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## Multiple Religious Belonging in Contemporary South Korea

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# MULTIPLE RELIGIOUS BELONGING IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH KOREA

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# Multiple Religious Belonging in contemporary South Korea

## Introduction

*'I discovered my bowel is a shamanist bowel, my heart is a Buddhist heart, and my head is a Christian head.'*<sup>1</sup> These words, spoken by Korean theologian Hyun Chung Kyung, exemplify how a person might feel connected to multiple religions at the same time. Often, belonging to religion has been viewed as a commitment to an exclusive religious tradition. However, in the lives of believers, it seems that different types of religiosities can be mixed and combined. This manner of experiencing religion where elements of multiple religions constitute complex religious belongings seems to be growing in the West and has received more and more interest in the academic world.<sup>2</sup> Over the past decade, it has been increasingly studied under the term *Multiple Religious Belonging (MRB)*. The debate surrounding Multiple Religious Belonging is still growing and the current discourse often discusses how the concepts of religion and religious belonging can be understood in a context where religiosity is shaped in a way that transcends commitment to one religious tradition.

One aspect of this discussion around MRB involves studying East Asian religiosity and comparing it to Western views on religion. Since most of these studies focus on China and Japan, it is noteworthy that the discourse surrounding Multiple Religious Belonging lacks case studies from South Korea. While some aspects of the Korean religious context have been studied through the concepts of syncretism or religious accommodation, it has not yet been studied from the perspective of Multiple Religious Belonging. The South Korean religious context does, however, offer an interesting field for studying complex religious belongings, and therefore this study will analyse MRB in Korea through three research questions. Firstly, we will research whether people express belongings to multiple religions in South Korea. Hand in hand with that, we will analyse from what religions people draw their religiosity and which combinations exist. Secondly, we study how self-identified religious affiliation relates to performed religious practices. Finally, through this process, we want to answer the question of

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<sup>1</sup> Timoteo Gener, 'Engaging with Chung Hyun Kyung's Concept of Syncretism: An Intercultural Dialogue on Mission', 52.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Cornille, ed., *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 1.; The growing academic interest is illustrated by Daan Oostveen with how the European Association of the Study of Religion chose 'multiple religious identities' as the topic for their annual conference. Daan Oostveen, 'Hermeneutical Explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging' (2020), 15.

whether complex forms of belonging in the Korean context can be fruitfully studied through the Multiple Religious Belonging paradigm.

The answers to these questions will be sought in two ways: through a literature study as well as a survey. For both methods the modalities of belonging that Joantine Berghuijs distinguished for her research on MRB in the Netherlands will form a guiding framework. The first chapter of this paper offers a discussion of the concept of Multiple Religious Belonging and the recent debate surrounding it including MRB in East Asia and religious belonging in the Korean context. Following this the methodology will be presented. The analysis is divided into a chapter for the literature study, a chapter on the survey data and a chapter reflecting on these findings. Lastly, we will conclude this paper with a discussion of study results and the implications for further research.

## The debate on Multiple Religious Belonging

### *Multiple Religious Belonging*

Complex hybrid forms of religious belonging have been increasingly studied under the term Multiple Religious Belonging (MRB) since the turn of the century, and especially over the last decade. This relatively new paradigm of looking at religiosity includes religious belongings that are more complex than identification and commitment to one exclusive religious tradition. It acknowledges and researches the notion that religious belonging can be shaped individually and exist in many different forms.<sup>3</sup> Within the debate on MRB then, the occurrence of people relating to more than one religion is studied and an important topic in the field pertains to the question of how religious belonging and religious identity can be viewed when it relates to more than one religion.<sup>4</sup>

The term Multiple Religious Belonging might seem to be contradictory, how can we speak of belonging when people draw from multiple traditions and religions? One of the earlier works on MRB is *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*, edited by Catherine Cornille.<sup>5</sup> It explores several case studies of MRB in diverse contexts but all related to Christianity. Cornille states that in a growing free market of religious resources religious persons have a broad choice of where to find answers to their life questions and that they may find themselves belonging to more than one religion. Cornille defines religious belonging as involving *'the recognition of one's religious identity by the tradition itself and the disposition to submit to the conditions for membership as delineated by that tradition.'* She states that full belonging to two religions is possible but does not happen often, mostly MRB can occur when someone belongs to one main religion but incorporates elements of another tradition in their lives that do not conflict with the main religion.<sup>6</sup> Experiencing religiosity by combining many elements from various religions is something that Cornille does not describe as MRB but something that she relates to the New Age movement and an absence of religious belonging.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Joantine Berghuijs et al., 'Exploring Single and Multiple Religious Belonging', *Journal of Empirical Theology* 31, no. 1 (20 April 2018), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Berghuijs et al., 21.

<sup>5</sup> Cornille, *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*.

<sup>6</sup> Cornille, 4-6.

<sup>7</sup> Cornille, 3.

However, for Daan Oostveen this type of combining religious elements falls within the spectrum of MRB. Oostveen acknowledges the complexity of using the term *belonging* for non-exclusive commitments. He states that, indeed, within theology, the term *belonging* has often signified someone's commitment to one specific religious tradition and within the social sciences *belonging* is used to classify these commitments to religions. However, he argues that *belonging* as defined in MRB can refer to the religious *belonging* some people experience when they perceive themselves as belonging to a '*deeper religious reality*' such as God, ultimate meaning or love, instead of to religious traditions.<sup>8</sup> Daan Oostveen's work is part of a five-year research project of the Vrije Universiteit together with Joantine Berghuijs. The project ran from 2013 until 2018 under the title *Multiple Religious Belonging: hermeneutical and empirical explorations of hybrid religiosity*.<sup>9</sup> Within the project they decided to make a hermeneutical distinction between what they viewed as three different types of Multiple Religious Belonging: *Hard Multiple Religious Belonging*, *Medium Multiple Religious Belonging*, and *Soft Multiple Religious Belonging*.<sup>10</sup> The first type, *Hard Multiple Religious Belonging*, is defined as a double belonging to two or more religious traditions where a person self-identifies with these multiple religions. *Medium Multiple Religious Belonging* signifies a main self-identified belonging to one religious tradition in combination with incorporation of elements of other religious traditions or forms. *Soft Multiple Religious Belonging* is the category for people who do not express identification with a specific religious tradition but who engage with various elements of different religions. This pragmatic categorisation of MRB, therefore, includes individuals that combine religious elements without self-identifying with a tradition and views them as having a religious belonging: a Multiple Religious Belonging.<sup>11</sup>

these definitions give us a clearer idea of what MRB is and how we can approach research on Multiple Religious Belonging. They are however not always that clear about what exactly 'belonging' is or when you can speak of incorporation of an element of a religious tradition in someone's life. Joantine Berghuijs, working within the same research project, did research on Multiple Religious Belonging in the Netherlands. In one of the studies on MRB in the Netherlands Berghuijs defines religious belonging as '*the variety of ways in which individuals are connected to one or more religious traditions, by combining elements (texts,*

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<sup>8</sup> Daan Oostveen, 'Hermeneutical Explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging' (2020), 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> More information on the research project can be found at <https://vuweb.vu.nl/en/about-vu/more-about/multiple-religious-belonging>

<sup>10</sup> Oostveen, 'Hermeneutical Explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging', 16-17.

<sup>11</sup> Oostveen. 16-17.

*beliefs, practices or other) from one or more traditions in their lives.*<sup>12</sup> Her research on religious belonging in the Netherlands offers an operationalisation of aspects of Multiple Religious Belonging and therefore offers a way of gaining insight into how we might define belonging that can be used to research religious belongings.

In 2017 Berghuijs' article on MRB in the Netherlands was published researching the prevalence of MRB and its combinations of religions and elements of religions.<sup>13</sup> To research these topics Berghuijs differentiates modalities of belonging on which religious belonging can be measured; these are *Affinity, Practice and Material culture, Ideology, Narrative, Origin, Experience, Ethics, Social participation, and Identification*. These modalities represent ways in which individuals can relate to a religious tradition. Of these nine modalities Berghuijs uses seven, all except *Origin* and *Narrative*, to determine whether someone expresses Multiple Religious Belonging.<sup>14</sup> She defines this as when people relate to more than one religion through one or more of the modalities. This can be two or more religions through the same modality/modalities or two or more religions through different modalities. In 2018 an elaboration of this research was published focussing on single as well as Multiple Religious Belonging.<sup>15</sup> In this study, Berghuijs approaches religious belonging through the four perspectives of variety in relations to religions, styles of belonging, religious mobility and motivations for belonging.<sup>16</sup> Berghuijs et al. operationalised these four dimensions of religious belonging in survey questions to study MRB in the Dutch population. This current study will build on the research of Berghuijs and use this approach to Multiple Religious Belonging through the distinguished modalities of religious belonging to study Multiple Religious Belonging in South Korea.

This short overview of the academic debate on Multiple Religious Belonging and its definitions shows that this is a young and relevant academic debate in which new views on the concept of religious belonging as well as explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging are still being generated. The debate then would benefit from further explorations of religious belonging in more contexts. Besides the studies on MRB in the Netherlands, the debate on Multiple Religious Belonging so far contains studies on religious belonging in China, Japan,

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<sup>12</sup> Berghuijs et al., 'Exploring Single and Multiple Religious Belonging'.

<sup>13</sup> Joantine Berghuijs, 'Multiple Religious Belonging in the Netherlands: An Empirical Approach to Hybrid Religiosity', *Open Theology* 3, no. 1 (26 January 2017): 19–37.

<sup>14</sup> Berghuijs, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Berghuijs et al., 'Exploring Single and Multiple Religious Belonging'.

