of spirituality, a secure relationship with God, a belief that there is meaning to be found in life, and a sense of spiritual connectedness with others*" (Pargament et al., 1998, p. 712). The pattern of negative religious coping methods includes e.g. Spiritual Discontent, Demonic Reappraisal, punishing God reappraisal, reappraisal of God's powers, interpersonal religious discontent. In contrast to positive religious coping, it expresses "*a less secure relationship with God, a tenuous and ominous view of the world, and a religious struggle in the search for significance*" (Pargament et al., 1998, p. 712).

The positive religious coping pattern was found to be correlated to psychological well-being, spiritual growth, cooperativeness, and hardly any rates of distress (Pargament et al., 1998). Negative religious coping patterns were correlated to symptoms of emotional distress like depression and apathy towards others (Pargament et al., 1998).

Researchers found through quantitative self-report studies that many people tend to use the pattern of positive religious coping methods quite more often than the negative patterns of religious coping because they "*see God and their congregation as a source of love and support than as a source of punishment*" (Pargament et al., 1998, p.720).

The designation of the respective patterns as "positive" or "negative" implies not per se the outcome of the coping, which is either successful or not. Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn (2004) quantitatively examined the relationship between religious coping at baseline and mental health, spiritual outcome, and physical health through a two-year old longitudinal study and were able to demonstrate that many religious coping methods can have mixed implications. For example, it was found that negative religious coping patterns (as demonic reappraisals of an illness) among a group of Christian older people (55 or older) can be predictive of deterioration of psychological well-being and health but were also correlated to better spiritual outcomes. Making sense of someone's illness by believing that the devil is to blame may be disadvantageous for someone's well-being, yet the effort to

search for meaning in such an incomprehensible situation might be partially successful (Pargament et al., 2004). Some positive religious coping methods such as religious purification, religious conversation, and religious forgiveness were correlated with "*declines in activities of daily living, depressed mood and/or quality of life*" (Pargament et al., 2004, p. 727), although the same religious coping methods were correlated to stress-related spiritual growth. In a meta-analysis of 49 studies with participants ranging between 17-97 years of age ($M_{age} = 42.01$) with different religious affiliations (e.g. Christian, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.), Ano and Vasconelles (2005) quantitatively examined the correlation between situation-specific religious coping methods and psychological adjustment to stress. The findings show that positive coping strategies are only functional because they go hand in hand with successful coping, while negative religious coping methods with significantly worse success in coping which explains why they are regarded as dysfunctional.

It is also important to consider the chronicity of negative religious coping and its effects on well-being. Individuals who reported to use negative religious coping methods only at baseline were found to be at no greater risk for deterioration of mental health than persons who use positive religious coping strategies (Pargament et al., 2004). Hence, some people use negative religious coping methods as a time-limited phenomenon which does not cause any long-term disadvantages for someone's well-being (Pargament et al., 2004).

As the paragraphs above highlighted, religion has a complex relation to well-being. Depending on factors like success of coping, chronicity and other potential factors, the religious coping behaviour could affect the well-being of the person in a negative or positive way and the other way around. The remaining question is however whether a quantitative top-down approach to measuring religious coping is enough to capture the dynamic nature of religious coping processes and whether the reported mixed outcomes are due to individual differences in identity and context.

1.4 The Narrative Reformulation of Religious Coping

Pargament and colleagues have rendered much insight into the field of religious coping research. They recognized that religion holds a complex relationship to well-being and that religious coping is a dynamic process. However, Ganzevoort (1998a) has criticized certain aspects of Pargament and colleagues work. Specifically, there are three aspects he criticizes in the current research of religious coping (Ganzevoort, 1998a). First, he argues that Pargament's research focused on one-directional effects of religious coping. According to Ganzevoort (1998a), Pargament has recognized religious coping as a bidirectional process, but his model and research were presenting that religion has an influence on coping and not vice versa. This presents religion as a stable system rather than a dynamic process, which changes over time through various life experiences like coping and crises. The second criticism by Ganzevoort (1998a) involves that Pargament's merely focused on other processes that could be important for understanding religious coping behaviour like identity and context. Identity

and context were only mentioned as external independent variables rather than "*as influencing and being influenced by the coping and religion processes*" (Ganzevoort, 1998a, p.261). The third criticism is the emphasis on investigating religious coping through quantitative research methods. Ganzevoort (1998a) claims that a model of religious coping that claims individuals are striving for significance and interpretation of crisis should use qualitative research methods to receive a greater understanding of this very complex field of research. These aspects that were criticized by Ganzevoort (1998a) might explain the mixed findings on the relationship between religious coping and well-being since there is no clarity about the influence of identity and context on coping on religion and vice versa (see paragraph "1.3 positive- and negative religious coping" above). The narrative approach can help to investigate these aspects by exploring the idiosyncratic and dynamic nature of religious coping experiences rather than generalizing religious coping methods through quantitative methods.

The life story model offers one form of narrative inquiry. The life story is "*the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what the person remembers of it and what he or she wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another*" (Atkinson, 2012, p. 26). A life story situates one's life in a retrospective and prospective sense of time, which McAdams conceptualizes as *narrative identity* (McAdams, & McLean, 2013, p. 234). The narrative identity "*is a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future*" (McAdams, & McLean, 2013, p. 233). The internalized life story entails self-defining memories from the past which "*match the motivational themes of future goals*" and thereby establish thematic coherence (McAdams et al., 1996, p. 344). The thematic coherence in the life story provides the person's life "*with meaning, unity, and purpose*" (McAdams et al., 1996, p. 344).

According to McAdams et al. (1996) there are two concepts which organize the motivational content of life stories, namely agency and communion. Agency is described as "*existence of the organism as an individual, manifesting itself in self-protection, self-expansion, and mastery of the environment*" whereas communion refers to "*the participation of the individual in some larger organism of which the individual is a part, as manifested in union, love, and intimacy*" (McAdams et al., 1996, p. 344).

Coping processes are important when constituting meaning and coherence in one's life story or narrative identity (Ganzevoort, 1998b). Through coping processes the story can be reinterpreted or altered, e.g. emotion-focused coping tries to change the interpretation of it and problem-focused coping aims to alter the situation (Ganzevoort, 1998b). The central role of coping processes in building a coherent narrative identity is structured since it helps the individual to reinterpret or change the situation according to the storylines (Ganzevoort, 1998b). Religious coping, like non-religious coping "*is in narrative terms also a part, antecedent and result of identity processes. Both religious and identity stories tell us who we are and where we stand in this world. They define, interpret and direct our relations with God and our fellow human beings*" (Ganzevoort, 1998b, p.9). The life story model

(McAdams, 2001) can help to understand religious coping processes by analysing them in a dynamic story with changing contexts. It can also help to investigate how older people experience the relation between religious coping and well-being. Furthermore, the life story model can clarify whether religious coping plays a role in construing narrative identity.

1.5 Research Questions

Since research suggests that religious involvement (e.g. religious beliefs, practices, and communities) can offer coping strategies for how older adults maintain their subjective well-being (O'Brien et al., 2018; Ellison, 1991), a target group of older adults of at least 65 years of age was chosen. There are three reasons why this target group was chosen. Firstly, older adults tend to have higher levels of religious commitment when compared to other age groups. Secondly, religious institutions provide services (e.g. worship services, offered services by organisations like the Catholic Women's Association (KFD) in Germany or Caritas, as going to trips and having breakfast with the congregation, etc.) for older people to help them maintain their well-being (McFadden, 2010). Lastly, religion provides the believers with a framework through which they can reflect upon the meaning of life and what comes after, which could contradict some negative stereotypes about ageing (McFadden, 2010). Current research on religious coping among older adults provides valuable knowledge about the relation between religious coping and other constructs like well-being through mainly quantitative research methods. However, it is still something to be investigated whether and how constructs like context, well-being and narrative identity play a role in the subjective experience of religious coping behaviour of older adults.

The purpose of this study is to understand religious coping from the perspective of older individuals. It revolves around the question how religious coping relates to context, well-being and narrative identity in the experience of older adults. The following research questions are guiding this qualitative inquiry. The first research question is focuses on the aspect of context and religious coping "*how can we recognize religious coping methods within the individual's life context?*". The second research question concentrates on the dynamic nature of religious coping methods and well-being "*how is the relation between religious coping methods in achieving or maintaining well-being in the individual's experience?*". The third research question focuses on identity and religious coping "*how is narrative identity constructed in relation to the religious coping methods?*".

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

This study comprised a purposive sample of five older individuals of at least 65 years of age who were not familiar with the researcher and voluntarily participated to share their experiences on religious coping. The sample consisted of two men and three women, whose age ranged between 74

and 82 ($M = 78,2$; $SD = 2,85$). Two of the participants were higher educated and the other three less educated. Four of them are in good and one is of poorer physical health. All the interviews were conducted in one district of North-Rhine Westphalia (Germany) called Coesfeld. Inclusion criteria were an affiliation to the catholic church and an age of at least 65 years. Exclusion criteria was an age-related insufficiency of cognitive and verbal abilities and memory recall. None of the participants needed to be excluded on the grounds of this criteria.

2.2 Interview

The goal of this interview was to explore how the individual experiences their faith in certain situations in his/her life and how s/he coped with the situation through his/her faith considering his/her coping behaviour is integrated into context and identity.

A qualitative narrative approach was deemed appropriate for the purposes of this study. Based on McAdams (2008) life story model, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The interview comprised nine open-questions and some sub questions, focusing on religious coping experiences (cf. Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in the German language and with each of the 5 participants individually. The goal of this interview was to explore how the individual experiences his/her faith in certain stressful situations and how s/he coped with the situation through his/her faith. Furthermore, it was explored why the person experiences this situation as important and what s/he learned from it. Another point of exploration was the to find out how helpful the individual experiences religious coping and well-being. The interview questions covered five main parts.

In the first part, the interviewees were informed about the structure and aim of the interview and were asked whether they have any questions about the procedure, which was the first question.

In the second part, the interviewees were asked to reflect their lifelong experiences with faith chronologically as if their life was a book or TV series with different chapters or episodes. Subsequently, the interviewees were asked to name the title of the main chapters of their life and give a short description of each life chapter.

In the third part, four questions were asked for one key scene per life chapter. Specifically, participants had to describe a situation or a specific experience (which was very vivid in their memory) for each life chapter in chronological order (as a child, teenager, adult, older adult). After describing the situation the participant had to give a detailed explanation about which role faith took in the named situation or experience and how their faith might relate to the situation or experience. By means of sub-questions they were asked what they specifically did in this particular situation to cope with it and whether faith played a role and how exactly the situations relate to their faith (reinforced or decreased faith, the experienced relation to God, the understanding of God in that context). Next, the interviewee was asked to explain why s/he chose this situation or experience in order to figure out what the person learned from it. Through sub-questions the interviewee was asked what s/he had learned from the situation and how it changed them as a person.

In the fourth part, four questions were asked about how helpful the interviewee experiences religious coping in achieving or maintaining his/her well-being. Specifically, s/he was first asked to reflect how helpful s/he experienced his/her faith in the mentioned key scenes. Through sub-questions the interviewer clarified whether there were other times where s/he had experienced faith as helpful and not helpful. Then, the interviewee was asked whether s/he visits the church regularly and whether s/he takes advantage of the services that are offered by the church (e.g. Caritas or KFD). If yes, a sub-question was asked to which s/he had to answer whether s/he experiences church visits and services offered by the church as contributing to her/his well-being. If not, they were asked why as a sub-question. Subsequently, the interviewee was asked whether s/he believes that having a sense in life through religion contributes to well-being. Through the last question, the interviewee had to answer how s/he experiences aging from a religious point of view and whether s/he thinks religion contradicts negative stereotypes about aging.