<sup>16</sup> Berghuijs et al., 21.

Sri Lanka, and Nigeria among other countries.<sup>17</sup> One specific aspect of the debate on MRB pertains to studying multiple religiosities in East Asia which until now has mostly been studied in China and Japan.

### *Multiple Religious Belonging in East Asia*

The part of the academic discourse on MRB that studies East Asia mainly focuses on comparing the rise of MRB in the West with East Asian religiosity.<sup>18</sup> Where religion in the West has often consisted of people committing to one religious tradition and being affiliated with religious institutions and organisations this is not what constitutes religion everywhere in the world. In East Asia identification with one religion is less common and the incorporation of elements and practices from several religions and philosophies in their religiosity is more prevalent. For example in China, people might combine practices, rituals, and elements from Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism without identifying with one religion or not feeling like these traditions conflict with each other or demand an identification with the tradition.<sup>19</sup> Daan Oostveen states that it could be hypothesized, and that some scholars already have hypothesized, that the transformation of religious belonging in the West into a more complex, hybrid, religious belonging can be viewed as an ‘Easternization’ of religion in the west.<sup>20</sup> In this way, religiosity in western society becomes more grounded in subjectivity because of persons choosing elements from religions to fit their needs.<sup>21</sup>

Building on Voss Roberts application of the Deleuzian metaphor of the rhizome to religious belonging, Daan Oostveen argues for a reinterpretation of the concept of religious belonging that could be applied to describe and study not only East Asian religiosity but also religion in general.<sup>22</sup> In this reinterpretation connectedness through a collection of rituals,

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<sup>17</sup> Elisabeth Harris J., ‘Double Belonging in Sri Lanka’, in *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity* (New York, U.S.A.: Orbis Books, 2002), 76–92; Daan Oostveen, ‘Hermeneutical explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging’ (2020); Jan Van Bragt, ‘Multiple Religious Belonging of the Japanese People’, in *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity* (New York, U.S.A.: Orbis Books, 2002), 7–19; Corey L. Williams, ‘Multiple Religious Belonging and Identity in Contemporary Nigeria: Methodological Reflections for World Christianity’, in *World Christianity* (Brill, 2020), 225–50.

<sup>18</sup> Oostveen, ‘Hermeneutical Explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging’ (Ph.D., Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2020); Daan F. Oostveen, ‘Religious Belonging in the East Asian Context: An Exploration of Rhizomatic Belonging’, *Religions* 10, no. 3 (March 2019): 182–191.; Cornille, *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*, p. 1–2.; Paul Hedges, ‘Multiple Religious Belonging after Religion: Theorising Strategic Religious Participation in a Shared Religious Landscape as a Chinese Model’, *Open Theology* 3, no. 1 (26 January 2017): 48–72.

<sup>19</sup> Oostveen, ‘Hermeneutical Explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging’, 2020, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Oostveen, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Cornille, *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Oostveen, ‘Hermeneutical Explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging’, 2020; Oostveen, ‘Religious Belonging in the East Asian Context’.

symbols, and religious elements is emphasized instead of connection to one tradition or institution. This understanding of religious belonging builds on two frameworks through which religion can be approached.

The first framework, which Oostveen calls a *hermeneutics of multiple religions*, views religion as the existence of separate and exclusive religious traditions. The second framework of this *hermeneutics of religiosity* views religion not as separate traditions but as expressions of culture that can exist in a mixture of forms through which religion is lived. Oostveen states how this second framework lies closer to understandings of religiosity that earlier research on religiosity in China has put forward.<sup>23</sup> Oostveen argues for a reimagining of belonging that corresponds with this hermeneutics of religiosity and hence does not put separate religious traditions central but instead ‘the religious’ which can exist through various connections of religious elements. This reimagined concept is termed *Rhizomatic Belonging* and it is here that Oostveen uses the metaphor of the Rhizome as first used by Deleuze and later applied to religious belonging by Voss Roberts.<sup>24</sup> A rhizome stands for horizontal connections between plant roots and in philosophy this concept represents non-hierarchical connections.<sup>25</sup> In applying the rhizome to religion a concept of belonging comes forward where interaction and interconnectivity between various religious elements are central. In contrast to seeing belonging as identification with an exclusive tradition, religious belonging becomes a non-hierarchical constellation of different religious elements. This belonging is not static but dynamic: connections can be lost and new connections can be made. In this way, the religious belonging of an individual exists in the multiplicity of religious elements that form connections between themselves.<sup>26</sup> This view of religious belonging aligns to an extent with Berghuijs’ approach of researching Multiple Religious Belonging through different modalities through which people can feel connected to a religious tradition.

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<sup>23</sup> Oostveen, ‘Religious Belonging in the East Asian Context’, 185.; Oostveen mentions the work of Hedges and Yang: Hedges, Paul. ‘Multiple Religious Belonging after Religion: Theorising Strategic Religious Participation in a Shared Religious Landscape as a Chinese Model’. *Open Theology* 3, no. 1 (January 2017): 48–72. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2017-0005>.; Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui. *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2008. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pnzsc>.

<sup>24</sup> Oostveen, ‘Religious Belonging in the East Asian Context’, 186. See also: Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press. First published in 1980 and Voss Roberts, Michelle. 2010. Religious Belonging and the Multiple. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26: 43–62.

<sup>25</sup> Oostveen, 186.

<sup>26</sup> Oostveen, 186-187.

### *Multiple Religious Belonging in South Korea*

Despite this growing academic interest in religious belonging and complex religious identities, as well as the exploration of the role played by East Asian religiosity in the debate, very little research has been carried out on religious belonging in contemporary South Korea. This is remarkable since the South Korean religious context contains interesting factors regarding religious belonging. The religious landscape seems to incorporate elements from East Asian religiosity as discussed earlier as well as a relatively recent development of increasing affiliation and dramatic growth of Christianity over the last centuries. Korea is one of the East Asian countries in which the Asian type of multi religiosity described earlier seems to be present in history. Korea has a long history of shamanism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism as well as some more ‘recent’ indigenous religions and Christianity.<sup>27</sup> Where in the past very few Koreans were affiliated to specific religious traditions, this has increased over the previous century to an extent that more than half of the population expresses an affiliation to a religion.<sup>28</sup>

Professor in Korean History and Civilization Donald Baker describes this transformation and argues that religion and religious plurality in Korea have undergone a revolution over the past centuries.<sup>29</sup> Religious affiliation where people feel like they belong to and profess a specific religion was nearly non-existent in pre-modern Korea for average Koreans. Identification with a religion was only for religious professionals such as monks or shamans. Religion was a mixture of elements and practices of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and shamanism and was mostly not seen as something to identify with. In Joseon Korea, the Confucian dynasty that ruled from the 15<sup>th</sup> century until 1910, religion, if it even had a concept of that, was subordinate to the state.<sup>30</sup> The state determined which ethics should be followed and could decide who could perform religious rituals and which Gods could be worshiped and when. This started to change when Christianity entered the country and the indigenous monotheistic *Donghak* religion came into existence. These monotheistic movements confronted the authority of the state and wanted something akin to religious freedom: the existence of religion in a separate sphere of society alongside the state.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Moonjang Lee, ‘Experience of Religious Plurality in Korea’, *International Review of Mission* 88, nr. 351 (1999): 399–413.

<sup>28</sup> Donald Baker, ‘The Religious Revolution in Modern Korean History: From Ethics to Theology and from Ritual Hegemony to Religious Freedom’, *The Review of Korean Studies* 9, no. 3 (September 2006): 249-275.

<sup>29</sup> Baker, 262.

<sup>30</sup> Baker, 262.

<sup>31</sup> Baker, 264-266.

Alongside these developments lay people also started to identify with religious orientations, besides the religious professionals. In 1916 the Japanese, who had colonized Korea, identified religious affiliation and counted 3% of the population as having one. By 1940 not even 5% said to have a religious orientation. This grew into 12% in 1964 and to over 42% in 1985 and 53.1% in 2005.<sup>32</sup> Religion in Korea has become more focused on theology, confession, and congregation, even the religions that did not do so before, like Buddhism. Most religious organizations in contemporary Korea seem to model themselves on Church organization and worship.<sup>33</sup>

The most recent measurement of religious affiliation in South Korea is a census conducted by the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS) in 2015. In this census, people could express their affiliation to several religious traditions as well as to ‘other religions’ or indicate ‘no religion.’<sup>34</sup> Another measurement of religious group size was carried out by the Cline Center in 2013.<sup>35</sup> Table 1 conveys the percentages found in the KOSIS and Cline Center measurements. The numbers show that Christianity and Buddhism are the main religions that people express affiliation with. Even though Korea is often called the most Confucianized country, as the third group Confucianism is a lot smaller in affiliation than Protestantism and Buddhism. This shows that while traditions can be influential culturally this does not mean people have to identify with the tradition. Similarly, shamanism is not present in these measurements because it is not often seen as something to identify with. In shamanism a shaman invokes and communicates with supernatural beings for several purposes, among them to bring blessing, to cure disease or as a funerary rite.<sup>36</sup> Shamanism was the main spirituality present in Korea before Buddhism became the main religion after its introduction in the fourth century.<sup>37</sup> It has no overarching institutions, shamans often work alone and their clients normally do not express any affiliation to shamanism as a tradition.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Baker. 252-254.

<sup>33</sup> Baker. 271-271.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Population by Gender / Age Group / Religion-City / Region’, Korean Statistical Information Service, 5 January 2017, [http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT\\_1PM1502&conn\\_path=I2](http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1PM1502&conn_path=I2).

<sup>35</sup> ‘Composition of Religious and Ethnic Groups (CREG) Project’, Cline Center, accessed 17 December 2020, <https://clinecenter.illinois.edu/project/Religious-Ethnic-Identity/composition-religious-and-ethnic-groups-creg-project>.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Koehler, *Religion in Korea: Harmony and Coexistence*, Illustrated edition (Seoul, Korea: Seoul Selection USA, Inc., 2013).

<sup>37</sup> General information on Korean shamanism can be found in Koehler, Robert. *Religion in Korea: Harmony and Coexistence*. Illustrated edition. Seoul, Korea: Seoul Selection USA, Inc., 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Laurel Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF: South Korean Popular Religion in Motion* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2009) 30.

Table 1. Religions as a percentage of the population as measured by KOSIS and Cline Center<sup>39</sup>.

<i>Religious tradition</i>	<i>KOSIS</i>	<i>Cline Center</i>
<i>Expressed affiliation</i>	44	
<i>Protestantism</i>	20	24
<i>Catholicism</i>	8	11
<i>Buddhism</i>	16	17
<i>Won Buddhism</i>	.17	.10
<i>Confucianism</i>	.15	2.7
<i>Cheondogyo</i>	.13	.14
<i>Deasoon Jinrihoe</i>	.08	
<i>Deajongism</i>	.006	
<i>Other religions</i>	.2	
<i>Non-religious</i>	56	45

Other religious traditions that South Koreans expressed affiliation to in the censuses are Cheondogyo, *Deasoon Jinrihoe* and *Daejongism* which are new indigenous Korean religions of which Cheondogyo is the oldest and biggest. Born in the political turmoil of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Cheondogyo is based on Confucianism but contains elements of Buddhism, Daoism, and Christianity. The tradition focuses on this earthly life, and God is less of a deity and more of the representation of justice and virtue. As a core belief, it teaches that God and man are one.<sup>40</sup>

Religion in Korean society has through time developed into having a bigger presence of confessional and congregational religion that people identify with nowadays. However, it also has a history of mixing religious practices that is also visible in contemporary Korean religiosity similar to religiosity found in other places in East Asia as described earlier.<sup>41</sup> The growth in affiliation does not have to mean that people conduct religious practices without religious affiliation, or that they do not shape personal religious identities by combining religious elements also from outside their affiliation. Religious plurality and complex religious identities can be observed in the literature on religion in the South Korean context. The Korean feminist theologian Chung Hyun Kyung notes about herself that: *'I discovered my bowel is a*

<sup>39</sup> KOSIS, 'Population by Gender / Age Group / Religion-City / Region'; 'Composition of Religious and Ethnic Groups (CREG) Project'.

<sup>40</sup>Information on Cheondogyo is based on Koehler, *Religion in Korea*, 90-96.

<sup>41</sup> Baker, 'The Religious Revolution in Modern Korean History'.

*shamanist bowel, my heart is a Buddhist heart, and my head is a Christian head.*”<sup>42</sup> This intermingling of beliefs is also mentioned by Laurel Kendall in her work on Korean shamanism. She writes about a shaman whose religious identity also constitutes elements of Christianity and Buddhism.<sup>43</sup>

Hung Chull Jang did anthropological research among Korean Methodists. He noted that while many interviewees identified as Christians, some would also perform shamanist spiritual practices.<sup>44</sup> The aspect of people looking further than their affiliation for forming their religious identities is also observed in a more recent article by Woo Hai Ran. She describes that many Koreans engage in self-training or self-development programmes that are less registered in religious identity surveys since they are not (recognized as) institutional religions.<sup>45</sup> She notes that interest in spirituality outside of the established religions in Korea is growing but also that these spiritual self-development programmes are attended by people who do commit to an established religion but do not feel like this poses a conflict. People are more and more shaping their own identities even when they are committed to a religion.

The current literature on religion in Korea then seems to show complex forms of religious belonging and the building of personal religious belonging based on a mixture of religious elements. However, there is one voice that argues against the presence of Multiple Religious Belonging in the Korean context. Dr. Moonjang Lee, who specialised in Asian theology, argues that even though through culture different traditional religious elements have their influence in the lives of Korean people, this should not be interpreted as a commitment to those religions and that Korean religious identity should not be called Shamanic-Confucian-Buddhist. Lee states that Korean religiosity is characterized by being faithful to one particular religion and that religious plurality in Korea exists of people minding their own religion, but not in easily combining religious practices.<sup>46</sup> The different religions never fuse and are clearly separated for Koreans. He even argues that a dual or multiple religious identity is not possible in the Korean context due to the folk Korean experience of religious plurality and ascribes the

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<sup>42</sup> Timoteo Gener, ‘Engaging with Chung Hyun Kyung’s Concept of Syncretism: An Intercultural Dialogue on Mission’, 52.

<sup>43</sup> Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF: South Korean Popular Religion in Motion*, 26-28.

<sup>44</sup> Hung Chull Jang, ‘Religious Cultural Hybridity in Chudosik (Ancestor Memorial Service/Ceremony) in Korean Protestantism’, *Journal of Religious History* 31, no. 4 (2007): 403–20, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9809.2007.00690.x>.

<sup>45</sup> Hai-Ran (혜란) Woo (우), ‘New Religious Movements in South Korea Focused on Contemporary Situation’, *신종교연구 (Sinchongkyoyeongu)*, August 2010, 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.22245/JKANR.2010...1>.

<sup>46</sup> Lee, ‘Experience of Religious Plurality in Korea’, 410-411.

main cause for the exclusivity of the Korean church not to the influence of Western exclusive religion, but to the ‘deep-rooted religious sentiment of the Korean people that find it hard to tolerate ‘otherness’’<sup>47</sup>

This seems to contradict with Donald Bakers observations that rituals were combined in pre-modern Korea and that Korea has seen a revolution of growing affiliation and belonging; the complex religious identities we can see in the literature; as well as the interpretation of Asian religiosity in the MRB debate, as it being prone to religious hybridity. The arguments of Donald Baker and Moonjang Lee in combination with the observations of complex religiosities in Korea call for further exploratory research that specifically studies how we can view religious plurality and religious belonging in contemporary South Korea.

### *Research Questions*

Despite the Korean context offering a unique landscape to explore Multiple Religious Belonging the current discourse on MRB does not contain any studies about MRB in South Korea. Also within Korea studies, and specifically the academic field of Korean religion, very little research has been carried out that specifically focuses on the conceptualisation of religious belonging and how this can be understood in the Korean context. This study makes a first step towards filling these lacunas in the current academic discourses by trying to answer the following four research questions:

- In what way do people express belongings to multiple religions in South Korea and which religious traditions does this involve?
- How does self-identified religious affiliation relate to performed religious practices?
- Can these complex forms of belonging be fruitfully studied through the Multiple Religious Belonging paradigm?

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<sup>47</sup> Lee, 407

## Methodology

This study will research Multiple Religious Belonging within the described Korean religious context and will seek to answer the stated questions through literary research as well as a survey. Our research questions are quite similar to the questions that Berghuijs addressed in the Dutch context and this study will base its methodology on the approach that Berghuijs et al. applied to answer their questions.<sup>48</sup> Berghuijs et al. developed a survey that researched Multiple Religious Belonging based on the idea that people can relate to religion through nine different modalities of belonging. These modalities are:

- “Affinity: affinity with religion by inspiration, relatedness, attractiveness of rituals or appealing values
- Practice and material culture: prayer, meditation, yoga, fasting, pilgrimage, text reading, celebrating holidays, owning of objects with personal religious meaning
- Ideology: religious beliefs, relevant to the respondent
- Narrative: religious stories, persons or books relevant to the respondent
- Origin: religiosity of parents, religious upbringing or school type
- Experience: religious experiences and emotions
- Ethics: ethical values taken from religion
- Social participation: involvement in religious groups: gatherings and services, membership, financial contributions, volunteering, professional involvement.
- Identification: self-identification as a follower of a religion (I consider myself ...).<sup>49</sup>

These modalities as described by Berghuijs will form the framework for this current research in two ways. Firstly, it will serve as a matrix for the analysis of the current literature on religion in Korea. Secondly, it will serve as a foundation for the creation of the survey by developing questions that can reveal belongings to religions through these modalities.

### *Literature study*

The existing literature on religion in South Korea will be analysed and searched for descriptions of forms of Multiple Religious Belonging based on described expressions of belonging through

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<sup>48</sup> Berghuijs, ‘Multiple Religious Belonging in the Netherlands’; Berghuijs et al., ‘Exploring Single and Multiple Religious Belonging’.

<sup>49</sup>The modalities and descriptions are taken literally from: Berghuijs, ‘Multiple Religious Belonging in the Netherlands’, 22.

the modalities of Berghuijs. When belonging to multiple religious traditions is expressed through at least one modality, or through different modalities we can speak of MRB. For example, someone being a church member and also callings on the help of a shaman to perform a ritual expresses belonging to multiple religiosities through the modalities of *social participation* and *practice*. This study focuses on descriptions of personal beliefs and practices and not of congregations or traditions that combine multiple traditions as part of its ideology. In South Korea many of these religions exist. An example is the religion of *JeungSanDo* which combines elements of Taoism, Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, Catholicism and Korean shamanism.<sup>50</sup> Followers of these relatively new religions constitute only a small part of society. Literature on the nature of these religions mostly consist of analyses of which elements are taken from which religions. However, in this study we are interested in how South Koreans develop their own forms of religious belonging and in what ways they combine elements of religious traditions personally in their own lives. Therefore we leave out theoretical discussions of encounters of religions, but have filtered the available literature descriptions of personal beliefs and practices.