2.3 Procedure

This interview study obtained ethical approval of the ethics committee of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social sciences (BMS) at the University of Twente under the registration number 191234. At the beginning of the interview it was made clear that the participant would have the opportunity to withdraw from the interview at any time. All participants were fully informed about the nature and aim of the study without deception. Furthermore they were asked for permission to record, store, and transcribe and quote them under a pseudonym for academic purposes. Every detail about their identity was anonymized. They gave permission by signing an informed consent where the researchers contact details are mentioned (cf. Appendix B). Participants got the opportunity to ask questions throughout the whole interview. After the interview the researcher asked the interviewees how they feel in order to spent emotional support, since the topic could be emotionally burdening to some people.

All the interviews were conducted by the researcher herself in the private home of the participant due to convenience. Generally, the participants appeared to be interested in the topic, cooperative, talkative, and calm. The length of the interviews ranged between 73 to 106 minutes with a mean length of 92.2 minutes. The interviewer had some problems with explaining the interview guideline to 4 of the participants. Although the interviewer explained that the interview begins with the title and a short description of the life chapters and continues with a detailed explanation about the life chapter through key scenes, four interviewees thought that they have to tell everything, including the key scenes, directly at the beginning of the interview. This explains the extensive interview length, since a life story interview by McAdams is normally slated for 1 hour. In order to control the length of the interview, the interviewer reminded the participants about the structure of the interview, which sometimes helped to control the length of the interview.

2.4 Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and analysed by the researcher herself. The anonymity of the participants was ensured by replacing names with pseudonyms and omitting the locations. The *holistic content analysis* (Lieblich et al., 1998) was adapted to analyse the interviews. It enables to see how the individual constructs narrative identity in narrating about religious coping experiences. The process for analysing the interview in terms of the holistic content analysis can be summarized as follows: First, the interviews were summarized by means of the life chapters in order to provide a rich description of the individual's life context. Second, the interviews were read several times until the foci of the whole story emerged and the interpretation followed in order to answer the research questions. What goes beyond the holistic content analysis was the comparison between the interviews and the recognition of the coping methods and their comparison with the coping methods described by Pargament.

The first research question ("*How can we recognize religious coping methods within the individual's life context?*") was answered by interpreting the interview in terms of the coping strategies, which were described in terms of the key scenes through which the context in which the individual found him-/herself was made conceivable. Thereby, the researcher searched especially for reoccurring coping behaviour and turning points in the storyline. Subsequently, the researcher compared the mentioned coping methods to the religious coping methods described in the literature by Pargament et al. (2000) and examined whether they fit. If not, the researcher suggested new religious coping methods.

For answering the second research question ("*how is the relation between religious coping methods in achieving or maintaining well-being in the individual's experience?*"), the researcher described how the individual experiences the relation between religious coping strategies in achieving or maintaining well-being in general.

In order to answer the third research question ("*how is narrative identity constructed in relation to the religious coping methods?*"), the researcher described how the narrative identity is constructed in relation to the religious coping methods. For this purpose the researcher went through the interview and searched for reoccurring themes, "*the space devoted to the theme in the text (...) and the number of details the teller provides about it*" (Lieblich et al., 1998) that hint to the religious development and the identity at stake.

Lastly, the three research questions were answered across the persons by examining differences and similarities on religious coping behaviour and context, the relation between religious coping and well-being, and the construction of narrative identity in relation to religious coping.

The results were interpreted and discussed with another researcher in order to find consensus and avoid researcher bias. Furthermore, the results were reported by using many quotations that were translated into English in order to stay close to the way the interviewee narrates. The paraphrases were also closely reported to the words that the interviewees have used.

3. Results

3.1 Developing freedom and creativity through new religious interpretations

Sabine is an 82 years old woman, who lives alone in her private home. The interview with Sabine went very smoothly and good rapport was built very quickly, although the interviewer was not relative to her. Her openness and her desire to talk with younger people about the topic of the research made it very easy to obtain a rich narrative. It seemed that she understood the questions well and appeared to be very reflected on this topic. Hence, she could give reasonable answers to the questions without talking about topics that were not related to the questions asked. This manifested in the duration of the interview, which was the shortest one.

Since Sabine was raised in a very religious catholic family, religion played a key role in her life very early on. Hence, she called her first life chapter "*My childhood*". Her childhood memories are all related to traumatic war experiences. It was coined by experiences of hunger, poverty, and fear. Faith was the only thing that gave her and her family hope. Hunger and poverty were chasing them even after war. This is where her second life chapter starts, called "*The hunger after the war*". After the war, Sabine and her family continued to be hungry. Besides the hunger she reported that her sister was suffering with poliomyelitis. Her sister's situation got worse day by day and one day, her sister was suddenly healed. She said that her family believed that this was a miracle and they believed that they owe this miracle to a saint. The third chapter was called "*The time at school*". She reported that after the second World War many teachers left her school because they needed to undergo denazification. Only two female teachers were left who were very religious. She experienced them as very good Christians and therefore they turned into her role models. Chapter four was called "*Apprenticeship and work*". Sabine was working very hard and very long hours. There was no time left to visit the church, neither did she had the desire to pray, because she felt that her life went well without many complicated situations where she would need the help of God. The fifth chapter was called "*The marriage*". After her apprenticeship, she met her future husband. His family was very religious as well, however, she had no good relationship to her mother in law. Although she had time to visit the church on Sundays, she decided against it because her mother in law was visiting the church on Sundays. This ultimately led to another life chapter where she felt dissociated to the church and God. Contact to God and the church was re-established in the sixth life chapter, where she started to work in the catechesis, called "*The catechesis*". She worked for 18 years there and felt as an important part of the church community, which she experienced as a new family. There she felt accepted and loved, in contrast to the criticising and cold environment she experienced at home with her husband and mother in law. The seventh chapter was called "*The depression*". Sabine's husband was suffering from depression for 30 years. She described this life chapter as the worst chapter of her life. It was very hard for her to accept and empathise with her husband who was not kind to her. However, the religion helped her to see his situation from a different viewpoint. She started to realize that he was not "*just*

evil", but as she described, "*mentally ill*". Her last life chapter spans from the death of her husband until today. The last life chapter is called "**Today**". Today, Sabine is an active member of The Catholic Womens Association of Germany (KFD), which stands up for women's interests and their appreciation within the male-dominated catholic church.

As a religious person, Sabine interprets life in general as a path which ends up in heaven. She believes that every situation, as difficult it may be, belongs to that path and is an exercise that is given by God. She interprets God as a "*father who shows me the path and carries people through their lives*". In a key scene from her seventh life chapter she described a situation where her husband left their home in the evening and came back at night. She did not know where he was or what he was doing. She only prayed and thought that this situation is "*another exercise for me*", which belongs to her path that she was meant to go through. This interpretation helps her to see a meaning in every situation that she needs to cope with. She copes with situations by praying alone or going to the church and praying with the other members of the catechesis. Sabine got more and more critical about her religion, this helped her to interpret conflict situations involving her husband and her mother in law differently. Sabine reported that her husband and her mother in law were restricting her freedom and her creativity for a long time. This made her feel very angry and she went to church to meet the catechesis team and pray with them. In church, she felt free and thought that God is free as well when deciding whether to listen or not. She felt calmness through the acceptance and love among the other members. In a key scene from her sixth life chapter, she explains that within the catechesis, Sabine had the opportunity to make "*eye opening insights*" about her religion: "*The more I learned about my religion within the catechesis, the more I got critical about the things I learned as a child. I learned that our religion is not asking of us to be obedient as I once thought. This helped me to become more autonomous in my decisions without being directed by my husband or mother in law*". Before this insight she prayed "*please God answer to our prayers...*". As she realized that this praying is an imperative directed to God, which is restricting his freedom to choose whether he wants to answer, she changed the way she prayed into "*please God hear our prayers...*". She thinks that she cannot demand of God to listen to her, as her husband and her mother in law cannot demand her to obey.

As the faith of Sabine developed over time, her coping style developed as well. Being angry at her husband who restricted her freedom and creativity, Sabine sought shelter and comfort among other members of the catechesis in chapter six. This kind of coping relates to one coping strategy called "*Seeking support from clergy and members*", which was described by Pargament and colleagues. As described in the literature, Sabine found love, acceptance, and reassurance among the other members of the catechesis. As this coping method turned out to bring her comfort, she went to church as often as possible in order to find comfort and her faith was "*reinforced*" through that positive experience, when considering that her faith did not play a significant role in her life before. The more religious she got, the more she tended to redefine future stressful situations as a path or way that had been determined by God, which made it easier for her to accept difficult or stressful situations. She thought that situations

were "*exercises*" that she has to "*pass in order to find the way to heaven*". This coping strategy relates to the coping strategy "*benevolent religious reappraisal*". This coping strategy helped her especially during her seventh life chapter to understand her husband's mental issues instead of seeing him as "*evil*" and made it easier for her to accept the situations and find comfort since it is "*part of the way*" God had chosen for her. Sabine sought direction by God in her prayers or during learning sessions in the catechesis. She realized in her sixth life chapter that she does not need to obey to rules, but that she can act freely since she learned in the catechesis that God does not want people to obey blindly as she did to her husband and her mother in law. In the literature, this coping behaviour is known as "*seeking religious direction*". After her husband's death, she used her newfound freedom in order to express her ideas within the church to reform it. For example, in her last life chapter, she helped her church members to become more open minded and accept diversity like greeting woman wearing hijabs. This strategy is called "*religious helping*". Reading Sabine's story, one can see the complexity and the context in which the choice of these coping methods lay. Started out as an obedient person, her faith helped her to find freedom and encouraged her to self-development. The context and identity development that Sabine went through by means of her faith cannot be assessed by for example a questionnaire like the RCOPE.

Generally, Sabine experiences a positive connection between religion and well-being. She describes worship services as the "*petrol station*" of her faith. She reported that she can pray for things and pray negative emotions away. The Catholic Women's Association of Germany (KFD) in which she is active gives her the opportunity to express her creativity (which was restrained from her in the past) and to give her a sense in life by reforming the church with her ideas. For example, she motivated the people in her local church to communicate with refugees and greet women with a hijab. Furthermore, interpreting life as a path which ends up in heaven is giving her sense and meaning in life as well. Hence, the religion with its services and associations helps her to gain and maintain meaning in life.

An important theme in Sabine's interview which gives a hint to the identity at stake is freedom and creativity. According to Sabine's portrayal of her religious development, she had the feeling that she was forced into a particular way of living and religious interpretation. Even being dissociated to the church was not her own choice but was rather due to other reasons like having no time or due to her mother in law who visited the church regularly. In the catechesis she learned to open up and could feel freedom and was able to express her creativity. Her newfound freedom and creativity made her think that she should leave God freedom whether he wants to answer to her prayers. Being an active member of the KFD, Sabine can feel freedom and express her ideas for good aims.

3.2 Religion as a background for life

Peter is a 79 years old priest who lives alone in his private home. In contrast to Sabine, it was difficult to build rapport. When being asked about emotions and meaning, Peter equivocated by answering rationally and trying to teach the interviewer about his attitudes. Eventually, talking little about his subjective world and teaching the interviewer allude that he wanted to appear professional and did not want to lose his authority as a priest, which suggests that being a priest who is a person who is representing his religion, plays a huge role in his narrative identity.