### *Survey*

The second method of analysing the presence and composition of MRB in South Korea is a survey. Similar to how Berghuijs employed surveys I developed a survey that is based on Berghuijs and adapted the questions to the Korean context.<sup>51</sup> It borrows Berghuijs' questions that operationalise the modalities of belonging and incorporates some other questions of Berghuijs' surveys that measure the perspective of self-identification such as "To what extent do you agree with: 'I combine elements of different religious traditions in my life'." Berghuijs left out the modalities of *origin* and *narrative*. For *origin* this is because it is an irrelevant factor for non-believers and for believers the impact of origin will show through other modalities. However, *narrative* is left out due to overlap in narratives between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Since the narratives between the religious traditions present in South Korea can be more easily distinguished a question was created for the modality of *narrative* in our survey.

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Pearson Flaherty, 'JeungSanDo and the Great Opening of the Later Heaven: Millenarianism, Syncretism, and the Religion of Gang Il-Sun', *Nova Religio* 7, no. 3 (March 2004): 26–44, <https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2004.7.3.26>.

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix A for the survey questions as well as indications from which questions are taken from which surveys of Berghuijs.

Through this survey we can analyse to which religions participants experience belonging and through which modalities this belonging take shape. In this way we will gain insight into whether people express belongings to multiple religions, from what different religions they draw and how they combine them. Furthermore, we will be able to see how self-identification relates to our approach of defining MRB based on belonging expressed through several modalities. Together this information can answer our first two research questions, in the process of this study we can find the answer to the third question, namely whether these forms of belonging can be fruitfully studied through the Multiple Religious Belonging paradigm, specifically through an approach based on modalities of religious belonging.

The survey consists of 23 questions of which most are closed questions except for a question asking to describe the participants' beliefs.<sup>52</sup> Another open question was added asking the participants to describe how they combine different religious traditions in daily life and what this means to them. Most of the questions are based on or taken from the surveys that Berghuijs used for her research into MRB, however the questions and answer choices were adapted to the Korean context and the religious traditions, practices, beliefs, values, etcetera that are common in Korea.<sup>53</sup> The survey is translated in Korean and distributed in Korean as well as in English. In total there are 41 useable responses from which 22 were female participants and 19 male. Respondents ages varied from younger than twenty up till fifty years old, see also table 2 on page 28. Distribution of the survey has been through personal contacts in South-Korea as well as through Reddit and Facebook groups where I could reach South Korean people living in South Korea.

Although respondents were gathered with a wide range in ages and a balanced distribution between male and female, the sample cannot be assumed to be representative of the Korean population. The contacts I used to distribute the survey in Korea identified as Christians themselves and sharing the survey among their friends may have led to a bigger representation of Christians in the respondents. Secondly Facebook and Reddit were used to collect respondents. In Korea, people primarily use social media platforms from Naver, a Korean online platform. Therefore, the people using Reddit are already not a representative sample of Korean society and might for example, be mainly younger internet users. For Reddit a Korean spoken subreddit was used to distribute the survey. With regard to Facebook, the survey was shared in a Facebook group where Koreans can exchange language with Dutch

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<sup>52</sup> See appendix A for the survey.

<sup>53</sup> Berghuijs, 'Multiple Religious Belonging in the Netherlands', 42-48.

speaking people. This is a specific group of Koreans living in Korea that have an interest in Dutch and are therefore also not representative for the whole Korean population. Furthermore, in both instances the participants are self-selected. Since people choose for themselves whether to participate in the survey or not, the sample might consist of people who are more interested in filling out a survey about their views on religion, and therefore perhaps more interested in religion than the Korean population in general. However, with still a very diverse sample of ages and gender of Korean people currently living in Korea this sample does give us a valuable insight in religious belonging among Koreans for an exploratory research on MRB in South Korea despite its limitations.

## Analysis

### *Literature Analysis*

In this first part of the analysis we will analyse our findings of descriptions of complex and Multiple Religious Belongings found in the English literature on religion in Korea. The descriptions that were found in the literature contain several forms of Multiple Religious Belongings of which many will be categorized by the aforementioned levels of MRB (medium, hard and soft) used by Daan Oostveen. I will analyse these various accounts of Multiple Religious Belongings and the combinations that are found as well as analyse, based on Berghuijs' modalities approach, through which modalities these Multiple Religious Belongings come about.

Our first findings relate to feminist theologian Chung Hyun Kyung. As a Christian theologian she spoke at the World Council of Churches in 1991 where she, controversially, invoked spirits based on Korean indigenous spirituality.<sup>54</sup> Around 2010 Chung *identified* herself as a Buddhist-Christian. Besides her affiliation with Christianity she also expresses belonging to Buddhism through practicing Buddhist *practices* as well as through *social participation* through professional involvement. In her life she has practiced Zen meditation and also lived for a couple of months at a Buddhist temple where she lived the same life as the nuns, even though she was not a Buddhist nun. Furthermore, she has practiced meditation in Tibetan Buddhist Temples in Tibet and Nepal and later on in 2008 became an official Dharma teacher.<sup>55</sup> This identity of dual belonging to Buddhism and Christianity is the only description of Hard Multiple Religious Belonging that we encountered in the literature.

Chung advocates in her literary works for an Asian theology that incorporates traditional spiritualities like Confucianism, shamanism and Buddhism. She calls this *survival liberation-centered syncretism* where women combine different 'life-giving sources' to find empowerment, liberation and their own way of religious meaning.<sup>56</sup> She illustrates this by the lives of her mothers, her birth mother and her mother who raised her, who both incorporated elements from different religions into their lives; what Chung would call 'life-giving' elements.

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<sup>54</sup> Timoteo Gener, 'Engaging with Chung Hyun Kyung's Concept of Syncretism: An Intercultural Dialogue on Mission', *Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology* 19, no. 1 (March 2015), 43-44.

<sup>55</sup> Volker Küster, 'Chapter Eight. A Plea For A Survival-Liberation Centered Syncretism Chung Hyun-Kyung (\*1956)', in *A Protestant Theology of Passion: Korean Minjung Theology Revisited* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 103–13, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/leidenuniv/detail.action?docID=583741>.

<sup>56</sup> Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1990), 113.

*“My two mothers mixed and matched all the spiritual resources they found around them and established their own comfortable religious cosmos in their hearts. Their center of spirituality was not Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, or any of the various fortune-tellers. All these religious personalities and spirits helped my mothers in various stages of their life journeys, but none of them dominated their inner life. The real center for their spirituality was life itself.”*

Chung's birth mother who later on in life became a deacon in a Protestant church was a Buddhist when Chung was young. The pregnancy with Chung was confirmed through Buddha and Korean spirits in dreams and she would visit fortune tellers in Chung's youth.<sup>57</sup> The mother who raised her incorporated Christian faith as well as elements from Confucian practice in her life. Furthermore, she sometimes visited Buddhist temples or turned towards traditional Korean religiosity for help.<sup>58</sup> It is this kind of spirituality, where life-giving meaning and liberation was found through the means of different elements from different religions, that Chung advocates for. The descriptions of the religiosity of Chung's mother seem to mostly align with a Soft Multiple Religious Belonging. Not one religion takes a dominant place, but elements from different religions constitute a personal spirituality and form of religious belonging. In these descriptions we can also see how her birth mother related to these religions through different modalities. Her birth mother *identified* with Buddhism, went on to *socially participate* in a Protestant church through *professional involvement* and at the same time related to indigenous Korean spirituality through *experience* and *practice*.

Another description that can be classified as Soft Multiple Religious Belonging is found in a description of Auntie Cho, a shaman. Lauren Kendall, an anthropologist specialised in studying Korean shamanism conveys the story of Auntie Cho. Just like Chung's mothers, Cho's life involves many different religions. Auntie Cho mentions Catholic, protestant shamanist and Buddhist influences. The follow are excerpts from her story:

*“When I was young, I thought that maybe I would become a Catholic nun ..... Next, I went to the Protestant church, the Methodists. I went there for a while, but that was when I began to dream.”*<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Chung Hyun Kyung, “Following Naked Dancing and Long Dreaming,” in *Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective*, ed. Letty M. Russell and others (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 65-66 as described in Gener, 'Engaging with Chung Hyun Kyung's Concept of Syncretism: An Intercultural Dialogue on Mission'.

<sup>58</sup> Chung Hyun Kyung, “Following Naked Dancing and Long Dreaming”, 64. as described in Gener, 'Engaging with Chung Hyun Kyung's Concept of Syncretism an Intercultural Dialogue on Mission', 50.

<sup>59</sup> Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF*, 25.

“...and then I went into a house and see a kut<sup>60</sup> and the spirits would come”<sup>61</sup>

“A friend of mine asked me to divine for her, and when I did, I could see everything, even to the graves of her ancestors.”<sup>62</sup>

“I didn’t want to have this. I wanted to be rid of it. I entered a Buddhist temple to suppress it, sitting there beneath the Buddha ..... I sat and prayed for two years.. I was a cook in a Buddhist temple for two years”<sup>63</sup>

“On my path there are young spirits and middle-range spirits who sometimes err from Christianity and Buddhism.”<sup>64</sup>

Auntie Cho, like many other shamans, experienced hardships and dreams before officially accepting their calling and becoming a shaman. Kendall then states that turning towards Christianity or Buddhism might be a way for young shamans that perceive their calling through hardships to try to escape from their calling and from the spirits.<sup>65</sup> In Auntie Cho’s case she tried to contain her spirits and shamanic calling through Buddhist practice. In Auntie Cho we see someone who *experienced* experiences related to shamanism while still *socially participating* in a protestant church. She then turned to Buddhist *practice* for help. In this way she combined elements from several religions through different modalities in her own religious spirituality. Kendall also affirms this by calling Auntie Cho a *bricoleur*. This term, first coined by Lévi-Strauss,<sup>66</sup> has been used more often in the discourse on Multiple Religious Belonging to describe the phenomenon of building a personal spirituality from building blocks of multiple religions and understandings.<sup>67</sup>

These cases of MRB were all complex forms of belonging involving three or even more religious traditions. The rest of the forms of multiple belonging found in the literature consist of combinations of two traditions. One of these can be classified as Soft Multiple Religious Belonging. This example is described by Chung Hyun Kyung in her book *Struggle to be the sun again*. It tells the story of a Korean woman who lost her son because a politician killed him. In revenge and in search for justice the mother started to pray, as Chung writes:

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<sup>60</sup> A shamanic ritual

<sup>61</sup> Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF*, 25.