As Sabine, Peter was raised up in a very religious catholic family in the time of the second World War. He called his first life chapter "***My childhood and the war***". Peter reported that he could not remember that he and his family had any discussions about their faith. He said that the faith and the religion were part of their everyday life and completely taken for granted. His second chapter he called "***The search for my identity***" and the third "***My studies***". As a child, he dreamed of becoming a lawyer, however, theology was playing a greater role in his life as he grew older, hence he decided to study theology. During his studies in theology, he was confronted with the decision to continue with his studies or to marry and build a family. However, he continued with his studies. A very valuable experience during the time of his studies were the lectures held by a professor who was explaining his faith very understandable, in contrast to the other professors which held lectures where he had difficulties to follow and gain new insights. The fourth chapter was called "***Being a provost***". After finishing his studies, Peter worked in different cities as a provost. He was accompanying many families that were in need of his help as a provost. Moving to his current hometown, Peter worked as an emeritus. He called this fifth chapter "***Working in my hometown***". He was working in a catholic hospital in the personnel office, where he had many responsibilities. His faith helped him to manage and take all the responsibilities he had to take. His last chapter was called "***My retirement***", which was about his life today. The church is still an important part of his life and he still organizes worship services at the local church.

Peter believes that his religion is a "*constitutive element*" in his life. He reported that it plays a role in everyday situations as well as situations that were particularly good or bad. His religion shapes the decisions he makes, his routines, etc: "*I regard my religion a value canon to which I can adjust my life*". Hence, as a continuity, his religion is accompanying him in every situation and every moment in his life. When he prays, he prays "*God give me strength and good people around me*". Praying in the church with the community or alone are important activities in his life and help him to keep his daily routines. He explained "*praying in community can motivate you to pray alone at home. Praying alone at home can motivate you to go regularly to church and pray with the community. One influences the other ... and you never forget your daily duties*". He stated that he believes that "*God has no direct influence on the situations that are happening, but rather an indirect influence*". Hence, he thanks God for every good situation and accepts every situation that turns out bad, since he does not believe that "*God directly caused the bad situation*", but that there is "*no rational answer to that*". Hence, he thinks

that how bad a situation might be, it would be "*wrong to blame God for it*". Rather, he thinks that the people who are involved in a bad situation "*should pray for the help of God*". Peter explained a key scene from his third life chapter where the professor at the university was constituting an authority figure for him. The Professor helped him to understand "*how one should interpret the bible and live according to it*". During the time as an active priest in his fourth life chapter, Peter described a key scene where he assisted a woman and her children who lost her husband through suicide. In comparison to other families he assisted, this family continued to cherish their faith instead of questioning it by asking "*why did God do this?*". Rather, he explained "*it was the right attitude, which the family had... they do not give up on God as it would be his fault. It is never the fault of God. God can only help people to be open for situations. This openness can help them to say 'I can live with that and I can welcome any situation like this in the future'... God shows us the path, we only need to follow the path*".

Peter's life story is very much focused on his profession as a priest. As someone who was raised in a catholic family, it was taken for a granted part, but after he met the professor who was a kind of an authority figure for him, he started to understand his religion and had true insights about how a good Christian could live his life. It was no longer a taken for granted in his life but turned out to be the "*guideline*" or "*value canon*", with which he was able to identify thanks to the explanations of the professor. During his time as a priest, he was trying to be an authority figure to the people he assisted. He was really judging families for no longer believing and praising the family who lost their father for staying religious. It appeared as if he wanted to give the interviewer a morality lesson. As he sees himself as a moral authority in his catholic community, one can see the dynamics between the situations that happen, and the proactive role religion has in coping and well-being as a "*value canon*". Coping, normally, is a reactive process, but as we see in Peter's example, it is a proactive process. It shapes his routines, his daily activities as for example regular prayer in community and individually, and helps him to make decisions. This proactive style of coping has a positive impact on his well-being, since it helps him to feel balanced and relaxed since he knows what to do and can be therefore open to every situation. In literature, this kind of proactive coping might partly relate to "*marking religious boundaries*", since Peter has clear boundaries in which his behaviour remains, but it is not only the boundaries that explain his coping behaviour, but the dynamics between the situation and the role of religion. Hence, proactive religious coping was not clearly mentioned in the current model of religious coping.

In essence, Peter experiences his faith as contributing positively to his well-being. He reported "*faith gives me balance in life*". Through that balance, he is "*open to welcome any situation that is about to come*". Since his religion shapes his everyday life as well as extraordinary situations, decisions, etc. he can be calm as he knows how to react, since his religion works for him as a kind of guideline of life: "*The faith is a constitutive element in a Christians life. It determines what you do in your everyday life, in bad situations, on Sundays and so on. Hence, it plays a crucial role in my*

decisions, since you must ask yourself whether the decision fits into your Christian value canon or your Christian guideline of life ... so, I do not need to be stressed about a situation or doubt what to do. I can accept every situation and say yes to it since I know what to do thanks to my religion ... this leads to a feeling of balance in life".

A reoccurring theme that hints to the identity at stake within the interview with Peter being an authoritative figure. This was for example conceivable through the way Peter constructed the interview situation. Furthermore, the professor who really described his religion in understandable terms was an authoritative figure which Peter seems to admire. Having made huge insights about his religion through the professor, Peter saw religion as a constitutive part of life. It suggests a way how to approach life and gives an idea about which attitudes are right or wrong. Peter was making valuations about some attitudes (like not going to church anymore, because God has not helped or led this situation happen) by judging whether the attitude was right or wrong. It appears that religion really shaped how Peter approaches life and also his strictness in being an authority figure as a priest.

3.3 New religious interpretations helped me to find my sacred inner strengths

Irmgard is 76 years old teacher, who lives together with her husband in their private home. The interview went rather smoothly, although the interviewer was not acquainted with Irmgard. Irmgard appeared very talkative and motivated to share detailed narratives about how faith played a role in her life and how her faith changed the way how she thinks about herself.

Irmgard was raised in a very religious catholic family, which means that religion played a role in her life from an early age. Her first life chapter starts with her "**Secure childhood**". As other girls in her age, Irmgard saw religion as an obvious part of her live which did not "*stand in her way*" Visiting the church on Sundays and being part of the catholic scout group were activities that were taken for granted in her childhood. Rather than going out with friends on Sunday, she followed her "*duty*" by visiting the church. She stated that she "*participated in every service and celebration which was related to the church without questioning*" since it was taken for granted to take part. Generally, she felt very secure in their local church and had a good relationship to her religious parents. After finishing high school, she moved away from her "*secure*" family home to another city where she started her studies to become a teacher. This is where she narrated her second life chapter which was called "**Opening eyes**". At the university, she met a university chaplain who influenced her life and her worldview until today. Influenced by the second Vatican council, the university chaplain was trying to "*open doors*" for the catholic Christians in a modern world. He helped Irmgard to question the "*dogmatic*" belief system with which she was raised with, for which she is very thankful today. The university chaplain raised the awareness in her that "*a Christian should take her responsibilities in the world*". He motivated her and her other catholic fellow students to engage in for example politics. A new life chapter began after finishing her studies. This third life chapter was called "**Collecting**

experiences". Irmgard started to work as a teacher with a very friendly teaching staff. However, she had the impression that there were few religious people in her new environment. Her first husband was not religious as well which dissociated her "automatically" from her faith. Sometimes she thought "you cannot give up on everything you once believed", but her environment had a big impact on her. She did not go to church on Sunday or participated in the services offered by the church, although she once believed that this was her "duty". She never really became an atheist, but religion played a minor role in her life for ten years during her profession as a teacher. After ten years, she left her first husband and met her second and current husband, who is a religious man. Her husband was always very motivated to visit the church, above all on Sundays. The second marriage was a turning point in Irmgard's life, since her second husband was one person who helped her to "find her way back to church". "**Finding the way back to church**" is her fourth life chapter. Together with her husband, Irmgard moved to her current hometown where she met a priest who is, as the student chaplain, a very crucial character in her life story. This priest was the second person who helped her to "find back to church". Seeing her situation, the priest was encouraging Irmgard to "go on her way". She was feeling guilty for having married a second man, which is prohibited within the catholic church. However, this priest was seeing things very "different" or "advanced". The priest encouraged Irmgard to work for the church and invited her to several events organized by the church. Religious beliefs were getting more and more important in her life. These beliefs helped her to find decisions within her profession as a teacher as well as they helped her to gain a new understanding about herself. Her last chapter was called "**The retirement**", which narrates her life today. Currently, Irmgard must fight many diseases. Recently, she survived cancer, however, there are still some other diseases that are making things difficult for her. Going to church, working for the church, and praying regularly are helping her to overcome the hard times.

When Irmgard was a child, she believed that religion meant "nothing but some rules to which people have to stick without questioning". She can very vividly remember a key scene from her first life chapter, where her father, as a religious man, went to church but not as regularly as the "rules demanded" of a good Christian. Irmgard realized that her father was not sticking to the rules as he should, so she blamed him for being a "hypocrite". Her father responded with one sentence which became meaningful after years. He stated: "Child, I go to church with the hope that God might find me once". The student chaplain and the priest in her home town were making clear to her that rules are not important to become a good human or Christian, but to find one's inner potentials and to focus on the "here and now" rather than looking back to someone's "faults" like getting married the second time as Irmgard did. After her father's death, her second marriage, and the meetings with the priest and the student chaplain, she went to church in order to "find God" for her father and for herself. After being dissociated from the church for years, she found a true attachment to faith. She realized that for finding and living up to one's potentials, one must find God and to live those potentials to their maximum with God's help. There was one key scene from her third life chapter where she, as a person who was

described by her colleagues as having a *"helper syndrome"*, sought help from God due to a problematic child within her class. Her colleagues were advising her to exclude him from school, but she wanted to help this child and had an *"emotional dilemma"*. Before she decided about the fate of this child, she went to church and read a biblical story about some fishermen fishing for days but without success. According to Irmgard that biblical story has a core message: one fisher asked Jesus for help and Jesus replied, *"Go and try it again"* and the fishermen tried it again after his advice and they were successful. Irmgard learned from this evening in the church, that she should *"try it again and help the child"* after she got the advice from God. Hence, her inner potential as a *"helper"* was maximized in that moment with the help of God and she found the right decision for that specific problem. It turned out, that she could really help the child by keeping him in her class. This success made her feel, in Irmgard's words, *"more attached to the church and reinforced my believe in God"*. Irmgard described another key scene from her last life chapter, which happened four years ago. Irmgard was suffering from cancer. The doctors prognosed that her life might be at an end. Panicking and feeling hopeless due to that prognosis, she went to church in order to seek the help from God. She prayed *"Please Lord I beg you to bless us and to lay your peace on us. Protect us and touch us with your strength"*. Irmgard stated that the most important *"gifts"* that she possesses in herself, as *"a child of God"*, is peace and strength. She believed that she could maximize inner peace and strengths by *"finding God in his church"* and asking him for help. Going into *"the house of God"* made her feel *"his peace and strength"* which *"we as his children also possess ... but in order to receive his peace and strength we have to show him our willingness to find him"*. Today, Irmgard has many other health related problems, for which she regularly visits the church to *"sought God's peace and strengths to handle my inner tensions"*.

Irmgard's rich narrative shows how her faith developed over time. Starting out as a child from a religious family, Irmgard took religion as a part in her life that was rather taken for granted. Throughout her young years, she associated religion with *"duties"* and *"rules"*. However, the two clergies she described changed her understanding about her religion. Especially the priest in her hometown, from whom she sought help in the fourth life chapter, gave her a new understanding of religion. This help-seeking is called in literature *"seeking support from clergy or members"*. As a turning point in her third life chapter, Irmgard went to church in order to get a clue on what to do with her problematic student. From there on, Irmgard was searching for help, strength and peace within herself which she can find only by the attempt to find God and not by asking priests for help. As in the described key scenes from the third and the last life chapter, Irmgard went to church in order to find her inner strengths, like strengthening the inner helper in the situation with the problematic student or the situation where she felt peace and strength through God. The church is therefore a place where she can strengthen her inner qualities. This coping method is not clearly described in the literature but can be suggested as a religious coping method called *"Religious Resource"*. Irmgard's developing faith and life context relate to her choice of coping methods as she first sought help from the religious authorities and later sought help within herself by showing the *"willingness to find God"*. Her coping style has a

good impact on her well-being, since she won a new psychological resource with which she deals with difficult situations.

Irmgard stated, *"faith can only make everything better, never worse"*. Hence, she believes that her faith is positively contributing to her well-being. Irmgard participates in many services that are offered by the church and works for the church which she experiences *"as an opportunity offered by the church to use my brain, although I am an old woman. Every time when I work or preach in the church, I am astonished about how good my brain still works and this makes me very happy and I am very thankful to the church that they gave me the opportunity to use my brain"*. Besides the experience that she is still mentally fit, she believes that the faith makes her concentrate on the *"here and now"* rather than ruminating about things that she could have done different or better: *"my faith helps me to focus on the here and now rather than ruminating on my past. This gives me the opportunity to not miss anything in my current life and to quit with the past, because if I assume that every situation happens out of the will of God, it must be fine. I am accepting the way God has chosen for me"*. Furthermore, Irmgard thinks that *"if it was god's will to make me grow older, than that is fine"*. As religion makes her accept aging as a natural process, it helps her to accept that death is natural as well and that *"there is a life after death"*. She stated: *"I do not know what will happen when I die, but about one thing I am pretty sure... wherever we will go, it will bring us peace and we will be in good and loving hands. I do not believe that we will leave this world completely, since in the end, there are our strengths that will survive in future generations"*.

Very outstanding themes that give a hint to the identity at stake within the interview with Irmgard were new kinds of interpretation and relations. Being raised in a conservative religious family, Irmgard was interpreting her religion as taken for granted and a duty. That is why she was using a rather negative way of coping about being divorced and marrying for a second time, since thereby she did not stick to the catholic rules. As she gained a new interpretation about her religion through the university chaplain and the priest in her hometown, she used a rather positive way of coping. Hence, her identity and religious development had an impact on her coping behaviour.

3.4 Recognizing that all I need is the help of a loving and caring mother like Mary, the mother of God

Mechthild is an 80 years old nurse who lives alone in her private home. Mechthild appeared very talkative and open. It appeared that she was trusting the interviewer right away, which made it very easy to build rapport. Although Mechthild was not acquainted with the interviewer before, she said that she was very happy about sharing her religious experiences with younger people, because she believes that her grandchildren are not interested in those kinds of topics. Hence, Mechthild talked a lot, even about topics not relevant to the research questions, which is recognizable in the length of the interview, which was the longest one.

As the other interviewees, Mechthild was raised in a very religious catholic family. Her first chapter starts with her childhood, hence the chapter is called "**My childhood**". She grew up in a rural place in Eastern Germany, which today belongs to Poland. Before the second World War, Mechthild's family had a rather good socio-economic status. She remembers that she had a very "*caring*" family and that they "*lacked nothing*". Especially her father had a "*very good reputation*" in their rural hometown. This changed as soon as the war started. Her family fled from their hometown to a city, where she had the impression that the people were treating them "*condescendingly*" and that she had the feeling that they were seen as "*the scum of the earth*". She reported that their nutrition was rather poor and that they were seized with cooties. She said that she felt "*embarrassed*" for their situation as refugees. Her embarrassment was reinforced by some people who were judging her due to her red hair. She said that she lacked self-confidence and did not "*felt worthy at all*". In all this "*misery*", she felt love and strength through the church. She remembers that her grandmother was mainly taking her and her siblings to church, hence she felt really attached to her grandmother. After the war, they went to another city. There, her second life chapter started when she became a nursing student, which is called "**The nursing school**". She remembers that she nursed many seriously ill people and went to church as much as she could in order to pray for her patients. She remembers that she sometimes only sat on her knees and enjoyed the silent atmosphere in the church. After she finished the nursing school, she moved to her current hometown as a fully educated nurse. A nun, which was acquainted with her family, asked her whether she wanted to work as a nurse in a hospital which was very near to their home and Mechthild accepted this offer. There her third chapter started, which is called "**Working in my hometown**". As a nurse, she continued to go to church, especially on Sundays which was "*taken for granted of a Christian*". She remembers that her mother told her that whenever she needed something, she should ask for the help of the holy spirit "*who can give an advice on what to do*". She also took advice from a nun, who was also working in the hospital, whom she really liked. However, she mostly prayed for the help of the Mother Mary, since she sought a "*caring*" and "*protecting*" mother for herself and her patients. She stated that she was always "*a fan of the Mary*" but during this time she prayed the most for her help. But sometimes, during this life chapter, she sought the help of the holy spirit, as her mother advised, since she believes that he has the "*power to change things*". Her fourth Chapter starts with her marriage and is hence called "**The marriage**". Mechthild's husband "*was very religious*" like herself. They had four children and baptised them all. After her fourth child, she decided to take birth control pills, which is prohibited within the catholic church, but she took the pills anyways. As the years passed, Mechthild's mother got older and very sick, which lead to her inevitable death. Life continued with the help, "*strength*", "*care*", and "*love*" she got from the Mother Mary. Her children grew up and she continued her life by working as a nurse. Her last or current life chapter is called "**My retirement**". Mechthild lost her husband shortly after her retirement, which was a very big loss for her, and she coped with this by praying a lot.

Mechthild's memories of her childhood as are still very vivid. Religion was part of her life very early on. Starting from her first life chapter, she stated that as a child, *"I learned my religion from my grandmother ... I always observed how she prayed"*. She remembers a key scene, where she, her siblings, and grandmother as refugees could drive a horse-drawn vehicle to the church and that she, her siblings and her grandmother were received with roses in the church. In the church she felt *"secure and appreciated"*. She said that she felt very *"secure after a long time of embarrassment and fear"* when saying together with her grandmother a rosary at the church. She said: *"In the church thanked God for still having my mother"*. She believes that her prayers helped her through the times being a refugee and made her faith even *"stronger"* and made her personally feel *"confident again"*. Realizing how crucial her faith was for her mental health, faith was no longer something taken for granted, but she believed for her own good. In a key scene from her third life chapter, she explains how *"shocked"* she was when they moved to her current hometown about the catholic Christians mentality *"People used to praise my hometown as very catholic ... and as I saw that the people here were forced to go to church, especially Sundays, I was disappointed... And I believe that this is the reason why people are not going to church anymore because they feel forced to go"*. She further told the interviewer that *"as my daughter once told me 'you do not go to church in order please God, but to please yourself'"*. She thinks: *"It is maybe not okay to say that, but we were told as we were children that going to church was our duty and taken for granted ... and we went to church and it helped us, but the duty should not be the motivation to go to church ... and Mary was always very important for me. I mostly pray to Mary ... she is a mother to me ... I even confessed to a priest that I pray to the Mother Mary, because it is not right to pray to her, but to pray to God ... I only prayed to God or the holy spirit in situations where I thought he can change things, but mostly I needed the care and love of Mary"*. As it is noticeable from her life story, mothers always played a huge role in her life. Her grandmother, her own mother, the mother of Jesus and the mothers she nursed. In a key scene from her second life chapter she explained *"I remember a patient of us who was lying on the death bed. She had one little child. It was horrible for me to imagine how the life of this child would continue without his mother. You can always replace a father but never a mother"*, *"I asked God 'why do you let this happen God?"*. Here, she prayed to God, but she *"realized that Mary really helps ... her love and care ... this is what I learned, my mother and my grandmother told me, that Mary will help"*. Even today, she prays to the Mother Mary. *"One reason why I like to pray in the church is because we sing 'Marienlieder' ... we sing 'Marienlieder' since we were children"*. Hence, Mechthild sees Mary as a helper. As a nurse, Mechthild is a helper as well. A key scene from her fourth life chapter shows how she helped a prostitute which she had to nurse *"First, I judged her for her job as a prostitute, but then, I saw the crucifix above her bed, and I thought 'why should God not forgive her'? ... I prayed beside her bed for the forgiveness of God, although she was not religious, but one time, we prayed together and she had tears in her eyes and looked at the crucifix above her bed ... this was a very meaningful moment for me and my faith, because I helped her to find*

to our religion". Here, she might act as a helper based on the model of Mary, to help this woman to receive the forgiveness of God.

As Mechthild's faith developed and her life context changed, her coping behaviour developed as well. As refugees in her first life chapter, Mechthild and her family found shelter, care, appreciation, and love within the church. This coping behaviour relates to a religious coping method described in the literature of religious coping by Pargament and colleagues, which is "*seeking spiritual support*". As her mother and her grandmother were significant personalities in her life, who taught Mechthild her religion and helped her through the war, they seem to have especially shaped her understanding of Mary. As Mechthild said "*she (Mary) is a mother to me*", hence it seems that Mary has characteristics that Mechthild found in her mother or grandmother, which gave her love and care throughout the war. She said that when she thinks that something about a stressful situation has to be changed, she prays to the holy spirit, which can be recognized as the coping strategy "*pleading for direct intercession*", but mostly, especially during the second until the fourth life chapter she was searching for reassurance through the love and the care of a mother, which was Mary in her eyes. Hence, depending on the situation, Mechthild was praying to either Mary or God/the holy spirit. Furthermore, it appears that Mechthild seems to act as a helper or mother like Mary towards people who she believes they need spiritual support. Hence, she is not only seeking spiritual support but also provides "*religious helping*" (which is also a coping strategy by Pargament et al. (2002) towards other people, like the prostitute in the fourth life chapter, which is also a coping method. This, as she described, was a very meaningful moment for her and her faith, since it confirmed that religion is a good way of coping for her. A reoccurring coping method, like "*seeking spiritual support*", was "*pleading for direct intercession*". Today, in her last life chapter, Mechthild copes with the belief that God can directly intercede by making things happen that make her happy, especially as an older woman. For example, a phone call from her grandchildren. Since she believes in a direct intercession by God, she feels "*hope*" that things will get better. This hope has a good impact on her well-being. One can see that different situations or contexts have an impact on Mechthild's coping style.

Essentially, Mechthild thinks that her faith leads to well-being. "*My religion helps me a lot, I am glad that I was raised as a Christian ... without religion, life would be horrible ... it is not easy to live without religion, since with religion you can cope with many things*". Mechthild never had the impression that her religion had any negative effects on her well-being "*I do not remember that I had the feeling that it did not help me ... this is why I am very religious, because I believe that it helps me*". Furthermore she said "*when you believe in God, you have hope, you have hope that you will receive help and I received help and therefore I believe. I had many experiences where I thought that religion helps me*". Aging was also a process which she interpreted in a positive light through religion "*I sometimes think, why do I live? I am so old, but God helps me to overcome these thoughts, for example when my grandchildren call and visit me. God makes things happen that will make me feel better*". Religion also helps her to deal with thoughts about death "*I am not afraid of death, why should*

I be? There is something beyond. We will continue to live; we will not really die". Mechthild is member to The Catholic Women's Association of Germany (KFD) and she really enjoys being a member. "I enjoy the community we have through the KFD. We go to the church together, we sometimes have a breakfast together, we play together, and all the other services are benefitting us".