<sup>62</sup> Kendall, 25.

<sup>63</sup> Kendall, 25.

<sup>64</sup> Kendall, 25.

<sup>65</sup> Kendall, 26.

<sup>66</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1966).

<sup>67</sup> See for example Corey L Williams, ‘Chrislam, Accommodation and the Politics of Religious Bricolage in Nigeria’, *Studies in World Christianity* 25, no. 1 (2019): 5–28.

*“every morning in front of a bowl of pure water, she prayed for justice to the deities she knew: Ha-neu-nim, Kwan-Woon-Chang-Nim, and Yesu-Nim. After prayer, the boys’ mother shot each portrait with a bow and arrow. .... The men who had hurt her became very frightened; In the Korean shamanistic tradition, the boy’s mother’s ritual would lead to the men’s deaths.” .... “She asked for the help from the supreme Korean god [Ha-Neu-Nim], a god from the shamanistic tradition [Kwan Woon-Chang-Nim] and from Jesus.”<sup>68</sup>*

Combining traditional Korean religiosity with Christianity the mother was in search for justice. She related to these traditions through the same modality, namely the modality of *narrative*. The modality of *narrative* consists of the religious stories, persons or books that are relevant to someone. In this case the gods of the different traditions were all relevant to the mother in her search for justice. A somewhat similar case is described by Laurel Kendall who mentions a shaman who was a Christian before becoming a shaman and still thanks the Christian god for giving her the shaman profession. Even though she is a shaman now the Christian god is still relevant to her and it is through this modality of *narrative* that she connects to Christianity.<sup>69</sup>

There are several descriptions where elements from two religions are combined, that seems like they could be categorized as Medium Religious Belonging. Most of these persons identify with one religion but incorporate elements from the other religion in their spiritual lives. One of these examples is described by Kendall and demonstrates the incorporation of Buddhist elements by a shaman apprentice:

*“The apprentice... invokes Buddhist-Inspired celestial deities: The Buddhist Sage (Pulsa); Seven Starts, associated with successful child-rearing; and the Birth Grandmother, associated with conception and childbirth.”<sup>70</sup>*

This shaman invokes Buddhist deities in a shamanic ritual. However, it is important to note that there is a close relationship between Buddhism and shamanism in Korea. This is something that should not be overlooked in the analysing and exploring MRB in South Korea. We might be too quick in deeming this an incorporation of two different traditions while Buddhism and shamanism have influenced each other thoroughly in Korea. Anthropologist Hyun-Key Kim Hogarth states that while shamanism has influenced Korean Buddhism primarily on the ideological level, it is Buddhism that influenced shamanism on the surface level, such as that

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<sup>68</sup> Chung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again*, 95.

<sup>69</sup> Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF*, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Kendall, 43.

shamanists have incorporated spirits from Buddhism in their tradition. She calls the total separation of Buddhism and shamanism unbelievable given how long they have influenced each other.<sup>71</sup> Where this portrayal of a shaman invoking Buddhist deities in her ritual might sound like a combination of two traditions, these Buddhist elements might be so much ingrained in shamanist practice that it has become an inseparable part of the shamanist tradition itself which makes it less logical to interpret as a multiple belonging to two traditions through the modality of *narrative*. How intertwined Buddhism and shamanism can be is something that has to be taken into account while researching Multiple Religious Belonging in South Korea.

There are however descriptions in the literature of combinations of two religious traditions that can be more clearly interpreted as Medium Multiple Religious Belonging. The first of those is another description from Lauren Kendall of an assistant shaman who identified as Christian but also helped at *Kuts*:

*“The woman described herself as a Christian but felt that it was wrong to call the shaman gods ‘Satan’ as Christians do. As we suspected, her thin physique evidence that she was suffering from ‘the drought caused by the gods’ the ill health and misfortunes that dog a destined shaman’s footsteps until she accepts her calling. She explained that she was trying to appease her gods by spending time at kut, and once she had recovered her health, she would go back to church because Christianity was ‘more elevated’ than popular religion. But she had every appearance of an apprentice shaman, learning the kut in anticipation of her own initiation.”<sup>72</sup>*

While being ideologically connected to Christianity this apprentice shaman also believes in indigenous Korean gods that need to be appeased. While she expresses belonging to Christianity through the modalities of *identification* and *affinity* she also expresses connections to shamanism through *practice*, *narrative*, *experience* and *social participation*. In this description of Medium Multiple Religious Belonging the main religion of the women is Christianity while she, temporarily, incorporates shamanist practices into her life.

Identifying with a Christian affiliation while practicing elements from other another religion is also seen in one group of Christians that practices Buddhism in Korea. This group of Catholics, studied by Bernard Senécal, have no intentions to call themselves Buddhist, but are attracted to Buddhism and also practice Buddhist rituals and practices. They have weekly meetings in the mountains where discussions about Buddhist-Christian relations take place as

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<sup>71</sup> Hyun-key Kim Hogarth, *Syncretism of Buddhism and Shamanism in Korea* (Edison and Seoul: Jimoondang International, 2002), 356-358.

<sup>72</sup> Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF*, 26.

well as meditation and studying both religious traditions.<sup>73</sup> A similar group, the Korean *Seondohoe*, have weekly retreats where sutra's and Buddhist doctrines are studied.<sup>74</sup> Sometimes they make Buddhist pilgrimages to for example China or Tibet. However, this all goes hand in hand with their Christian identity that they do not let go of. Sénécal describes this as '*the more those Catholics encounter the Buddha, Buddhists and Buddhism, the more dedicated Christians they become.*'<sup>75</sup> In this Medium Multiple Religious Belonging these Catholic Christians connect through many of the same modalities to both Catholicism as well as Buddhism. These traditions meet each other in all the modalities of *affinity, practice, material culture, ideology, narrative, experience, ethics* and *social participations*. However, on the modality of *identification* these Catholics express only a belonging to Christianity.

Christianity in Korea has historically been more averse towards contextualization and incorporation of local traditions. Early Catholicism in Korea deemed ancestor worship as idolatry which lead to them being persecuted. Many Protestant Christians also viewed Confucian ancestor rites and shamanist rituals as idolatry. However, since Confucianism and especially the Confucian value of filial piety is so deeply incorporated in Korean culture and ethics there are still Christians that incorporate (adapted) forms of Confucian rites in their lives. Donald Baker, professor of Korean history and specialist in the area of Korean religion states that around 30% of Koreans, of which most are Christians, perform adapted versions of the Confucian *Chesa* ritual.<sup>76</sup> This ritual is carried out at the anniversary of the death of ancestors and is one of the most important displays of filial piety.

Within Korean Protestantism a new ritual has been formed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century that has also been named *Chudosik* or *Chudoyaebe*. This ritual that takes the shape of a small service is performed on the death anniversaries of the ancestors. Hung Chull Jang did anthropological research into *Chudosik* at a Methodist Church in Seoul.<sup>77</sup> His conversations with church members give insight in what issues and considerations come up regarding implementing Confucian values into their Christian lives. For some Confucianism is not viewed as religious and therefore they have no problems of incorporating *Chesa* into their lives:

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<sup>73</sup> Bernard Sénécal, 'Jesus Christ Encountering Gautama Buddha: Buddhist-Christian Relations in South Korea', *Journal of Korean Religions* 5, no. 1 (2014), 92.

<sup>74</sup> Sénécal, 93.

<sup>75</sup> Sénécal, 93.

<sup>76</sup> Don Baker, 'Religion in Twenty-First Century Korean Lives', in *The Routledge Handbook of Korean Culture and Society* (Routledge, 2016), 99.

<sup>77</sup> Hung Chull Jang, 'Religious Cultural Hybridity in Chudosik (Ancestor Memorial Service/Ceremony) in Korean Protestantism', *Journal of Religious History* 31, no. 4 (2007): 403–20.

*'I think our traditional Confucian Chesa rite is not religious. Confucianism is not a kind of religion because it does not have any life after death. It is focused on how people live in this world. One facet is that a living person must respect a person who has passed away. But, in Confucianism, they are not regarded as any god. This is what Western missionaries did not understand. Sometimes, we Christians also think it is worshipping another god, their parents. Again, Confucianism has no idea about what will happen after this life or the end of living in this world. They just construe what life is for human beings in this world. It does not have any concept of God. From this point of view, I am not hostile to Confucian rites such as Chesa because, for me, it means people commemorating their parents with all their respect.'*<sup>78</sup>

However for some Christians performing *Chesa* or the accompanying full bow (*Jeol*) to their ancestors is seen as problematic:

*'My wife had been doing theology course in a Presbyterian college for a while. After that she never did Jeol when we were at the grave of parents. She said that the college taught her that it couldn't be allowed. So, I responded, if God is really like that, I do not need to believe in him. I express our respect to parents by Jeol. I do not mean worshipping them as any kind of God. Most times I have been to the Mount, I bowed down to them and start to talk to them . . . I talk to them about all the good things. And also I say bad things to them with my wish that they might talk to God to resolve the problems.'*<sup>79</sup>

*Chudosik* as a Protestant practice does mostly not contain a full bow to the parents or any other elements having to do with the spirits of the ancestors. It is shaped similar to a Christian service and is, therefore, a ceremony that can replace *Chesa* while still remembering the parents and/or ancestors on their anniversary. However, this does not fulfil the wish to do something meaningful for their ancestors for everyone:

*"it would be much better if Chudosik had some part or factor of the traditional Chesa. It makes us much more comfortable and pleased. Performing Chudosik sometimes makes me feel that something is missing. At the time I used to do Chesa, I felt that I was really doing something for my parents. But Chudosik is not like that."*<sup>80</sup>

Just like we have to be careful by stating that Buddhist-inspired deities in shamanism are Buddhist and not shamanist we can agree with Jang that *Chudosik* is a '*locally embedded Christian rite*'.<sup>81</sup> However, the wish for a rite like this, as well as the conflicts surrounding

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<sup>78</sup> Jang, 410.