An outstanding theme in Mechthild interview was the love and care of a mother. Growing up as a child of a religious catholic family, Mechthild saw praying and going to the church as something that is taken for granted, but as much as she realized that her faith really helped her to cope with situations, her religion became something very significant in her life. Her grandmother and mother had taught her religion and thereby shaped her understanding of religion. The fact that her grandmother was the person with whom she prayed the most as a child and the care she experienced through her mother have influenced her religious development. It appears that the women in her life, like her mother and her grandmother, had characteristics she attributed to Mary. Whenever Mechthild felt bad, her mother and her grandmother were there to support her with love and care. As they were there for her, she believes that Mary, who is also a mother, is also there for her to give her love and care. Since Mechthild learned much of her mother and grandmother, she could identify with these motherly attributes. She became caring and loving towards others, for example her patients. Realizing that she does good to other people (like the prostitute), it appears that this has confirmed her own coping style as positively contributing to well-being.

3.5 Realizing that religion was nothing but educational measures: God as a moral authority

Horst is a 74 years old acolyte who lives in his private home with his wife. Although Horst was not acquainted to the interviewer, he appeared very talkative and provided rich and detailed narratives about how he experienced his faith throughout his life. Horst appeared very reflected over this topic, since he developed a critical perspective over his religion. His openness proved that good rapport was established between him and the interviewer.

As all the other interviewees, Horst was raised in a religious catholic family. His first chapter was called "***The schooldays***". As a child, Horst has been educated in a catholic school. Horst remembers that communion lessons and the confirmation were part of the curriculum. Finishing the eight class of school, he started a business management training. There his second life chapter begins, which he called "***The company***". The company he worked for was settled in a predominantly catholic district in North-Rhine Westphalia, therefore he was able to practice his religion: "*It was accepted and even promoted to go to church or to practice religion generally*". His third life chapter was called "***The military***". After he finished his business management training, he did his military service. The company commander was a very religious person, who encouraged him and others at the military to go to church regularly. In church, he and other soldiers got "*morality lessons*" through which "*the military wanted to discipline the soldiers*". His fourth life chapter was called "***My family and the dissociation***".

from the church". After the military, he worked again in the company and married his current wife. His wife comes from a catholic household like Horst himself. They had one miscarriage and later they became parents of two healthy children. They tried to raise them "as Catholics". He and his wife lived their life as Catholics. They went to church regularly. The church they visited mostly belonged to one of the two congregations in their hometown. Due to the less amount of church visitors the church, in which Horst and his wife were members, was abolished and only one congregation remained. Consequently, he and his wife lost interest in being involved in the other church which belonged to the other congregation. Another fact that let him and his wife dissociate from the church were the revealed scandals within the catholic church. His last life chapter is called "**My retirement**". Today, Horst has many grandchildren. With regards to their religion, Horst realizes that they are not really interested. He sometimes goes to church with them, but generally, he is not motivated anymore to raise them as Catholics as he did with his children: "*due to the negative headlines the catholic church, we are not really interested in raising our grandchildren as Catholics, neither are their parents ... they are baptized, but that is all*".

Horst can remember a key scene from his first life chapter, where he and his friends got into trouble with a nun, who saw him and his friends stealing apples: "*In our school, the nuns were responsible for disciplining us and had to hinder us from doing nonsense. We as children were rather poor and we were hungry, that is why we sometimes snitched some apples and a nun scolded us ... I realized that it was not morally correct of us ... I felt sorry because of it*". In order to deal with his feelings of guiltiness, he said "*I went to the church and confessed. It was a duty to confess every 4 weeks*". After the confession, he felt "*relieved*". In another key scene from his third life chapter, he describes an event where 4.000 soldiers were foregathered for one reason: "*The regime was interested in supporting our religion as soldiers in order to encourage discipline*". "*I liked that they promoted our religion ... I liked discipline and the fact that so many people, who were enemies in the past, were foregathered and this symbolized that religion enhances peace and provides us with community*". A turning point starts in his fourth life chapter, where Horst said that he "*doubted Religion for the first time in my life*". He and his wife had one miscarriage: "*I asked God why? What was our fault? Why was he punishing us? Have I deserved it? I do not know why ... I mean we cannot blame others but have to question ourselves*". Later in his fourth life chapter, he and his wife were "*slowly enlightened about the scandals that were going on in the church*". "*First, I could not believe it, but later clear proof was revealed ... I asked myself, where is the church better than us? ... They declare belief systems but gravely fail in their own lives*". Today, in his last life chapter, he has "*no scruple anymore when we decide against going to the church ... in the past I would think that something is wrong with me*". He said: "*Through my grandchildren and children I have started to think critically about religion. In the past, we were left dumb. We were naively sticking to the hierarchy in the catholic church ... I mean, where was God when all these children were raped from priests? Where was he during the holocaust?*". He further said "*Can you imagine that priests have blessed panzers during the second*

world war? A thing that was only invented to kill people?... We did not know that; we only know such things through our grandchildren and children. They learned it in school ... we did not... clearly the church took us for fools". He said that he can understand when his grandchildren are not interested to go to church: *"that is why I do not judge them ... Today I am tolerant"*. He regards "God as a moral authority": *"the ten commandments are part of our basic law"*. Retrospectively, Horst regards the discipline he got from the nuns and in the military as *"educational measures"*.

There is a clear line of religious development visible in Horst's coping behaviour. Being born and raised in a religious catholic family in his first life chapter, he went to church in order to confess every 4 weeks. After confession, he said that he felt *"relieved"*. This is a coping method described by Pargament et al. as *"Religious Purification"*. In his third life chapter, Horst and his wife mourned about their miscarriage and ask themselves why that happened and whether this was a punishment by God. This coping method is called *"Punishing God reappraisal"*. A turning point in his fourth life chapter happened where he begins to see religion critically, caused through the scandals within the catholic church and he starts to think about the problem of theodicy by asking why bad things happen while there is a good god (*"where was God when all these children were raped from priests? Where was he during the holocaust?"*). This coping method fits to *"reappraisal of God's powers"*, since if God was good, he could have hindered the holocaust or the rapes. Till his last life chapter, Horst is very disappointed about the church that was *"taken"* from them, this coping method is called *"Interpersonal religious discontent"*. Besides religious purification, all other described coping behaviours are categorized as negative religious coping strategies by Pargament et al. Horst's developing critical view on religion is related to many situations in his life. Hence, his attitude about religion was dependent on the context and developed throughout these contexts: the religious family, the military, his own family, and his current life situation. Starting out as *"naïve"*, he went to church and used a coping method like *"religious purification"*. He started to *"enlighten"* after the turning point where he and his wife had a miscarriage and after being informed about the scandals. The *"slow enlightenment"* started with questioning whether God had punished him and from there on, the course of his life made him a critical thinker by reappraising God's powers and wondering whether his church, where they normally went to, had abandoned him and others from his congregation. Regarding his well-being, he thinks that he is *"happy"* and doing well, as do atheists. In the end, the negative coping methods he used throughout his life seem not to relate negatively to his well-being.

In essence, Horst is *"not sure"* whether there is a relation between well-being and religion: *"Religion can give a certain strength to people who are very sensitive but other people who are atheists can get along pretty well without religion, who are as good people as the religious people"*. He added: *"I believed that there is an authority above that will help, but I believed that in the past"*. Horst and his wife are rarely visiting the church because: *"they took our church from us. The other church which is left in our town is not our church. I sometimes help during the worship service or during funerals as an acolyte, but only because I do not want to disappoint the people. I want to give them the*

feeling that everything is as it was in the past". In conclusion, he said: "I have been married for 50 years and we are very happy. I cannot judge whether it is because of our religion. Other people are as happy as us and are atheists... You only seek something that is familiar to you. If you were not born and bred in a religious family and your neighbours are atheists, you would not seek religion".

A reoccurring theme in Horst's life story is god as a moral authority, which hints to the identity at stake. Getting "*disciplined*" through the nun in his first life chapter and through the company and the military throughout the second and the third life chapter, Horst had made the experience that he "*liked discipline*". Since receiving discipline from religious authorities is accompanied by religious morality lessons, Horst, retrospectively, realizes that the discipline he received in his past was nothing but "*educational measures*" and sees "*God as a moral authority*". Realizing that the priests are "*no better than us*" and "*fail at their own lives*", he sees that he and others experienced a lack of enlightenment during their past because as he said "*We did not know that; we only know such things through our grandchildren and children. They learned it in school ... we did not... clearly the church took us for fools*". Morality is still something important to Horst, but today, he does not believe that it has to be accompanied by a religious institution, because he says that atheists "*are as good people as the religious people*".

3.6 Differences and Similarities across the interviews

3.6.1 Seeing Religious Coping in the Individuals Life Context

All interviewees were born and raised in a religious catholic family. Hence, all agree that religion was something taken for granted when they were young, but as they grew older each interviewee developed their idiosyncratic coping behaviour which perhaps depends on the different life context, they found their selves. Table 2 provides an overview on which religious coping methods the interviewee's reported to have used throughout their lives.

Table 2.

Similarities and Differences in Religious Coping Behaviour

Religious Coping Methods	Sabine	Peter	Irmgard	Mechthild	Horst
Benevolent Religious Coping	x				
Punishing God Reappraisal					x
Demonic Reappraisal					
Reappraisal of God's powers					x
Collaborative Religious Coping					
Active Religious Coping					
Passive Religious Coping					
Pleading for Direct Intercession				x	
Self-Directing Religious Coping					
Seeking Spiritual Support	x			x	
Religious Focus					
Religious Purification					x
Spiritual Connection					
Spiritual Discontent					
Marking Religious Boundaries		x			
Seeking Support from Clergy or Members			x		
Religious Helping	x			x	
Interpersonal Religious Discontent					x
Seeking Religious Direction	x				
Religious Conversion					
Religious Forgiving					
Proactive Religious Coping*		x			
Religious Resource*			x		

* Religious Coping Methods are from Pargament et al. (2000) except Proactive Religious Coping and Religious Resource. Both are new Religious Coping Methods found and suggested in this interview study.

As conceivable from Table 2, not all religious coping methods by Pargament et al. (2000) were reported to being used in the life stories. Even two new religious coping methods were identified in this study, which were not described in literature before. The reason why some coping strategies were used and some not can be explained by analysing them in their context.

For Horst, Mechthild, Sabine, and Irmgard one can recognize that their coping behaviour has a dynamic nature in relation to context. The situations they narrated about had an impact on their faith and the other way around. For example, growing up in a catholic family, Horst confessed every four weeks in the church and this coping behaviour had a good impact on his well-being, which

strengthened his faith as well as the memories of community during his time in the military. But as Horst and his wife lost their first born due to a miscarriage and were enlightened about the scandals within the catholic church, they used rather negative coping methods like "punishing God reappraisal", "reappraisal of God's power" or "interpersonal religious content". These negative coping methods were used because of the circumstances that made Horst sceptical about his religion. Like Horst, Mechthild, Irmgard, and Sabine took religion for granted throughout their youth, however, their faith was reinforced through the coping strategies that helped them throughout difficult situations. Depending on the context and their personal development, they used different or reoccurring coping behaviours. Hence, these four interviewees prove that the situation and context have an impact on their faith and coping behaviour as well as their coping behaviour has an impact on how they interpret and deal with the situation and context.

However, for Peter, faith and context have a rather static relationship. "Marking religious boundaries" and "proactive religious coping" are coping behaviours that help him to shape his life with religion in a proactive, rather than reactive way like the other four interviewees. The interviews show that it depends on the person and the context which kind of coping methods they use and how the nature of religious coping in relation to context looks like.

The first research question ("*how can we recognize religious coping methods within the individual's life context?*") can be answered as follows: Pargament and colleagues have already mentioned that context plays a role in religious coping behaviour. They, however, did so by mainly reporting that context relates to religious coping. This study adds to this by providing the insight that religious coping and context can have a bidirectional, but also a one-directional relationship. Furthermore, it adds to Pargament's work by providing how the individual him-/herself constructs the dynamic or static relation between religious coping and context. Overall, depending on the context and its static or dynamic relation to religious coping, the interviewees reiterated the same coping behaviour or used different ones.

3.6.2 Religious Coping and Well-Being

Four of the interviewees constructed a positive relationship between faith and well-being. Sabine, Irmgard, and Mechthild reported that religion helped them to interpret difficult situations rather as benefitting or as a new lesson from which they can learn. Hence, these three experienced growths through their faith and their experience this growth as contributing to their well-being. It is also the other way around since as they saw the positive effects of religious coping on their well-being, their faith was reinforced, and they continued to use religious coping. Some religious coping methods reoccurred throughout their life story because they had the impression that this coping behaviour really helped them. For example, Mechthild had the impression that "*seeking spiritual support*" from Mary helped her to deal with difficult situations and she continued to pray to Mary and even became "*a fan of Mary*". Hence, there seems to be a dynamic nature between religion and well-being as well.

However, Peter, as someone who shapes his life through his religion, sees a rather static positive relationship between well-being and faith. For example, regarding religion as a constitutive element in his life, he can "welcome" any situation that happens, since he argues that he knows what to do and cannot be negatively surprised.

Horst is the only interviewee who cannot construct a relationship between religion and well-being. Interpreting religion as a moral guideline, he cannot argue why having religion should be contributing to well-being when we also have other "good" moral guidelines like the basic laws. Hence, it is up to the persons context and personal development, whether s/he constructs a dynamic, static, or no relationship between religious coping and well-being.

The second research question ("*how is the relation between religious coping methods in achieving or maintaining well-being in the individual's experience?*") can thereby be answered as follows: Pargament and colleagues have mostly informed about how religious coping could affect well-being. This study shows that the relation between religious coping and well-being could be dynamic, but also static (as Pargament describes it) and that some people even do not see any relation.

3.6.3 Narrative Identity Constructed in Relation to Religious Coping

For each interviewee one can recognize certain recurrent motivational themes which hint to how religion helped them either to construe or restrict their lives. The concepts agency and communion will help to provide an understanding which role religion and religious coping play in the narrative of the individuals. As illustrated in table 2, every interviewee has more or less a different religious coping style which not only depends on the context, but also on the individual's development.

Peter's faith was described as rather static and shapes his life. Since his childhood, religion played a huge role in his identity development. First, it was taken for granted but he chose to follow the professional way by becoming a priest. Themes that hint to his professionalism and moral authority as a priest seem to be important for his narrative identity. For example, themes that revolve around the authority figures at university (like the professor) or being himself an authority figure as a priest, and lecturing the interviewer like a moral authority. The static nature of his faith also points to being a moral authority that "knows what to do" and therefore shapes his life according to the moral rules of religion. Hence, relevant recurrent themes in his life story as "moral authority" and "religion as a constitutive element" seem to execute his agency. Peter has the feeling that he can handle life and welcome any situation because he feels that he knows what to do (being the moral authority) and that his religion provides him a ground on which he can orient (religion as a constitutive element) and execute power over maybe uncontrollable or unwelcome situations. This example shows that narrative identity and religious coping could have a static relationship in the experience of some people.

For Horst, the aspect of religion as a moral authority is also very outstanding in his narrative. However, this aspect led to a decline in his religious affiliation rather than an increase as with Peter.

Compared to his past self, Horst believes that he is now enlightened and not as "naive" as he was in his past by following the rules of the church although the religious authorities are "no better than us". Relevant reoccurring themes in his life story seem to be "god as the moral authority" and "becoming enlightened", which rather show that religion restricts his agency. Horst feels that he was blinded by church and their scandals. This made him realize that the moral authorities in his life, like the nuns and other authorities in the church, have preached a morality which they even cannot follow (God as a moral authority). After being enlightened, he dissociated himself from the church and developed different opinions which made him more "tolerant". Hence, his feeling of being "blinded" by the church yields to the notion that he did not have the autonomy to build up his own opinions. He "opened his eyes" when he dissociated from church which shows that religion restricted freedom of opinion and his agency. A development from more communal themes (like the community he appreciated a lot during the time where his religious affiliation was strong) to more agentic themes is very outstanding in Horst's narrative.

Irmgard and Sabine experienced a decline in their religious affiliation as well, but for Irmgard it was due to the influence of her atheist peers and for Sabine the external conditions that left her no time for going to church as well as the bad relationship with her husband and mother-in-law. The most important reoccurring themes in Irmgard's story are "the peers" and "the sacred inner strength". For Irmgard, "Finding God in his church" means finding one's sacred inner strengths given by God. As a reoccurring theme, it shows that Irmgard executed agency through her religion, as she believes that her inner strengths get empowered through God, which help her to deal with difficulties autonomously. Irmgard's identity developed from more communal themes (like adapting to her peers) to more agentic themes (the sacred inner strength).

Compared to Irmgard who found a new connection to faith through inner orientation, Sabine's faith increased through social orientation, like helping and being helped as well as learning new interpretations in the catechesis and her work in the KFD. Important themes in her life story are "obedience", "the congregation", "freedom and creativity", and "new interpretations". Sabine developed from an obedient person to a free and creative person through religion. Through new religious interpretations, the congregation and her engagement in the KFD gave her the power and autonomy to act free and creative. Hence, as Irmgard, religion seems to be crucial in Sabine's identity, since it developed dynamically from more communal themes to agentic themes.

Irmgard's and Sabine's life stories show that identity development could be dynamic in the experience of some people. However, Mechthild's life stories contain predominantly communal themes. Her narrative has reoccurring themes as "being a loving and caring mother like Mary" and "appreciation", which hint to the importance of communion in her life. She tries to be the loving and caring mother to other people through her job as a nurse like she receives love and care through Mary ("being a loving and caring mother like Mary"). Furthermore, she explained that she felt much "embarrassment" during the war for being a refugee and losing social status. She did not feel

appreciated by the people, but she felt appreciation in Church ("appreciation"). This again hints to the dominance of communal themes, since social status seemed to be an important topic in her narrative.

The third research question ("*how is narrative identity constructed in relation to the religious coping methods?*") can thereby answered as follows: There is some individual variation in identity construction and how they attribute meaning to religion, but all interviewees have in common that their narrative identity, motivated by communion or agency, shaped their faith and their religious coping behaviour and the other way around, as can be seen in the narratives of Sabine, Irmgard and Horst whose identity developed in a dynamic way.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to get an understanding about religious coping from the point of view of older individuals. Based on Ganzevoort's (1998a; 1998b) criticism, which is still relatable to the current state of literature about religious coping, it was explored how religious coping methods can be recognized within the individual's life context and how the older individual sees the relation between religious coping and well-being. Furthermore, it was explored how the narrative identity is constructed in relation to the religious coping methods.

The narratives made conceivable that the diverse and individual contexts of some participants dynamically relate to the situation, the coping behaviour and their faith. However, the results show that the context and religious coping can also have a rather static relationship through a rather proactive style of coping in comparison to the other participants who reported a dynamic and reactive style of coping. The results show that well-being and religious coping can have a dynamic relationship, but that it can also be static, and some people even cannot construe any relation. All interviewees were able to construe a narrative identity in relation to religious coping. The individual variation in how the persons construed their narrative identity in relation to religious coping shows that their narrative identity, either motivated by agency or communion, can shape their faith and their religious coping behaviour. But this can also be the other way around, since it was found out that some people can experience a dynamic relation between religious coping and narrative identity.

If we put these findings in the light of previous scientific work, there are certain aspects which accompany the experiences of older adults, and certain aspects which do not. Relating the results to Pargament's theory of religious coping, many religious coping methods described by Pargament were found in the interviews, but not all (see Table 2). Adding to his theory, this study proposes two new religious coping methods, namely "Religious Resource" and "Proactive Religious Coping". These new religious coping methods can enrich the list of religious coping methods described by Pargament et al. (2000) and show that every person might find an idiosyncratic religious coping method not yet known in literature.

As reported in previous literature on religious coping (Pargament, 1997; Krägeloh et al., 2012), the religious coping behaviour reported by the interviewees seems to be neither a problem-focused nor

an emotion-focused coping strategy. The interviewees were reporting some religious coping methods that could be both. The "Religious Resource" coping, for example, proved to be both. It can be a solution seeking behaviour, but it can also bring emotional comfort. Therefore, religious coping might be considered as a higher order coping factor, like emotion-focused or problem-focused coping.

Some of the found religious coping methods (which were relatable to the one's described in the literature) were classified as positive or negative religious coping methods by Pargament and colleagues (1998). As described in literature (Pargament et al., 1998), some people used predominantly positive religious coping strategies. These people generally see religion as more of a resource of support rather than punishment, like reported by Pargament et al. (1998). Furthermore, the results show that religion has indeed a rather complex relation with well-being (Pargament et al., 2004; Ano, & Vasconelles, 2005). Positive religious coping methods do not necessarily relate to positive well-being and neither do negative religious coping methods relate to poor well-being. The findings show, as described in literature (Pargament et al., 2004; Ano, & Vasconelles, 2005) that it depends on the chronicity of the negative or positive religious coping methods (Pargament et al., 2004) and its success in coping (Ano, & Vasconelles, 2005). For example, Horst used predominantly negative religious coping methods throughout his life span like "Punishing God Reappraisal, Reappraisal of God's powers, Religious Purification and Interpersonal Religious Discontent". Through his coping style, Horst experienced a decline in religious affiliation, an experience of good mental health and subjective personal growth rather than subjective spiritual growth. These results yield to the notion that he experienced his coping style as successful. Subjective spiritual growth and good subjective well-being was mainly found in chronicity of successfully experienced positive religious coping behaviour. What this study probably adds to the findings of the mentioned literature (Pargament et al., 1998; Pargament et al., 2004; Ano, & Vasconelles, 2005) is that the complex relation between religious coping and well-being is because of its dynamic nature. Success might add to the subjective well-being of the person which could reinforce the positive religious coping style, which would explain the chronicity of the coping behaviour.