<sup>79</sup> Jang, 411.

<sup>80</sup> Jang, 418.

<sup>81</sup> Jang, 420.

performing a full bow or leaving food for the ancestors on the table at *Chudosik* like is done in a Confucian *Chesa* rite gives us insight in the affinity these Christians have with Confucianism. While they *identify* and *socially participate* as Christians they express a connection to Confucianism through *affinity*, in which they find the Confucian rituals attractive, and the *ethics* of Confucianism which they value. However, for many Koreans Confucianism is not seen as a religion but rather as culture or a philosophical tradition. In this way, Koreans might not perceive Confucian rites as constituting to their personal spirituality. The sometimes blurry borders between religion and philosophy and culture in Korea's spiritual landscape have to be taken into account while studying MRB in Korea.

At last, there are some Koreans that partake in self-cultivation programs regardless of religious affiliation. Woo Hai Ran studied the new Age/ New Spirituality groups that have been growing since the 1980s and the people that participate in their programmes that are mostly paid programmes.<sup>82</sup> Many of these programmes claim to have Buddhist roots and offer ki-training or meditation. Woo states that most of the participants were people who were affiliated with other established religions and did not think of the training as clashing with their primary religion. Furthermore, most participants, among which were also Christians, stated that they believed in the original Hindu or Buddhist belief of reincarnation.<sup>83</sup> This description illustrates that there is a small number of Koreans identifying mostly as Buddhist or Christians that incorporate elements of New religions into their practices of spiritual self-cultivation and have no problem with combining different spiritual elements. To quote Woo Hai-Ran: *'individuals' religious worlds are quite complex, allowing some degree of autonomy over which doctrines of established religions -if any- have power.*<sup>84</sup>

To conclude, we have encountered many different complex forms of religious belonging among South Koreans in the literature. We have analysed a collection of descriptions of forms of religious belonging that express belonging to multiple traditions through different modalities. We can conclude that Multiple Religious Belonging is present in contemporary South Korea and that it can mostly be approached through Daan Oostveen's categorisations of Hard, Medium, and Soft MRB even though these categorisations sometimes seem to be unable to capture the full complexity of a belonging. Furthermore, we have demonstrated that MRB

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<sup>82</sup> Woo Hai-Ran (우혜란), 'New Religious Movements in South Korea Focused on Contemporary Situation'.

<sup>83</sup> Woo Hai-Ran (우혜란), 6-7.

<sup>84</sup> Woo Hai-Ran (우혜란), 8.

in Korea can be approached by Berghuijs system of expressing belonging through different modalities. However, we have also come across culturally specific complexities that make studying MRB in Korea more complicated. As noted, the mutual influence of shamanism and Buddhism that has connected the two traditions inseparably means that the traditions cannot always be easily separated. It is therefore not always easy to determine whether something should be seen as Buddhist or shamanist and therefore it is more difficult to determine the presence of MRB based on the approach of the modalities as described by Berghuijs. Furthermore, even though Confucian rituals are practiced in Korea not many people view Confucianism as religion or spirituality but categorise it as culture. It should therefore be questioned whether Confucian practice can be viewed as adding to Multiple Religious Belonging or whether this does not contribute to the personal spiritualities of South Koreans, however, this might also change from person to person whether they view Confucian practice as spiritual or not.

## Survey Analysis

The distributed survey researched which religions and traditions South Koreans express belonging to and whether we could see complex forms of religious belonging that might be called Multiple Religious Belonging. Based on Berghuijs' survey the survey was built on the modalities through which people can relate to different religions. In total 41 usable responses were gathered of which 22 identified as female and 19 as male. Ages varied up until 50 years old with eight participants being younger than 20, fifteen participants between 20 and 30 years old, thirteen participants between the age of 30 and 40 years old, and five participants between 40 and 50 years old, see also table 2.

Table 2 *Distribution of gender and age*

	<20	20-30	30-40	40-50	
<i>Female</i>	3	11	8	-	<b>22</b>
<i>Male</i>	5	4	5	5	<b>19</b>
	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	

One of the earlier questions in the survey asked which traditions the participants drew from in their daily life (see table 3). As expected based on the distribution of (non)-religious persons in South Korea more than half of them answered no religion. Moreover, 20 participants did not consider themselves as a believer of any religious tradition (see table 4). Besides these participants identifying as irreligious twelve respondents self-identified as Christians. Many of those also drew only from Christianity in daily life and did not show much affinity to other religious traditions. However, besides these cases the survey also uncovered many instances of more complex forms of religious belonging. For example, two persons answered that they drew from more than one religion in their personal lives.

In the literature analysis, we classified these complex forms of religious belongings based on *hard, medium, soft* MRB and most of the time we could point out certain modalities through which the people related to religious traditions. Clear classification is more difficult with the survey results. While the survey is very useful for precisely indicating on what modalities people relate to which traditions it also demonstrates how religious belongings in South Korea might be more complex than just the literature could show us. Quite often, the

Table 3. Answers to the question: *From which tradition do you draw from in your personal life?*

<i>Religious tradition</i>	<i>amount</i>
<i>No religion</i>	23
<i>Christianity</i>	13
<i>Buddhism</i>	3
<i>Buddhism, Confucianism, shamanism</i>	1
<i>Buddhism, Confucianism, shamanism, Tengrism, Taoism</i>	1

Table 4. Answers to 'I consider myself a ...'

<i>Religious tradition</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Nothing or unspecified 'other'</i>	20
<i>Christian</i>	12
<i>Confucianist</i>	2
<i>Buddhist</i>	2
<i>Believer of Cheondogyo</i>	1
<i>Christian &amp; Buddhist</i>	2
<i>Buddhist &amp; Confucianist</i>	1
<i>Buddhist, Confucianist, Shamanist, Taoist</i>	1

answer to the question which religions respondents draw from in daily life did not correlate with the religion they considered themselves to be a believer of for example. This complexity especially shows when trying classify the survey results using *Hard, Medium, and Soft Religious Belonging*.

The first example of this are the two participants that considered themselves Christian as well as Buddhist and therefore *self-identified* with these traditions. This would incline us to classify their cases as *Hard Multiple Religious Belonging*. However, one of these participants, a 40 to 50 year old male, states he only draws from Christianity in daily life, and not Buddhism. Furthermore, he also draws values from Confucianism and feels related to shamanism next to Christianity. His most important conviction, that he describes as '*Things eventually find their rightful/just course*', is for him also connected to shamanism besides Christianity and Buddhism. Furthermore he values texts, and draws values from Confucianism. So in this case,

even if the participant expresses connection mainly to Buddhism and Christianity through most modalities there also is a connection to shamanism and Confucianism. With a dual self-identification but also connections to other traditions this case is already more complex and more difficult to classify as *hard*, *medium* or *soft MRB*.

The other participant that considers themselves Christian and Buddhist does not consider themselves to be shamanist but does state to combine elements from Christianity, Buddhism and shamanism in their lives. Their identification with these two traditions however is not connected to *Social participation* with the traditions with regard to attendance, volunteering, membership, financial contributions or any professional involvement. This 20 to 30 year old woman also connects her *experience* of being deeply touched by a ritual to Cheondogyo next to Christianity. In this case too, what seemed like a *Hard MRB* proves to be more complex when taking into consideration the whole survey results. Applying the *Hard*, *Medium*, *Soft* classification and approach of the VU project to the survey results then sheds light on how complex these forms of belonging are but also shows us that this approach might not be able to fully capture the complexity of religious belonging in South Korea.

However, there are respondents that can be clearly categorised, such as the following example of *Hard MRB*. Identifying as Buddhist, Confucianist, Shamanist and Taoist this respondent states to draw in his daily life from Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, Tengrism and Taoism. Even though he voices attraction to Christianity and that he feels home with it he expresses only *Social Participation* with Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and shamanism and connects his experiences, practices and the persons and stories he values also not to any other traditions than these four. In this way he can be categorised as mostly having a *Hard MRB*.

There are some cases that could be classified as *Medium MRB* in the survey. A 30 to 40 year old woman who *self-identifies* as Christian and states to draw only from Christianity in life voices that she combines practices from Christianity and Buddhism. Next to Christianity she expresses *affinity* to Buddhism and also Hinduism, specifically the concept of Karma. She does not *socially participate* in any religious tradition but does draw values from Christianity and Buddhism as well as has a crucifix and a Buddha statue that she attaches personal religious significance to and thus connects through *ethics* and *material culture* to both religions. In this case of *Medium MRB* the respondent identifies with Christianity but incorporates elements of Buddhism into her religiosity.

Two other respondents both draw only from Buddhism in daily life and *self-identify* as Buddhist. Still one of these respondents expresses to view Christianity as a religion they combine elements from in their daily life next to Buddhism which points to *Medium MRB*. The other respondent voices similar forms of belonging but combines Confucianism and shamanism next to Buddhism. In this case it is difficult whether we might classify them as having a Multiple Religious Belonging or not since, as came up in the literature analysis, it should be questioned whether Confucian practice can be viewed as adding to MRB. This also relates to two respondents who self-identify as Christian and express to draw solely from Christianity but also state to combine Christianity with Confucianism, both putting Christianity as the most important tradition in their lives.

Finally, multiple cases can be categorised as *Soft Multiple Religious Belonging*. One woman does not consider herself a believer of any religion but does *socially participate* in Christian and Buddhist gatherings and expresses that she combines elements from Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism and shamanism. Another respondent, a 40 to 50 year old men, does not draw from any religions in life and never indicates to attach a personal religious significance to any experiences, texts, practices etc. However, he does consider himself a Confucianist and states to combine Buddhism, Confucianism and shamanism. In a way, this case seem similar to another women who states to draw from Buddhism, Confucianism and shamanism in daily life without *self-identifying* with any tradition. She *practices Chesa and Gosa*<sup>85</sup> and relates this to Buddhism. Furthermore she finds Buddhist and shamanist rituals attractive and feels at home with Christianity. However, she puts no religious significance to any of this and denies that she combines elements of different religious tradition in her life. Even though it does take shape differently, both this man and woman seem to be aware of the influence Buddhism, Confucianism and shamanism have in their lives, but they do not attach any religious meaning to it.

The last two cases lead us again to the question how we should view Buddhism, shamanism and Confucianism in the cultural context and whether these cases can be called complex forms of religious belonging. From this survey we can see that this might vary per person. While the last examples discussed might point to Buddhism, Confucianism and shamanism not having an influence on constituting a religious belonging other respondents have claimed to attach religious significance to elements of shamanism and Buddhism.

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<sup>85</sup> A shamanist ritual for blessing

Nevertheless, even though Confucianism is often mentioned as an influence and something they express affinity for, it is barely mentioned as something that carries religious significance. As one respondent mentioned in relation to the Confucian *Chesa* ritual 'I see it more of a family tradition. I do not attach any religious meaning to it.' Only one respondent state to attach religious significance to the Analects. However, similar to what was expressed in the literature by the Methodist Christians that were interviewed about *Chesa* many Koreans do not perceive Confucianism as religious.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, while researching MRB in South Korea one should not classify every case where a connection to Confucianism is seen alongside another religious tradition as constituting a Multiple Religious Belonging. Rather, it should be taken case to case whether Confucian elements do influence the spirituality and religiosity of an individual.

The survey results deepen our insight in the religious landscape of South Korea by showing that religious belonging in Korea is even more complex than the literature could show. Where we were able to classify not all, but most descriptions of complex forms of religious belonging in the literature, in the survey we see multiple cases that are difficult to classify and that contain diverse connections to religious traditions through various modalities. The survey gives us a better view of how religious belonging is constituted through these modalities and in which ways people relate to which traditions. It especially gives us a clearer insight in how self-identification relates to connections to religious traditions on other modalities and how this may not always correlate. Where the literature shows us examples of how people combine religious elements, the survey also shows how this relates to their personal identification with religions. It shows us how complex this can be, and that incorporation of elements of tradition does not have to mean at all that people feel related to or identify with a religion. Moreover, this underscores the idea that South Koreans might be less prone to identify with a tradition such as shamanism or Confucianism.

However, the survey also has its limitations to exploring these complexities. Since many of the questions are closed questions it leaves little space for elaborations. Furthermore, the answer choices I provided in the survey can never be exhaustive and even though the survey offers space to specify a different choice it might influence respondents into choosing from the limited options. Since it is a survey and not an interview it also deprives us of the possibility to ask clarifying follow up questions. However, in this exploratory stage of research into MRB

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<sup>86</sup> Jang, 'Religious Cultural Hybridity in Chudosik (Ancestor Memorial Service/Ceremony) in Korean Protestantism'.

in Korea it does provide valuable insight into complex forms religious belonging that enriches the insights we gained from the literature.

### ***Reflection***

The research findings of the literature and survey analyses affirm that South Korea offers a unique context in which complex forms of religious belonging can be studied. Don Baker theorized how religion in Korea has changed revolutionarily over the last centuries and has seen an increase in belonging and affiliation.<sup>87</sup> In the literature as well as the survey we saw examples of people self-identifying with and expressing affiliation to certain religions, especially concerning Christianity but also regarding Buddhism, Confucianism and shamanism. It underscores the notion that a sense of affiliation and belonging regarding organised religions is present in contemporary Korea. At the same time, the findings of this research affirm that Koreans are less likely to self-identify with, express affiliation with or find religious significance in some traditions such as shamanism and Confucianism. In this sense, the research agrees with Moonjang Lee's view that because Buddhism, shamanism and Confucianism influence Koreans lives we cannot automatically speak of a Multiple Religious Belonging that can be called Shamanist-Buddhist-Confucian.<sup>88</sup> However, Lee's opinion that MRB cannot exist in Korea and that Korean people do not easily combine religious practices has to be refuted by our many findings of complex forms of religious belonging that combine multiple traditions. In this way, the results of this exploratory research demonstrate the unique religious context of contemporary Korea that shows a combination of increased expressed belonging as well as the characteristics of East Asian religiosity where religions are less delineated from each other and from culture. Going against Lee's arguments the results also show that his context can viewed through a lens of MRB.

This exploratory research however, also laid bare some issues with applying existing approaches within the MRB paradigm to this specific Korean context. Within the VU project on Multiple Religious Belonging the classification of Hard, Medium and Soft MRB was formed as well as Berghuijs' modalities approach. While these approaches did help to organise this present research and brought useful insights they have their limitations for capturing the full complexity of religious belonging in Korea. Not all survey respondents could be classified into Hard, Medium or Soft MRB which points to this classification being not inclusive enough

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<sup>87</sup> Baker, 'The Religious Revolution in Modern Korean History'.

<sup>88</sup> Lee, 'Experience of Religious Plurality in Korea'.

to represent all complex forms of religious belonging that can be encountered. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the modalities approach of Berghuijs might be lacking to research MRB in Korea due to the nature of the Korean religious landscape. The modalities approach of Berghuijs is very delineated in the way that it separates different traditions from each other and ask people to choose to which specific traditions they connect. However, this approach does not fit the Korean religious landscape where parts of religion can also be viewed as culture, some traditions flow into each other more easily, and some traditions culturally are less prone to identification with the tradition. Where Berghuijs approach might fit well in the Dutch context which has more delineated religions, it lacks sensitivity in the Korean context because it forces us to view Buddhism, shamanism and Confucianism as separate traditions while Koreans might perceive them partly as being intertwined. Nevertheless, applying the approach in this exploratory research has borne fruit. It laid bare many elements that constitute complex forms of religious belonging in the Korean context and with that enriched our understanding of how MRB in Korea is shaped beyond what self-identification with religions tells us.

Still, it might not be the right approach for deeper research into religion in Korea or East Asia in general. Our research results leads us to propose that it will be more useful to think about MRB in South Korea approached through the idea of Rhizomatic belonging as described by Daan Oostveen based on Voss Roberts.<sup>89</sup> By viewing religious belonging as a rhizomatic belonging that is multiple in the sense of it being a non-hierarchical combination of religious elements, it eliminates the need for having to view MRB as a combination of horizontally separated traditions. It is not that this view was not already taken into consideration and incorporated into this research. Berghuijs' modalities approach does give a lot of room to interpret MRB as a constellation of religious elements that connect on different modalities. Similarly does the Soft MRB categorisation. However, I consider Berghuijs' approach as encouraging the separation of religions with clear boundaries in order to be able to determine through which modality someone expresses a belonging to these then delineated religious traditions. In the Korean context where we see a growth of religious identification, but also a Asian type of multiple religiosity that includes less delineated religious and cultural traditions this approach might not be able to capture the true nature of MRB in Korea as adequately as a rhizomatic approach might be able to do this.

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<sup>89</sup> Oostveen, 'Religious Belonging in the East Asian Context'; Oostveen, 'Hermeneutical Explorations of Multiple Religious Belonging', 182-205.

## Conclusion

This exploratory research on MRB in contemporary South Korea found different forms of Multiple Religious Belonging through analysis consisting of conducting a survey as well as analysing literature on religion in Korea. This study searched to answer three questions. Firstly, it researched in what way people express belongings to multiple religions in South Korea and which religious traditions this involves. In our literature we have encountered forms of religious belonging that could be classified as Hard, Medium, or Soft MRB. Some people expressed dual belongings, others incorporated elements from multiple religions while self-identifying with one religion and other people combined elements from different religions without self-identifying with a religion at all. These forms of MRB involved Buddhism, shamanism, Christianity and Confucianism. We also found even more complex forms of MRB, especially in the survey, that were more difficult to classify as Hard, Medium, or Soft MRB but rather formed a constellation of different religious elements that people connected to through different modalities. Besides Buddhism, shamanism, Christianity and Confucianism complex forms of religious belonging encountered in the survey also involved Cheondogyo, Hinduism, Taoism and Tengrism.

Secondly, we studied how self-identified religious affiliation relates to performed religious practices. The analyses showed that self-identification with a religious tradition does not always mean that someone performs practices of or expresses connections through other modalities to that religion, nor does performing practices from a certain religion indicate a sure identification with the religion. We have seen that in the Korean context people can connect to different religions through different modalities and that this can be unrelated to self-identification with the tradition. This especially seems to apply to shamanism and Confucianism in the Korean context. It is therefore important to look further than only self-identification or religious practice in order to fully understand what constitutes MRB in Korea.

Thirdly, with performing this research we assessed whether these complex forms of belonging in Korea can be fruitfully studied through the Multiple Religious Belonging paradigm. Studying religious belonging in Korea through the MRB paradigm has certainly enriched our understanding of contemporary Korean religiosity. This study has shown that complex forms of religious belonging that contain forms of MRB are present in the Korean religious landscape. Applying approaches from the paradigm has given us the tools to find

these cases of MRB in South Korea and to analyse how they are structured. We can conclude then that complex forms of belonging in Korea can be fruitfully studied through this paradigm.

Nevertheless, we observed that some approaches from the MRB paradigm might be lacking for studying MRB in the Korean context. The complex belongings encountered in this study could to an extent be categorised as Hard, Medium and Soft MRB and approached through Berghuijs modalities approach. However, context specific factors such as the unclear delineation of Buddhism and shamanism, the possibility of perceiving Confucianism or shamanism as non-religious, and a smaller inclination to identification with a religion cause these approaches to fail in satisfactorily capturing the full complexity of religious belonging in South Korea. Further research into MRB in Korea then should take into account this unique context and apply approaches that can capture all these complexities. This might mean viewing Korean religiosity through the concept of Rhizomatic belonging and developing tools that can analyse complex forms of religious belonging without delineating religious traditions in a way that might not represent how religion can be experienced by South Koreans, as we have seen in the literature and the survey.

Moreover, I would recommend further studies to conduct anthropological research that focuses on interviews and conversations with individuals. This will enable us to gain deeper understanding of the complex constellations of belonging without limiting any interpretations beforehand. Moreover, it could shed more light on which elements, from for example shamanism and Confucianism, may be perceived as religious or cultural since our research shows that this might be different from person to person. Research based on interviews will also be a fruitful step to follow up the findings of this research since it can eliminate some of the limitations that this exploratory research in particular encountered. Most importantly, it will not be limited by closed questions that might contain bias in the answer options created by the researcher. Furthermore, it is also advised for additional research to collect a bigger sample that can be viewed as representative for Korean society, this is especially valuable in case a survey is conducted to gain a more representative view on the presence of MRB in Korea. Lastly, this exploratory research has focused on the English literature on religion in Korea. Supplementary studies may analyse the Korean literature on religion in Korea as well to compose a even more complete overview of written descriptions of forms of Multiple Religious Belonging in South Korea.

Even though we came across limitations of the approaches based within the MRB paradigm and we advise adaptations for further research, this does not mean that the Korean religious context cannot be fruitfully studied within the MRB paradigm. This exploratory research shows that the Korean context offers a unique and nearly unexplored field to deepen our understanding of MRB. Korea's context presents a unique interplay, containing a history of mixing practices from traditional religious traditions combined with revolutionary growth in organized religion and increased expressed affiliation. It is within this context that complex forms of religious belonging are shaped in Korea and our research uncovered that many different forms of expressed religious belonging and MRB can indeed be found. Researching MRB in South Korea in this unique context then adds to the international debate on MRB by broadening our view of and providing valuable new insights into how we can understand religious belonging in general and Multiple Religious Belonging specifically. Furthermore, it creates extra awareness that context specific factors should be taken into account while studying MRB and therefore provides incentive to re-evaluate and advance the existing approaches to studying Multiple Religious Belonging. Finally, this exploratory study also adds to the field of Korea studies where the study of complex forms of religious belonging has been largely absent.

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## Appendix A - Survey

1. Most of the survey questions are directly taken from Berghuijs' survey as described in Berghuijs et al. 2018.<sup>90</sup> I adapted the answer options to the Korean context. Furthermore, Question 13 and 23 marked with an \* are questions fully created by myself. Every question that has the option to choose 'other religious tradition' was followed up by the question: 'If you chose 'other religious tradition' in the previous question which religious tradition(s) do you mean?'

### *Survey Questions*

2. How old are you?
3. What is your gender?

### **From 2016 survey:**

4. Is there a religious tradition from which you draw in your personal life, and if so, which is it?

Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	Cheondogyo	No religion	Other religious tradition; please specify

### **From 2015 survey:**

Affinity: affinity with religion by inspiration, relatedness, attractivity of rituals or appealing values

5. Are you attracted to religion(s)? More than one answer per row is possible.

	Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	cheondogyo	Other religious tradition	No religion
I am inspired by							
I feel related to							

<sup>90</sup> Joantine Berghuijs, Hans Schilderman, André van der Braak, and Manuela Kalsky. 'Exploring Single and Multiple Religious Belonging'. *Journal of Empirical Theology* 31, no. 1 (20 April 2018): 18–48. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15709256-12341365>.

I find the rituals attractive of							
I find the values appealing of							
I feel at home with							

Social participation: involvement in religious groups: gatherings and services, membership, financial contributions, volunteering, professional involvement.

6. Are you involved with a religious group in one or more of the following ways? More than one answer per row is possible.

	Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	cheondogyo	Other religious tradition	No religion
Attendance of gatherings or celebrations							
Membership							
Financial contribution							
Volunteering							
Professional involvement							

Experience: religious experiences and emotions

7. Which of the following experiences have you had:

	Yes, and I attach religious meaning to it	Yes, but I do not attach a religious meaning to it	No
A concurrence of events in my life which made me feel: this cannot be a coincidence			

A feeling of connectedness with other people, even if they are quite different from me			
An experience of connectedness to all life around me			
A feeling of connectedness to God / the divine			
an experience in which the nature of reality became clear to me			
an experience of receiving help as an answer to my prayer			
seeing a deceased person or another experience of contact with a deceased person			
An experience of an invisible power that somehow offered me council, advice or Guidance			
Being deeply touched by music or a song			
Being deeply touched by a ritual			
Another experience that was religious to me			

8. If you have had one or more experiences to which you attach a religious meaning, with which religious tradition(s) did you feel this experience or these experiences were connected? More than one answer possible.

Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	cheondogyo	Other religious tradition	No specific religious tradition

Practice: prayer, meditation, yoga, fasting, pilgrimage, text reading, celebrating holidays, owning of objects with personal religious meaning

9. Do you practice

Prayer (aside from religious gatherings)	Yes	No
Meditation		
Yoga		

Fasting		
Pilgrimage		
Chesa (Confucian ancestor practice)		
Attend a Gut		
Fortune telling		
Gosa		

10. If you do practice any of these activities: are these activities, for you personally, connected to a religious tradition? More than one answer possible.

To no religion	To religion in a general sense	Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious tradition....

Material culture: Owning objects/texts etc.

11. Do you possess religious objects?

	Yes, and it holds a personal religious significance to me	Yes, but it holds no personal religious significance to me	No
A crucifix			
A Buddha statue			
Shamanic amulet or talisman			
A home altar/shrine			
Buddhist Sutra's			
The analects			
Other religious objects			

12. If you have any of these religious object: are these objects for you personally, connected to a religious tradition? More than one answer possible.

To no religion	To religion in a general sense	Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious traditions; specify

Beliefs/ideology

People can feel supported by certain religious convictions or beliefs. Some will be convinced that Jesus Christ died for their sins. Others will be sure that by abandoning desire you can reach enlightenment. Some believe in angels, reincarnation, the Goddess, chakras or astrology. These are but a few examples. Do you have one or more religious convictions that are important to you?

13. Yes/no

14. (if yes) Please describe your most important religious convictions or beliefs. (open question, repeated to a maximum of three convictions/beliefs)

15. Is this conviction or belief connected to a religious tradition? More than one answer possible.

To religion in a general sense	Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious tradition....

Narrative: stories, persons and texts relevant to the respondent\*

16. Are any of the following texts, persons or stories relevant for you?

	Yes, and it holds a personal religious significance to me	Yes, but it holds no personal religious significance to me	No
A Bible			

The analects			
Sutra's			
Tangun			
Siddharta Gautema/ Buddha			
Jesus			
Confucius			
Mencius			
Other stories, persons, texts			

17. If any stories, persons or texts were relevant to you, are these stories, persons or texts for you personally, connected to a religious tradition?  
 More than one answer possible.\*

To no religion	To religion in a general sense	Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious tradition....

Ethics:

18. Which values are important to you? Do you draw these from a religious tradition?

	important, and part of all religions	important, and I draw it from one or more religious traditions	important, and I do not draw it from a religious tradition	not important
Forgiveness				
Compassion				
Charity				
Gratitude				
Humility				
Honesty				
Loyalty				

Other				
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19. If you draw the values that are important to you from one or more specific religious traditions, which traditions do you mean? More than one answer possible.

Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious tradition

**Self-identification:** Identification: self-identification as a follower of a religion (I consider myself ...)

20. Please indicate if the following expressions apply to you. More than one answer possible.

I consider myself a:

- Christian
- Buddhist
- Confucianist
- Chondogyo
- Shamanist
- Other....

**From 2016 survey:**

21. To what extent do you agree with: 'I combine elements of different religious traditions in my life'

- a. Yes, certainly
- b. I think so
- c. I think not
- d. No, certainly not

For those who do combine:

22. You have indicated that you combine elements from different religious traditions in your life. Which traditons? Please tick at least two boxes.

Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious tradition

23. Maybe you have chosen more than two religious traditions. We want to know which two are the most important to you. Which one comes first? If they are both evenly important, just give one of them here and the other at the next question

Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious tradition

24. Second religion

Christianity	Buddhism	Confucianism	Shamanism	chondogyo	Other religious tradition

25. How do you combine different religious traditions in daily life and what does this mean to you?\*