Relating the findings to Ganzevoort's (1998a; 1998b) criticism on religious coping it appears that his arguments can be applicable to the experience of some people. Regarding one criticism, the results show that depending on the person, religious coping behaviour can depend on the context and the other way around. However in the experience of some people (who use a rather proactive style of coping rather than a reactive style) religion seems to be a background for life rather than a help for reacting to difficult or stressful situations. Regarding another criticism about the dynamism of religious coping and well-being, the results show that religious coping can be experienced as having a dynamic relation to well-being but also static as Pargaments research shows (Pargament et al., 1998; Pargament et al., 2004; Pargament, 1997). Furthermore it was found that some people even do not experience a relation at all which shows that both the research results of Pargament and Ganzevoort's theory do not have to apply to the experience of people. Regarding the aspect of identity that Ganzevoort criticized

about Pargament's research it can be stated that the importance of identity in religious coping behaviour seems to match with all interviewees. The narrative identity either motivated by communion or agency seems to shape the faith and the religious coping behaviour of the person in static way but also the other way around.

Looking at the findings, it seems that Ganzevoort's construction of religious coping might be more complex than assumed, since it depends on the person whether religious coping has dynamic relations to well-being, or context, or rather static, or none at all. Hence, depending on the person, it can be that religious coping can be experienced as having a static relation to well-being or context (as Pargament's research shows) but Ganzevoort's theory of the dynamism can also be applicable.

Investigating phenomena like religious coping through a narrative approach turned out to be indeed very helpful. The life story interview which is based on McAdams's life story model (2001; 2008) helped to provide a rich context through the life chapters, in which the religious coping behaviour could be understood in its context. The dynamism or static relation between religious coping and context, well-being and identity were construed by the people in their idiosyncratic ways and helped to understand religious coping from the lens of the older individual rather than generalizing it through quantitative methods. By using the life story model by McAdams (2001; 2008) as the base of this explorative study, it came out that one can see religious coping as a constituting narrative identity motivated by either communion or agency. Furthermore it was shown that religious coping processes can help to ensure coherence in identity by changing situations or reinterpreting in a way which fits to one's story line.

4.1 Strengths and Limitations

This study has some strengths and limitations. The life story interview based on McAdams (2008) combined with an approach which is based on holistic content approach (Lieblich et al., 1998) seems to be one strength of this research design, since it enabled to study religious coping from a bottom-up approach. Insights about the dynamic nature of religious coping and its importance in constituting narrative identity could be gathered from the rich and idiosyncratic narratives. Since there is few research on the dynamism between religious coping and well-being and context and its importance for the construction of narrative identity, this exploratory approach was necessary to broaden current knowledge on this topic. Qualitative coding was not seen appropriate for the means of this study, since this study avoided the quantifiability of the data in order to cover the complexity of the dynamic religious coping processes with context, identity, and well-being. Hence, this study preferred a qualitative way of explaining religious coping, which is regarded as a strength, since it provides a new perspective on this topic. When it comes to validity and reliability, some actions have been taken. Firstly, the researcher discussed the interpretations with another researcher. The interpretations were adjusted until a consensus was found between the researchers. Secondly, the

number of steps that were taken in the interpretation of the interviews (first providing a rich description of the context through the life chapters, then continued with how the person interprets the relation with well-being, and the description of how the person construes narrative identity with religious coping) provides help to follow the line of the researchers reasoning, which also adds to reliability and validity.

The target group (older adults of at least 65 years of age) seems to have a generational issue when it comes to their attitude towards the catholic church and its religion. The interviewees reported that religion was "taken for granted" when they were young. It seems that the cultural surroundings (including the changes the catholic church went through after the second World War) have coloured their stories.

The researchers frame of reference might have shaped the statements of the interviewees, which can be regarded as a weakness. The interviewer sometimes acted suggestive and directed the interview into a preferred direction which fits to the interviewer's expectations. Specifically, the researcher had the implicit idea that coping has to do with dealing with stress which involves emotions. This idea of course comes from a psychological point of view and clashed sometimes with the religious interpretations that people had. For example, Peter, who is a priest, responded rather rationally to questions with emotional content and tried to teach the researcher Christian morality lessons, which was not expected by the researcher. Hence, the researcher tried to pull emotions out of the person, because of the implicit idea that coping has to do something with emotions and subjective experiences. This behaviour could have contaminated the results in a wished direction and shows that the researcher was biased with the implicit subjective norm that the interviews should contain emotional content. Another clash with Peter's perspective on religion was that he had the feeling that the researchers reduced religion to certain situations. Other than the researcher, the person saw religion as a background of his life, rather than something he "uses" when needed.

The clash between the researcher's perspective and Peter's perspective on religion reminds of a discussion in the psychology of religion about the functional approach to religion. Robert Segal (Idinopulos, & Yonan, 1994) criticizes the social sciences for analysing religion "*in secular rather than religious terms*" (Idinopulos, & Yonan, 1994, p. 4). He mainly argues that social scientists "*reduce religion to something nonreligious, transforms it into something other than what it is*" (Idinopulos, & Yonan, 1994, p. 4). Religionists feel that the reductionist or functional approach to religion reduces religion to its functions in life which does not match with the religious experience people have (Idinopulos, & Yonan, 1994). This could explain why Peter felt misunderstood by the researcher since the researcher used a framework that he might experience as a reduction of religion to a coping behaviour. Furthermore it could explain why Horst could not construe any relation between religious coping and well-being because he might interpret religion rather through its content and essence in contrast to the functionalistic framework of religious coping through which the researcher made sense of their experiences.

Other interviewees, as described in the beginning of the interview descriptions, were experienced as rather open and good rapport was established. This good relation was maybe established because the implicit ideas about religious coping of the interviewer and the interviewees did not clash as so much as with Peter. Sometimes, of course, the interviewer helped with giving directions, when the interviewees were confused about where to start telling or had difficulties to explain something, which was rather suggestive. However, the researcher tried to give the direction back to the interviewee by asking many open-questions and by attuning to the interviewee's perspective. Eventually, giving direction to the interview could also be a strength, since it encouraged the interviewee to talk. Attuning to the interviewee ensured trust and the interviewee could open up. Ultimately, this facilitated the establishment of good rapport, which can also be regarded as a strength. The personal information which was gathered in the interviewee's through the establishment of trust was useful in order to gather a rich description of the context, identity and well-being in relation to religious coping.

4.2 Future Research and Implications

Although generalization was not the aim of this qualitative study, the approach could be generalizable to other people in other times and settings. For example, the dynamics that have been found in this study could also be found in interviews with younger adults, but it could be that the younger generation experiences other kinds of dynamics. Other than the older generation, this group did not grow up in a religious context. Hence, it could be, for example, that the understanding of one's gender roles are different (Diehl, Owen, & Youngblade, 2004) and perhaps not so much determined by the catholic church. The women of this interview study have been raised in a time where they were expected to focus on other people rather than their own growth (Diehl et al., 2004). This could be why some of the interviewee's (Sabine and Irmgard) experience dynamism by starting out from a communal identity towards an agentic identity. Whereas Mechthild's identity is mainly motivated by communal themes. In contrast, the men from this generation are mainly motivated by agentic themes (Diehl et al., 2004), as can be seen in the example of Peter. Even though Horst experiences a shift from communal to agentic themes, his life story is very much focused on how he executed his agency by dissociating himself from the church. Younger generations could perhaps experience dynamism through a shift from agentic to more communal themes. However, this is something which could be investigated in the future.

Future studies could also build up on the findings of the current study. For example, researchers could, in a systemic way, analyse the same interviews and see whether they come up with similar kind of interpretations, which would strengthen the validity and reliability of the results even more. A next step in research would be achieved by deriving a coding scheme from these kinds of stories that is based on the different patterns of relations between religious coping and well-being. A

further step would be to derive a coding scheme that can be applied to a larger number of interviews. Further studies with the scope of this study could be done in other religious groups, like Islam, or in other settings. Since the target group of this study is probably biased about their views on the catholic church and its religion due to aspects of cultural surroundings after the second world war, future studies could focus on younger generations (e.g. middle aged people), who maybe do not have the same biases as the older generations, because they started out from a different perspective where e.g. religion was not taken for granted anymore. Comparative studies between younger and older generations religious coping styles would be an interesting direction for future research.

Since this study found that the nature of religious coping in relation to context and well-being is person-dependent and construes identity, it would be interesting to investigate the relation between personality, context, well-being, and religious coping in future research. This would maybe clarify to what extent personality plays a role in determining the nature of religious coping in relation to other constructs as context or well-being. A mixed methods approach would be a suited for that scope. The strength of such an approach would be to that both approaches make up for each other's weaknesses. For example, quantitative research is weak in providing knowledge about the context or the setting in which the behaviour takes place, something which qualitative research offsets. On the other hand, quantitatively researching the correlations with personality would offset potential biased interpretations of the researcher and would help generalizing the outcomes to larger groups. Another exciting area of future research would be to investigate the relationship between religious coping, coherence and well-being. Emery and Pargament (2004, p.7) claim that religion can provide a "*sense of coherence*" in late life. Although some researchers like McAdams and Barger (1999) claim that a coherent life story is serving well-being, there is some research which suggests that incoherence may serve well-being as well (Sools, 2012). Hence, this relationship could be clarified in relation with religious coping in future research.

The outcomes of this study and of future studies can inform interventions to help religious older individuals to deal with stressful life events. In everyday settings, religious older people might take advantage of pastoral care which is offered by the congregation. Furthermore, religious coping can be helpful in the psychotherapeutic setting. Either way it has been shown that religious coping interventions can facilitate "*positive interactions with God*" (Wilt, Harriott, Exline, & Pargament, 2018, p. 287) which results "*in improved psychological and spiritual health*" (Wilt, Harriott, Exline, & Pargament, 2018, p. 287). The results of this study show that religious coping interventions should not only be individually tailored, but also tailored in accordance with the narrative identity the older individuals have construed throughout their life's through religious coping. This might give them a sense of coherence as Pargament and Emery (2004) proposed.

5. Conclusion

The current study has opened a starting point for further research through its approach that can be generalized for future studies. Furthermore this qualitative study appreciated the experiences and subjectivity older adults. This could complement the rather objective and quantitative empirical data that we have. It provided more clarity about how older individuals experience the nature of religious coping in relation to context and well-being and narrative identity, which appears to be person depended. Hence, the experienced relation can be dynamic but also static or can be experienced as having no relation at all. Another aspect which this study contributed to the current state of research is that religious coping is that religious coping can (in the experience of older adults) either motivate the person to develop autonomy or a strive for social connectedness.

There are some directions for future research on religious coping in late life. For example, the relationship between religious coping, coherence and well-being in late life could be investigated. Another exciting investigation for the future could be a comparison between younger and older generations and their coping styles. To what extent personality plays a role in determining the nature of religious coping in relation to other constructs as context or well-being could be investigated in the future as well.

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Appendix A: Interview Scheme

Interview Leitfaden: Überdenken der religiösen Bewältigung

Basierend auf McAdams (2008)

1. Einführung

Dies ist ein Interview über die Geschichte Ihres Lebens, welches darauf abzielt zu verstehen, wie Sie Ihren Glauben unter bestimmten Lebensumständen erleben. Während dieses Interviews werde ich Sie bitten, darüber nachzudenken, wie Sie Ihren Glauben in bestimmten Kapiteln Ihres Lebens in Schlüsselszenen erlebt haben. Es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten, da es um Ihr subjektives Verständnis, Ihre Erfahrungen und Ihre religiösen Ansichten in bestimmten Situationen geht. Dieses Interview wird aufgezeichnet und transkribiert, um zu analysieren, wie Ihr Glaube Ihre persönliche Entwicklung und Ihr Verständnis über bestimmte Situationen geprägt hat und auch anders herum: wie Ihre persönliche Entwicklung und wie bestimmte Situationen Ihren Glauben geprägt haben. Die Dauer dieses Interviews beträgt etwa eine Stunde. Sie können sich jederzeit entscheiden, das Interview zu beenden, falls Sie nicht mehr teilnehmen möchten.

Frage 1: Haben Sie Fragen?

2. Lebenskapitel

Wenn Sie zustimmen, können wir mit einem chronologischen Überblick über die verschiedenen Kapitel Ihres Lebens beginnen, in denen Ihr Glaube eine Rolle gespielt hat. Sie können sich Ihr Leben wie ein Buch oder eine Serie mit mehreren Episoden vorstellen. In jedem Kapitel oder in jeder Episode befinden Sie sich in einer anderen Lebensphase. Diese kann zum Beispiel eine Altersphase, prägende Umstände wie zum Beispiel Krieg oder Zeiten wo Sie ihr Leben in verschiedenen Umfeldern gelebt haben also mit verschiedenen Menschen und verschiedene Rollen annehmen mussten (e.g. Kind sein, Vater oder Mutter sein, Oma oder Opa sein). Jedes Kapitel erzählt von positiven und negativen Erlebnissen, an die Sie sich erinnern können.

Bitte nennen Sie in chronologischer Reihenfolge den Titel der Hauptkapitel Ihres Lebens und geben Sie eine kurze Beschreibung der einzelnen Kapitel an.

3. Schlüsselszenen

Nun, da wir einen Überblick über die Hauptkapitel Ihres Lebens haben, denken Sie bitte an eine prägende Schlüsselszene für jedes Kapitel Ihres Lebens, die eine bestimmte Situation (positiv oder negativ) ist, bei der Ihr Glaube eine Rolle gespielt hat. Diese Situation sollte auch einen prägenden Einfluss sowohl auf Ihren Glauben als auch auf Sie als Person aufweisen. Während Sie mir die Schlüsselszene erläutern, werde ich Ihnen einige Fragen zur Aufklärung stellen.

Detaillierte Beschreibung der Situation

Frage 2: Können Sie die Situation beschreiben? Was ist passiert?

Unterfragen:

- Wo und wann ist das passiert?
- Wer war in dieser bestimmten Situation verwickelt?
- Ganz allgemein, wie haben Sie sich in der Situation gefühlt und was waren Ihre Gedanken (Höhepunkt oder Tiefpunkt)?
- Hat diese Situation Ihr Leben, Ihren Glauben und Sie persönlich verändert?

Detaillierte Beschreibung welche Rolle Religion spielte und wie der Glaube durch die Situation beeinflusst wurde

Frage 3: Können Sie beschreiben, wie Ihr Glaube in der Interpretation und Bewältigung dieser Situation eine Rolle gespielt hat in dem Sie genau beschreiben wie sie mit der Situation umgegangen sind oder was Sie gemacht haben um mit der Situation umzugehen? Das kann zum Beispiel beten, in die Kirche gehen oder beichten sein.

Unterfragen:

- Während sie _____ getan haben, welches Gefühl oder welcher Gedanke hat ihnen den Umgang mit der Situation einfacher gemacht? (e.g. Kontrolle, Trost, Reinigung)
- Hat Ihre Religion Ihnen geholfen, einen Sinn in der Situation zu finden? Welchen?

Frage 4: Können Sie beschreiben, wie Ihr Glaube durch die Interpretation und Bewältigung dieser Situation beeinflusst worden sein könnte?

Unterfragen:

- Haben Sie das Gefühl gehabt, dass es Ihren Glauben gestärkt oder geschwächt hat?
- Gestärkt: Welche Gefühle und Gedanken haben zu dem gestärkten Glauben beigetragen? (e.g. Hoffnung, Dankbarkeit zu Gott)
- Geschwächt: Welche Gefühle und Gedanken haben zu dem geschwächten Glauben beigetragen? (e.g. Misstrauen, Hinterfragen)
- Wie sahen Sie Ihre Beziehung zu Gott? (e.g. Partnerschaft, Gott hat mich verlassen, Gott stellt mich auf die Probe)
- Was war zu dem Zeitpunkt Ihr Bild oder Verständnis von Gott? Wie groß seine Macht oder Güte?

Interpretation und Bedeutung für das Individuum

Frage 5: Warum haben Sie diese Situation als Schlüsselszene gewählt? Was bedeutet diese Situation für Sie?

Unterfragen:

- Was haben Sie aus dieser Situation gelernt? Hat sich etwas für Sie in Ihrem Weltbild verändert?
- Was sagt diese Situation über Sie als Person aus?

4. Glaube und Wohlbefinden

Nachdem wir nun damit fertig sind, verschiedene Kapitel in Ihrem Leben zu benennen und über wichtige Schlüsselszenen gesprochen haben, möchte ich Ihnen einige Fragen stellen, wie hilfreich Sie Ihren Glauben an das Erreichen oder Erhalten von Wohlbefinden erleben.

Frage 6: Zusammenfassend, wie hilfreich haben Sie Ihre Religion erlebt bei dem Umgang der genannten Situationen?

Unterfragen

- Gibt es bestimmte Zeiten, wo Sie sich dachten, dass Ihre Religion Ihnen nicht weiterhilft und Sie sich schlechter fühlten?
- Gibt es bestimmte Zeiten, wo Sie sich dachten, dass Ihre Religion Ihnen geholfen hat und Sie sich dank Ihres Glaubens viel besser fühlten?

Frage 7: besuchen Sie regelmäßig Gottesdienste und nehmen Sie die Angebote kirchlicher Verbände (wie z.B. Caritas oder KFD) regelmäßig wahr?

JA: Welche Vorteile sehen Sie in Gottesdiensten und Angeboten der Kirche für Ihr Wohlbefinden? Gibt es Nachteile, die Sie sich vorstellen könnten?

Nein: Wieso nicht? Was hat Sie zu der Entscheidung geführt, Gottesdienste und Angebote der Kirchenverbände nicht wahrzunehmen?

Frage 8: Viele religiöse Menschen berichten, dass Sie dank ihrer Religion einen Sinn im Leben sehen. Glauben Sie, dass dieser Sinn maßgeblich zu dem Wohlbefinden der Psyche beiträgt? Wie?

Frage 9: Mit dem Begriff altern verbinden viele Menschen negative Dinge, wie z.B. Schwierigkeiten mit dem Gedächtnis oder körperliche Probleme. Nun wissen wir ja, dass die Religion einen anderen Blickwinkel auf das Altern werfen kann, indem die Religion im Menschen eine unsterbliche Seele sieht. Was denken Sie darüber? Glauben Sie, dass wir durch die Religion ein anderes Verständnis über das Altern gewinnen können?

Unterfrage:

- Was bedeutet das für Sie? Was für ein Gefühl bietet Ihnen das, wenn Sie nun darüber nachdenken? Gewinnen Sie dadurch Lebensfreude und Kraft

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Einverständniserklärung

Forschungsprojekt:	Religiöse Bewältigung: Ein narrativer Ansatz
Institution:	University of Twente Drienerlolaan 5 7522 NB Enschede, The Netherlands
Betreuer des Forschungsprojektes:	Prof. Dr. Gerben Westerhof, Dr. Anneke Sools
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Ziel dieser Interviewstudie ist es, die Religion aus der Sicht des Einzelnen zu verstehen, z.B. wie der Einzelne seinen Glauben erlebt und wie er/sie Lebensereignissen (in einem dynamischen Lebenskontext und einer dynamischen Identität) aus religiöser Sicht interpretiert und mit ihnen umgeht. Darüber hinaus zielt es darauf ab zu verstehen, wie der Einzelne den Zusammenhang zwischen Glauben und Wohlbefinden sieht. Das Interview wird für akademische Zwecke aufgezeichnet, gespeichert, transkribiert und zitiert. Die Dauer des Interviews beträgt 1 Stunde.

Um die Anonymität zu gewährleisten, werden personenbezogene Daten über den Befragten, wie Name und Ort, weggelassen. Darüber hinaus wird der Befragte nur auszugsweise zitiert, um das Risiko der Identifikation (durch die im Interview geäußerten persönlichen Meinungen) von Bekannten sowie Mitgliedern der Kirchenverbände zu verringern.

Es besteht ein gewisses Risiko, dass der Befragte nach dem Interview emotionales Unbehagen empfinden kann, da eventuell belastende Ereignisse ins Bewusstsein gerufen und thematisiert werden können. Der Befragte hat das Recht, sich jederzeit innerhalb des Interviews aus der Studie zurückzuziehen. Die Teilnahme an dieser Forschung hat keinen direkten Nutzen für den Befragten.

Um sicherzustellen, dass keine Dritten Zugriff auf die Audiodatei des Interviews haben, wird die Audiodatei mit einem von Windows 10 bereitgestellten Verschlüsselungsverfahren verschlüsselt und mit einem Passwort geschützt. Nach der Transkription wird die Audiodatei zerstört.

Einverständniserklärung zur Teilnahme an der Studie "Religiöse Bewältigung: Ein narrativer Ansatz"

Bitte kreuzen Sie die entsprechenden Kästchen an

Ja **Nein**

Teilnahme an der Studie

Ich habe die Studieninformationen vom [TT/MM/YYYY] gelesen und verstanden, oder sie wurden mir vorgelesen. Ich konnte Fragen zur Studie stellen und meine Fragen wurden zu meiner Zufriedenheit beantwortet.

Ich stimme der Teilnahme an dieser Studie freiwillig zu und verstehe, dass ich die Beantwortung von Fragen ablehnen kann und mich jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen aus der Studie zurückziehen kann.

Ich verstehe, dass die Teilnahme an der Studie ein audioaufgezeichnetes Interview beinhaltet, das als Text transkribiert und nach der Transkription zerstört wird.

Risiken im Zusammenhang mit der Teilnahme an der Studie

Ich verstehe, dass die Teilnahme an der Studie folgende Risiken der Identifikation durch nahe Verwandte und Mitglieder der Kirche (trotz Anonymisierung) und potenzielle emotionale Unannehmlichkeiten nach dem Interview mit sich bringt

Verwendung der Informationen in der Studie

Ich verstehe, dass die von mir zur Verfügung gestellten Informationen für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet werden, z.B. für wissenschaftliche Publikationen und Berichte.

Ich verstehe, dass personenbezogene Daten, die über mich gesammelt wurden und die mich identifizieren können, wie z.B. mein Name oder mein Wohnort, nicht außerhalb des Studienteams weitergegeben werden.

Ich stimme zu, dass meine Informationen in Forschungsergebnissen zitiert werden können.

Ich stimme einer Audioaufnahme zu.

Unterschriften

Name des Teilnehmers Unterschrift Datum

Ich habe dem potenziellen Teilnehmer das Informationsblatt genau vorgelesen und nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen sichergestellt, dass der Teilnehmer versteht, was er freiwillig zustimmt.

Name des Forschers Unterschrift Datum

Kontaktinformationen für Fragen zu Ihren Rechten als Forschungsteilnehmer

Wenn Sie Fragen zu Ihren Rechten als Forschungsteilnehmer haben, oder wenn Sie mit jemand anderem als dem/den Forscher(n) Informationen einholen, Fragen stellen oder Bedenken bezüglich dieser Studie

Reconsidering Religious Coping: A Narrative Approach

besprechen möchten, wenden Sie sich bitte an den Sekretär der Ethikkommission der Fakultät für Verhaltens-, Management- und Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Twente unter: ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl