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Cultural and Cross-Cultural Psychology of Religion

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It is a fascinating and tremendous task to provide an integrated review of psychological research on religion and culture. As far as we know, no such effort has been made at least in the last 30 years (but see for previous steps of theorizing or reviewing Saroglou, 2003; Saroglou & Cohen, 2011a; Tarakeshwar, Stanton, & Pargament, 2003). Systematic research on this field is only emerging, and past and current work comes from various research traditions: cultural psychology (often adopting social experimental methods; see Atran, 2007; Cohen, 2009), cross-cultural psychology (often based on multicountry and multiethnic data; see Saroglou & Cohen, 2011b), comparative psychology of religion (questions and methods of psychology of religion are applied to non-Christian populations; see Saroglou, 2003; Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2011), and qualitative idiographic approaches on religion and culture (see Belzen, 2010).

In the present chapter, after a short introduction on the theoretical links between religion and culture, we review empirical research, organized in three sections. In the first section, we examine psychological similarities and differences between religions, with a focus on the major components of religion and dimensions of religiosity as well as on the ways religion relates to personality, values, social behavior, and mental health. In the second section, we examine how a vast array of cultural factors shape religion and its outcomes and can, at least partially, explain interreligious differences. These cultural factors include socioeconomic and sociocultural factors; cultural psychological differences in the cognitive, emotional, social, and moral domains; different theologies; and broad cultural dimensions such as collectivism versus individualism. The third section deals with the interplay between religion and another major dimension of culture: ethnicity. We look at the role religion plays with respect to ethnic identity and interethnic relations in general as well as with respect to the mutual process of acculturation between immigrants and members of the host majority. In the conclusion, we further consider the main lines of research, highlight key methodological issues, and suggest future research directions.

RELIGION AND CULTURE: FOUR WAYS OF CONCEIVING THEIR INTERRELATIONS

Cultures and religions might relate to each other in four ways (see also Saroglou & Cohen, 2011a). First, religions can be considered to be cultures. Religions certainly contain all of the key elements of cultures, such as shared values, norms, symbols, and practices (Cohen, 2009; Fiske, 2002). Of course, religions have features that make them stand out from other forms of cultures; they typically include notions of transcendence and sacredness (Saroglou, 2011). Taking this view of religion and culture is consistent with the theme of this volume, highlighting religion as a meaning system, with meanings imbedded from the subindividual to the macro level (see Park, Chapter 18, this volume).

Second, religions and ethnic or national cultures may be empirically and theoretically confounded and inseparable. When one compares Americans and Japanese, one is often comparing Christians with members of Eastern religions. Thus, cross-cultural differences (e.g., Easterners are collectivist, Westerners are individualist) might be interpreted as religious differences (e.g., Buddhists are collectivist, Protestants are individualist). One reason that national or ethnic cultures and religious cultures can be so highly intertwined is that religion is in many cases historically responsible for national patterns of cultural parameters (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Of course, the process going from religions to national cultures is extremely complex and is far from constituting a straightforward relation.

Third, religion can be seen as the result of other cultural influences—for example, country-level culture can cause a religion to develop in a certain way. Here, religions might be considered subcultures (e.g., Hinduism can be thought of as a subculture of the broader culture of the Indian subcontinent). In addition, religions may be mediating mechanisms of other cultural differences. For example, one could say that Scandinavian cultures (ecological, economic, social, historical factors) cause individuals to become Protestant, which in turn pushes them to often be more tolerant than Catholics in other European countries (see later discussion).

Finally, religions may moderate (interact with) other cultural influences. Even the nominally same religion takes vastly different forms when it encounters other aspects of culture. For example, in the United States, for Blacks and Latinos, religiousness is not associated with conservative politics, but it is among Whites and Asians (Cohen et al., 2009).

RELIGIOUS SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES ACROSS RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL GROUPS

For historical reasons (socioeconomic and scientific development in Western countries) as well as theological developments (valorization of the faith–science dialogue), psychology of religion has mostly been developed in and studied Protestant and Catholic contexts. Only very recently has there been an increasing number of studies on other religions, and cross-religious comparative psychological studies are emerging (but see Taves, Chapter 7, this volume, for a discussion).

From a comparative, cross-cultural/religious perspective, this is a fascinating area of investigation. Are the psychological characteristics of religion (main components and

dimensions, predictors, and outcomes) basically the same, or do they differ across the various religious and cultural contexts? A fully universalistic attitude would consider that, beyond differences resulting from different religious orientations, the motives, expressions, and effects of religion are mainly universal across religions and cultures. The opposite attitude (i.e., excessive relativism) focuses too much on the variety of religious expressions and related psychological findings, thus quickly concluding that the unique way of fully understanding psychologically religious phenomena is to consider the role of cultural context (e.g., Belzen, 2010; see also Belzen & Lewis, 2010).

Research from cross-cultural psychology suggests the existence of both universals and cultural specifics if one has to understand human thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in general (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis, & Sam, 2011; Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). As shown later in this chapter, the same is true for the psychological aspects of religion.

Of course, the intriguing and intellectually fascinating questions are, What are the "universals" of religion? What may be the explanatory factors of both universality and differences across religious expressions? May these universals be explained by some universality in human psychology? In parallel, do religions differ, not only in their theology and history but also in the psychological aspects (e.g., predictors, characteristics, or outcomes) of religious phenomena? Do such differences originate at the early theology/anthropology and later historical and spiritual developments of the respective religious traditions, or are they due to other cultural dimensions, such as ethnic/country-level differences and socioeconomic and sociocultural factors at the individual and at the group/country levels?

In this first section of the chapter, we review existing research that is in favor of both psychological universals and specifics of religion across various religious and cultural contexts. We focus here on the following key issues: basic components of religion and dimensions of religiousness as well as the relationship of religiousness to personality, values, social behavior, and mental health. (For an introduction to these topics and the way they are related to religion, see in this volume Piedmont & Wilkins, Chapter 15; Nielsen, Hatton, & Donahue, Chapter 16; and Park & Slattery, Chapter 27; see also Saroglou, in press; for culturally sensitive approaches to religion and human development, see Holden & Vittrup, 2010; Trommsdorff & Chen, 2012).

Religious Components and Dimensions

Throughout the last 50 years, theorists from both psychology and sociology of religion seem to have achieved a consensus that religions can be defined as integrating four major components: (1) beliefs and cognitions in relation to what people perceive as a transcendence, (2) specific moral rules and practices, (3) collective and individual rituals and emotions that bond people with each other and with (what they perceive to be a) transcendence, and (4) identification with highly valuable and supposedly eternal groups (Saroglou, 2011). These four components—believing, behaving, bonding, and belonging—reflect distinct psychological processes (cognitive, moral, emotional, and social) explaining religion and its effects. They are very likely present in all religions across history, even in nontheistic religions. However, across cultural and religious groups, there is important variability: These dimensions may differ in content (e.g., specific beliefs and

rituals), salience (mean importance), and the ways in which they are interconnected or emphasized, leading, for instance, to intellectual, ritualistic, emotional, moralistic, or identity-based religiousness (Saroglou, 2011).

There is also some evidence that the major dimensions/forms of religiousness can be identified across many religious denominations and religions, although cultural differences may exist in the expression of these forms. For instance, *fundamentalist* and *orthodox* versus *questing* expressions of religious beliefs and practices seem to be present and predict similar outcomes among Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims (Hood, Hill, & Gorsuch, 2009; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005). However, it may be that what is perceived as the expression of fundamentalism in one cultural context (e.g., religious homophobia in the United States) can simply reflect average religiosity elsewhere (e.g., Mediterranean countries). The classic distinction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* religious orientations can be identified among Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, Jews, and Muslims (e.g., Cohen & Hill, 2007; Flere, Edwards, & Klanjsek, 2008). There is, though, important variability across religious groups on the normative character (e.g., positive for Jews, negative for Protestants) and the content of extrinsic religiosity (Cohen, Hall, Koenig, & Meador, 2005). Similarly, the distinction between organized traditional *religiousness* and modern individual *spirituality*, potentially independent from religious traditions and groups, can presumably be found in many cultural contexts (e.g., Dy-Liacco, Piedmont, Murray-Swank, Rodgerson, & Sherman, 2009; Saroglou & Muñoz-García, 2008). However, there may again be important variability between religious–cultural groups on the mean levels on each of these dimensions, the degree of their interrelation, the specific components that define them, and their respective external outcomes. Finally, there is a common assumption that religions become very similar when one focuses on the *mystical dimension* of religion and the spirituality of the great mystics. Initial evidence suggests common dimensions on mystic experiences between American Christians and Iranian Muslims (Hood et al., 2001) as well as Israeli Jews (Lazar & Kravetz, 2005), Indian Hindus (Anthony, Hermans, & Sterkens, 2010), and Tibetan Buddhists (Chen, Hood, Yang, & Watson, 2011).

Relations of Religion with Personality, Social Behavior, and Mental Health

Similarities

Personality characteristics—more precisely predispositions—of individual religiosity (i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, and low impulsivity) seem to be similar for Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians as well as Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists (Saroglou, 2010, for a meta-analysis). Similarly, in all three major monotheistic traditions (i.e., Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), high religiosity consistently predicts preference of values reflecting conservation of personal and social order over values reflecting openness to change (autonomy) and hedonistic self-enhancement (see Saroglou, Delpierre, & Dernelle, 2004, for a meta-analysis). Religious people, especially fundamentalists, are prejudiced against people who are seen as threatening religious values, such as homosexuals, members of other religions, and atheists (see Rowatt, Johnson, LaBouff, & Gonzalez, Chapter 23, this volume). This has been found in studies with Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim participants. In parallel, specific forms of religion are related to prosocial

intentions and behaviors, and this has been found in studies with participants from all the major religious traditions (Saroglou, 2013). Moreover, the links between religion and self-control-related behaviors such as low alcohol and drug use and restrictive sexuality seem to constitute additional "universals" across the major religions (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009).

Some features of religion have similar relationships with health across religious groups or across countries. Most religions help in finding meaning, provide social integration, and encourage healthy lifestyles, all promoting health (see in this volume Masters & Hooker, Chapter 26; Park & Slattery, Chapter 27). Empirical evidence does point to religions having positive health effects across cultures. For example, measures of religious beliefs and/or practice predict life satisfaction and related health constructs not only among U.S. Christians of different ethnic origins (e.g., Markides, 1983) but also among Buddhists (Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009) and Muslims in various national contexts (e.g., Abdel-Khalek, 2007; Amer & Hood, 2007; Leach, 2009).

Differences

Beyond these striking similarities across different religions in the way religiosity expresses major psychological needs, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies, one can find interesting differences when comparing mean levels or strength of associations. These differences can be found between religious groups within the same country or across countries. As shown later, they may to some extent reflect socioeconomic and sociocultural differences at the group level, but they often persist even when controlling for such variables.

For instance, in a comparative study of 27 nations around the world, Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kagitçibasi, and Poortinga (2006) found that Islamic countries, followed by Christian Orthodox countries, tend to show stronger family orientation by highly endorsing both hierarchical and emotionally supportive roles of parents within the family, in comparison with Protestant and Catholic countries.

There is a longer research tradition comparing Protestants and Catholics. Some evidence exists that religiosity in the United States (mostly Protestant participants in the studies) reflects more positive emotionality in personality traits (high extraversion, low neuroticism) and less discomfort with openness to experience than in Europe (mostly Catholic participants) (Saroglou, 2010). Sheldon (2006) found some evidence that Catholics are higher than Protestants of certain denominations (Unitarians, but not Baptists) in religious introspection. Religious introspection can be thought of, among other possibilities, as a measure, to some extent, of guilt (Ryan, 1982). Other differences can be interpreted in light of the classic distinction between the strong social dimension of Catholicism and the more individual, liberal, and achievement-oriented character of (at least mainstream) Protestant faith and ethic. For instance, for individuals raised as either moderate Protestant, conservative Protestant, or Catholic, parental divorce increases the likelihood of both switching to another religion and apostasy. However, the impact of divorce is particularly strong for Catholics and conservative Protestants, who are, in general, less likely to be religiously mobile (Lawton & Bures, 2001). Note also that for Catholic couples divorce has more negative effects on their well-being than for Protestant couples (Clark & Lelkes, 2005). The orientation toward work ethic seems to be higher among Protestants (Hayward & Kemmelmeier, 2011). In an experimental study,

Sanchez-Burks (2002) found that the activation, through priming, of the work context made American Calvinists (compared with non-Calvinists) restrict relational, social-emotional concerns, presumed to conflict, in Calvinism, with work imperatives. Similarly, in Germany, although both Catholics and Protestants are higher in social trust (an attitude important for the economy) than nonreligious individuals, Protestants tend to be more trusting; and the Protestant, but not Catholic, context (region) is also associated with trust regardless of individual religious beliefs (Traunmüller, 2011). Finally, Protestants tend to endorse internal attributions to a greater extent than do Catholics (Li, Johnson, Cohen, Williams, Knowles, & Chen, 2012).

As far as (mental) health is concerned, different religious groups may have different health outcomes, because of relevant differences in theology or other cultural parameters across the groups. Perhaps the earliest example of this is Durkheim's (1951/1897) finding that Jews and Catholics were less likely to commit suicide than Protestants, which he explained by group differences in collectivism. On the other hand, Jews report less life satisfaction and higher levels of depression and anxiety disorders than members of other Judeo-Christian religions, a finding that is clear even if the mechanism is not (Cohen, 2002; Cohen & Hall, 2009). Theological differences could be responsible, as could differences in willingness to report mental illness (Cohen, Gorvine, & Gorvine, 2013; Loewenthal, MacLeod, Lee, Cook, & Goldblatt, 2002).

Some evidence points to different rates of certain illnesses in certain groups, apparently because of different lifestyles. Jewish attorneys in Cleveland and Detroit were less likely to have a family history of stroke than non-Jews (Friedman & Hellerstein, 1968). Mormons may be less susceptible to cerebrovascular disease than non-Mormons (Jarvis, 1977; Lyon, Bishop, & Nielsen, 1981). Mennonites and Hutterites had the lowest incidence of new strokes in a 1½-year-long study (Abu-Zeid, Choi, Maini, & Nelson, 1975). In their 12-year prospective study of 112,000 Californians, Phillips, Kuzma, Beeson, and Lotz (1980) found that Seventh-Day Adventists were less likely to die from cerebrovascular disease. Differences in health behaviors (such as smoking rates) were theorized to explain these differences.

CULTURAL FACTORS AS MODERATING AND EXPLAINING RELIGION AND ITS OUTCOMES

Religion, in its expressions and outcomes, seems to be shaped by a large number of cultural factors. These factors often interact with religion in predicting human behavior. Furthermore, they seem to be, at least partially, responsible for cross-religious differences.

Moderation by Contextual–Cultural Factors

Differences between religious denominations seem to decrease, if not disappear, when the religious groups live in secularized societies—they are then similarly different from the nonreligious—and/or in countries in which they equally coexist. This is the case, for instance, regarding the way religiosity relates to various values among Catholics and Protestants living in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland (Bréchon, 2003; Devos, Spini, & Schwartz, 2002; Halman & Riis, 2003). However,

within a country, the minority versus majority status of a specific religious denomination makes a difference. For instance, Procter and Hornsby-Smith (2003), using European Values Study (EVS) data, found that Catholics living in countries with a Protestant tradition tend to accentuate a restrictive sexual morality or the importance of collectivistic values. Those authors interpret these findings as confirming the hypothesis of a "cultural defense." Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2003), analyzing World Values Study (WVS) data, also found that when Catholics or Protestants are a minority group living within, respectively, a predominantly Protestant or Catholic country, they do not show the same intolerance that characterizes them when they are a majority group in a given country. Finally, political context may also play a role. For instance, Western European Catholics' religiosity was weakly but positively associated with the importance attributed to the value of security, but for Catholics living in Eastern European countries during the Communist antireligious regimes, the relationship was inverse (Roccas & Schwartz, 1997).

Cross-religious differences may be related to, but do not simply reflect, socioeconomic differences at the group level. Indeed, Inglehart and Baker (2000), analyzing WVS data from 60 countries representing 75% of the global population, found that the socioeconomic development of a country predicts a move from (1) traditional to secular and rational values and (2) values emphasizing survival to "postmaterialist" values emphasizing self-expression (participation, confidence, tolerance, subjective well-being, and concern for the quality of life). However, beyond the role of socioeconomic factors, differences in values were still observable depending on whether countries have been historically Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, communist, Islamic, or Confucian. The Protestant cultural heritage is associated with a high appreciation of postmaterialist self-expression values, whereas low appreciation of these values is present in countries with Orthodox or communist heritage.

Similarly, an analysis of psychological variables from more than 100 countries (Georgas, van de Vijver, & Berry, 2004) showed that, beyond the role of economic factors, Protestant countries differ from Muslim ones on individualism, subjective well-being (high vs. low), and power distance (hierarchical relations: low vs. high). Protestant countries also differed from Catholic countries on secular authority (high versus low) and uncertainty avoidance (low vs. high). Catholic countries, in addition, tended to be high on harmony and uncertainty avoidance. Another analysis of the WVS data (Guiso et al., 2003) showed that when socioeconomic differences between countries are controlled, a number of associations between religiosity and values are similar among Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Hindus (e.g., low tolerance, conservative attitudes toward women, trust of the government, legitimization of poverty by attributing the responsibility to the poor people). However, for other values, some differences remained. For instance, Catholics and Protestants have a positive attitude toward the value of private property, whereas Muslims and Hindus have a negative attitude toward economic competition.

In sum, contextual-cultural factors at the group level such as degree of secularization, minority versus majority status, and socioeconomic development moderate expressions and social outcomes of religion. The domain of mental health provides an additional interesting case of illustration of how such cultural factors at the collective level interact with religion in predicting relevant outcomes.

Religion may have stronger effects on health or well-being in groups and societies in which religion is particularly important (Gebauer, Sedikides, & Neberich, 2012).

Religiosity correlates more positively with life satisfaction, and more negatively with depression, among African Americans compared with Caucasian Americans (Husaini, Blasi, & Miller, 1999; Musick, Koenig, Hays, & Cohen, 1998). Features of the national environment may also influence the relationship between religion and health or well-being. Religiousness is associated with slightly higher subjective well-being across four major world religions, but the effect is present only in nations with difficult life conditions and not in nations with favorable life conditions (Diener, Tay, & Myers, 2011). Elliott and Hayward (2009) found in the WVS, which included 65 countries, that while salience of personal religious identity was associated with life satisfaction everywhere, the magnitude of that association depended on the role of government regulation of individual liberties, including but not limited to religious liberty—the more government regulation, the lower the association.

There may be a triple interaction among culture, religion, and biology in predicting mental health. In comparing European Americans with Koreans, Sasaki, Kim, and Xu (2011) found that among people who were more genetically predisposed toward social sensitivity, Koreans, but not European Americans, had greater psychological well-being if they were more religious. As those authors suggest, religion may benefit well-being for those who are genetically predisposed to be socially sensitive but only to the extent that the cultural context provides adequate opportunities for social affiliation.

Note that the cultural factors go further than a mere interaction with religion in predicting health. They raise the question of how one should distinguish normative (i.e., religiously appropriate) behaviors from pathology (Abramowitz, Huppert, Cohen, Cahill, & Tolin, 2002; Loewenthal, 2007; O'Connor & Vandenberg, 2005). Drawing this distinction can be especially challenging given religious and cultural differences in norms for behavior. For example, obsessive–compulsive disorder (OCD) commonly involves excessive scrupulosity to religious demands, but there may be a fine line between being devoutly observant and being compulsive. Is an observant Jew showing signs of OCD or appropriate adherence to Jewish dietary laws if he or she refuses to eat a meat soup into which a drop of milk has accidentally fallen (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1992)? If a person worries whether his or her thoughts about having an affair are the exact moral equivalent of adultery, is this person showing thought–action fusion (sometimes a component of OCD) or devoutly following Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Cohen & Rozin, 2001; Siev & Cohen, 2007)? Several scholars have advocated for the need to integrate culture and religious sensitivity into clinical practice (Loewenthal, 2007; Richards & Bergin, 2000; see Shafranske, Chapter 30, this volume).

Theological or Broad Cultural Differences?

Differences within Monotheistic Traditions

Psychological differences between religious groups thus exist and are not pure artifacts of socioeconomic factors. Can these differences be attributed to strictly theological differences between religions (different teachings about humans, the world, and the divine)? Or should these be explained by other factors such as cultural differences on personality, cognitions, emotions, morality, and social behavior? It is too early, in terms of the existing empirical research, to make a conclusion on this issue, and, as mentioned early

in this chapter, the two processes may mirror one another. Nevertheless, initial evidence confirms the pertinence of both kinds of explanatory processes.

A series of studies has compared Jews with members of Christian denominations, especially Protestants. Religion for Jews is as much about community and biological descent as it is belief, whereas for Protestants personal beliefs trump community and biological descent (Cohen & Hill, 2007). Practice better characterizes Jews' religiousness, whereas beliefs better characterizes Protestants' religiousness (Cohen, Siegel, & Rozin, 2003). Protestants judge more negatively than Jews the presence of immoral thoughts, perhaps because of the Protestant view that thoughts are the moral equivalent of actions (Cohen & Rozin, 2001). Also, Protestants, but not Jews, consider a selfish motivation to invalidate the moral quality of a moral action (Cohen & Rankin, 2004). Cohen, Malka, Rozin, and Cherfas (2006) also found that Protestants' religiousness reflects more strongly the importance to forgive even "unforgivable" (for Jews) offenses compared with that of Jews. Muslims too seem to differ from Christians on forgiveness: They are particularly sensitive to the offender's apologies and demonstration of repentance and thus less strongly endorse unconditional forgiveness (Mullet & Azar, 2009).

Psychological differences may even be due to theological traditions that are specific to particular religious denominations rather than a broad religion. In a series of cognitive experiments in three countries and comparing religious with nonreligious participants, Colzato et al. (2010) found that Dutch Calvinists have a detail-focused perception (they see first the several small rectangles within the big rectangle), whereas Italian Catholics and Israeli Jews have an holistic perception (they see first the "big picture," i.e., the big rectangle). According to those authors, Calvinism emphasizes individual responsibility, whereas Catholicism and Judaism place more emphasis on social responsibility.

Differences between Western and Eastern Religions

An interesting case in understanding differences in the psychological aspects of religion as being a function of theological (e.g., Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism) and/or broad cultural differences is the comparison between West and East. Series of recent studies in (cross-)cultural psychology identified many domains where Western culture(s) differ from Eastern culture(s). This applies to Easterners', compared with Westerners', perceptions of the self (less egocentrism and positivity about the self), cognitions (weaker motivation for consistency) and reasoning (higher use of holistic thinking and of context-based rather person-based attributions), emotions (more control and less expressiveness of emotions), morality (principles of loyalty and authority, in addition to care- and justice-based morality), and social relations marked by higher social conformity (Heine, 2010; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Kitayama & Cohen, 2007).

It is very likely, then, that religious experience, cognitions, emotions, morality, and social behavior differs when one compares religiosity in Christianity, or possibly in all the three monotheistic religions, with religiosity in Eastern cultures. This is a fascinating area for future investigation. The existing sporadic and initial empirical evidence suggests that several psychological processes involved in Western religiosity do not seem to be paralleled in Eastern religions. For instance, Miller (2000; but see Liu, 2010) found that being religious represents a risk-avoiding behavioral tendency in Western societies (Christians

and Muslims, in Italy, the United States, and Turkey) but not in Eastern societies (Hindus and Buddhists, in India and Japan). In a similar line, Sasaki and Kim (2011) found through three studies that priming religion influenced acts of personal control for European Americans but not Asian Americans; religious coping was associated with personal control for European Americans but not East Asians; and themes of personal agency (e.g., spiritual growth, inclusion of diverse members) were more prevalent on American church websites while themes of relationships (e.g., close relationships within the church, social activities with other church members) were more prevalent on Korean church websites. Analyzing data from dozens of countries, and comparing especially Eastern countries (Japan, India, China) with Western ones, Stark (2001) found that religion has an effect in sustaining moral order only insofar as religion is based on belief in powerful, active, conscious, morally concerned gods, which is less typical of Eastern religions or cultures. Finally, both Christians and Hindus tend to make fatalistic interpretations of their life events, but there are important qualitative differences on the underlying processes (Young, Morris, Burrus, Krishnan, & Regmi, 2011).

Note that differences in religious aspects reflecting other cultural differences between the East and the West may be stable and pervasive across centuries. For instance, Tsai, Miao, and Seppala (2007) found that high-arousal positive states (e.g., excitement) are valued less, and low-arousal positive states (e.g., calm) more, in Buddhism than in Christianity, and these differences were consistent across old fundamental texts (Gospels and Lotus Sutra), contemporary self-help books, and reports of practitioners from the two religions.

However, religious and nonreligious cultural factors may not be in parallel but may have independent or even diverging influences. Analyzing data from the International Social Survey Program 2008, Clobert and Saroglou (2011b) found that religious Koreans, independently of their religious affiliation (Buddhists, Catholics, and Protestants) report high trust of science, whereas Western religious Catholics (Austria) and Protestants (Denmark) do the opposite. These results could be attributed to the higher presence of holistic and interdependent thought in Eastern cultures. Regarding another domain (i.e., interreligious prejudice), it was religious affiliation that made the difference. Among religious people from various Asian countries, Catholics and Protestants express high interreligious prejudice, whereas the opposite is the case for Buddhists and Taoists (Clobert & Saroglou, 2011a).

Individualism versus Collectivism

One can scarcely talk about culture in psychology, and thus differences between religious groups, without discussing individualism and collectivism. In individualistic cultures, people are socialized to be independent and to prioritize their own goals and to value self-expression. In collectivistic cultures, people are socialized to be interdependent and to prioritize their group's goals over their own (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Can we talk about religions as individualistic or collectivistic? It does seem fair to consider a religion that emphasizes intrinsic faith and personal relationship with God as individualistic, or a religion that emphasizes community integration as collectivistic (Cohen et al., 2005; Cohen & Hill, 2007). One reason that groups might differ in individualism or collectivism is that some religions base membership on internal faith (assent

religions), whereas other religions base membership on birth (descent religions; Morris, 1996).

Cohen and Hill (2007) found that for intrinsic religiosity, Protestants scored highest, followed by Catholics; Jews had the lowest scores. On extrinsic religiosity, Catholics were higher than were Protestants, and Jews did not differ significantly from Catholics or Protestants. Further, extrinsic religiosity and intrinsic religiosity were correlated negatively among Protestants, nonsignificantly and close to zero among Catholics, but highly and positively among Jews. Individualism and collectivism may also have an influence on religious groups' coping strategies. Reviewing series of studies, Fischer, Ai, Aydin, Frey, and Haslam (2010) concluded that Muslims tend to use an interpersonally oriented (collective) coping style when dealing with adversity, whereas Christians are more likely to employ intrapersonally oriented (individualistic) strategies when facing comparable scenarios.

Interestingly, beyond differences between religious groups, there exists similarity when focusing on the way individual religiosity (general religiosity, beliefs, or practice) functions. Several investigators have found that religiosity is related to interdependence and collectivism, and this relationship occurs across religions and countries that may be either individualistic or collectivistic. This was found for Jews and Protestants in the United States (Cohen & Rozin, 2001), for Catholics in the Philippines, and for Muslims in Turkey (Cukur, de Guzman, & Carlo, 2004; Dy-Liacco et al., 2009). Nevertheless, communal individuals (who seek assimilation with their ambient culture) are most religious in religious cultures, whereas agentic individuals (who seek differentiation from their ambient culture) are most religious in nonreligious cultures (Gebauer, Paulhus, & Neberich, in press).

RELIGION, ETHNICITY, AND ACCULTURATION

A key domain in the interrelations between religion and culture is the one of ethnic identity in general and among immigrants in particular. Ethnic identity, acculturation, and intercultural relations constitute a major subfield in cross-cultural psychology. Theory and research on the role of religion on these issues have been accumulated in the last years.

Religion and Ethnicity

Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Ethnicity is a major dimension of culture that leads humans to form different groups on the basis of descent and corresponding physical characteristics, language, geographical proximity, and often religion. The extent of the overlap between religion and ethnicity may vary from total to null, and the mechanisms explaining their interconnection are multiple (Hvithamar, Warburg, & Jacobsen, 2009; Kivisto, 2007). Hammond and Warner (1993) distinguish between cultural groups (1) with religion serving as the major foundation of ethnicity (e.g., Amish, Jews); (2) with ethnicity reinforcing religion (e.g., Greek or Serbian Orthodox, Church of England); and (3) with religion shaping ethnicity (e.g., Irish, Italian, or Polish Catholic).

At the same time, several religions, especially those with numeric success (Christianity, Islam, Eastern religions), have evolved since their beginnings toward transethnic,

global religious communities. They have developed theologies, beliefs, rituals, and organizations that emphasize the importance for their believers of transcending ethnic and national barriers and pursuing common, pan-human objectives and goals.

What are the connections between individual religiosity and attachment to ethnicity? Large international studies show that, across countries, religiosity is still today related, to a certain extent, to high ethnic and national identity and pride. People with frequent religious attendance tend to prefer an ethnic (ancestry- and descent-based) over a civic (citizenship- and respect-based) conception of national identity (Kunovich, 2009; data from 31 countries from the International Social Survey Program 2003). Young Europeans (18–29 years old) who identify strongly with their religion (Catholics and Protestants) have a stronger national pride (Campiche, 1997: EVS data 1990), stronger feelings of belonging to their region and country, and weaker feelings of belonging to Europe and the world, compared to their nonreligious peers (Belot, 2005: EVS data 1999; see also Bréchon, 2003). There is also evidence that marriage boundaries between certain ethnic groups are, in part, the result of differences with respect to religion: Intermarriage is more common between ethnic groups who have the same faith (Kalmjin, 1998).

Interethnic Relations

Does this religious attachment to ethnic ingroup translate into outgroup derogative attitudes, such as xenophobia and ethnic prejudice/discrimination? Studies suggest a complex picture, with interesting moderators such as religious denomination, country's cultural context, and religious dimension measured. For instance, religiousness is overall rather unrelated to the value of universalism, but is negatively related to it in countries with mono-religious tradition such as the Mediterranean ones, of Catholic (Italy, Portugal, Spain), Orthodox (Greece), Jewish (Israel), and Muslim (Turkey) tradition (Saroglou et al., 2004). In European multicountry studies, ethnocentrism or xenophobic attitudes are found to (1) overall be rather unrelated to religiosity, especially among young people, (2) sometimes be high among Catholics and Orthodox, and (3) be low among atheists and, in some countries, among Protestants (see Bréchon, 2003, and Strabac & Listhaug, 2008, for EVS data; Billiet & Meuleman, 2008, and Hooghe & Reeskens, 2006, for ESS data).

Not surprisingly, links of religion with xenophobic attitudes and racism become clearly positive when one uses measures of orthodox religious thinking and fundamentalism (Rowatt et al., Chapter 23, this volume). In contrast, spirituality implies high importance attributed to universalism (Saroglou & Muñoz-García, 2008) and strong identification as a citizen of the world among adolescents of various cultural backgrounds: natives of Christian tradition, Muslims, Jews, and Christians born of immigration, all living at the same country (Saroglou & Galand, 2004; Saroglou & Hanique, 2006; Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007).

Understanding the Relations between Ethnicity and Religion

Several questions remain unanswered. Do people in general perceive ethnic identity to be more important than religious identity? It may also be that strongly religious people prioritize their religious identity over their ethnic one. Moreover, from a developmental perspective, what are the relations between the emergence in childhood of ethnic awareness

(Quintana & McKown, 2008) and the emergence and development of the awareness to belong to a religious group? Initial research on Christian and Muslim children in Belgium suggests that religious awareness emerges later than the ethnic one (Van der Straten & Roskam, 2012).

How are we to understand the links between religion and ethnicity? It is a shortcut to interpret these links as being (only) due to the exploitation of religion for ethnic and political reasons. The opposite causal direction may also be true. For instance, in a country with a strong ethnoreligious tradition (such as Greece), exposure to the securitizing religious discourse in churches was found to immunize natives' anti-immigrant attitudes from the political message that encourages tolerance and desecuritization (Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010).

Indeed, from a psychological perspective, religions may have their own reasons to embrace ethnic identity and related attitudes. First, investment in ethnic and national groups—and even transnational entities in the case of spirituality—may simply be one among other expressions of the social function of religion. Need to belong, collective identities and corresponding self-esteem, social sharing of emotions, trust, large cooperation and altruism not based on direct reciprocity can be satisfied in large groups that are in genetic, geographical, and cultural proximity with the religious ones. Second, nationalism and religious orthodoxy share some common values (Duriez, Luyten, Snauwaert, & Hutsebaut, 2002). Ethnic/national groups and religions are invested in by people who value social cohesion and stability as well as personal and social order and security. Third, both religions and nations have historically constituted large entities that symbolize, if not instantiate, feelings of integration, unity, and wholeness that overcome the many human divisions, especially the one between past, present, and future (Saroglou, 2006, 2011). This points to the mystic dimension of religiousness. The affinity between modern spirituality and attachment to the world as a whole may thus be a new, more symbolic expression of the same psychological process but within broader entities.

Religion and Immigrants' Acculturation

Immigrants' Acculturation

Acculturation refers to immigrants' attitudes, values, identities, and behaviors relative to both new and heritage cultures. Sociological studies suggest that religion's roles in the immigration process and consequences are important, complex, and dynamic, given increasing globalization (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Kivisto, 2007; Plüss, 2009). However, systematic quantitative studies on the psychology of acculturation and religiousness are only in their beginnings.

A key task for immigrants is to negotiate between at least two cultural identities: the heritage and the new one. A variety of processes and outcomes are possible (Hong, Wan, No, & Chiu, 2007). Recent research confirms, consistently across studies, that religiosity or religious identity of (first- and second-generation) immigrants is positively related to the origin ethnic identity and attachment to the heritage culture, while mostly unrelated or sometimes negatively related to the identity, attachment, or acculturation to the new, host culture. This is the case for Asian Americans and African Americans in the United States (Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Singh, 2006), Christian European women married

to Muslim Arabs in Israel (Abu-Rayya, 2007), Christians from various countries, Arab and Turkish Muslims, as well as Jews living in Belgium (Friedman & Saroglou, 2010; Saroglou & Galand, 2004; Saroglou & Hanique, 2006; Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007), Turkish Muslims in the Netherlands (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007), and Muslims from various countries in the US (Sirin et al., 2008). In other words, the evidence suggests that religiosity does not lead to strategies (especially integration) that include valorization of the adopted culture and are known to be successful for the acculturation process. Interestingly, whereas both the ethnic and religious identities seem to decrease when moving from the first to the second generation of immigrants, the interrelation between the two identities becomes stronger (Maliepaard, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2010).

The fact that immigrants' religiosity implies attachment to the origin identity can be explained by the general pattern of the religion/ethnicity-positive relations, presented in the previous section. Moreover, it expresses the importance for immigrants (including the second and third generation) of being integrated into networks and communities that allow them to easily maintain links and develop helpful and profitable exchanges (social, cultural, linguistic, economic, marital, and professional) with others similar in religion and ethnic origin (Kivisto, 2007; Plüss, 2009). However, the possible negative association between religiosity and acculturation to the adoptive culture is intriguing. Perhaps the religion emphasizes the (perception of) distinctiveness of the origin culture, religion, and values from those of the adoptive country, which, in turn increases disidentification with the new culture (Friedman & Saroglou, 2010). The origin ethnoreligious identity may thus become, in some cases, an oppositional identity (see Ogbu, 2008). It may also be that perception of discrimination leads to increased religious identification as a way to find refuge, which in turn, decreases the identification with the adoption country (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007).

Immigrants' Mental Health

These recent studies question, directly or indirectly, previous research suggesting a positive role of religion in immigrants' acculturation, especially with regard to mental health indicators. This research had suggested that, like for majority members, religious beliefs and practices play a positive role in mental health of ethnic and immigrant minority members, often through individual and social processes such as social support, constructive religious coping, healthy lifestyles, and beliefs and practices that enhance meaning, self-esteem, and self-control (Viladrich & Abraído-Lanza, 2009, for review). In the United States, the results seem clearer for African Americans among whom religious attendance and the degree of guidance received from religious beliefs appear to buffer the effects of perceived discrimination on psychological distress (Bierman, 2006; Ellison, Musick, & Henderson, 2008).

However, a large study of Mexican Americans suggests that, rather than buffering, religiousness exacerbates the deleterious effects of discrimination and acculturative stress on depressive symptoms (Ellison, Finch, Ryan, & Salinas, 2009). Another study of Belgian Muslims born of immigrants found that intrinsic religiosity was indirectly related to decreased self-esteem and increased depressive symptoms through perceived religious intolerance from the majority and feelings of anger toward the majority (Friedman & Saroglou, 2010). In fact, religion may exert complex, even conflicting, influences on minorities' mental health. Verkuyten (2008) observed that life satisfaction of ethnic

minority members seems to decrease because of perceived discrimination, but also to increase because of high identification with the origin culture. As we described earlier, religion—or at least different aspects of it—does both.

The Host Majority's Attitudes

Acculturation is a double, reciprocal, process involving not only newcomers and their offspring but also majority members. The latter may have various attitudes toward immigrants and multiculturalism. Existing empirical research on religiosity and multiculturalism suggests that there are moderator effects of country (majority), target (minority), and religious dimension studied. For instance, Burris, Branscombe, and Jackson (2000) found that intrinsic religiosity is positively related to multiculturalism in Canada but unrelated to it in the United States. Anti-immigrant, ethnic, and anti-Muslim prejudice is unrelated to individual religiosity across 30 European countries, but religious attendance is related to anti-Muslim prejudice in eastern Europe (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). In some countries, religiosity or spirituality of the majority is found to predict positive attitudes toward Muslim immigrants (Abu-Rayya & White, 2010: Australia) or clear separation in perceptions between terrorism and Islam as religion (Saroglou & Galand, 2004: Belgium).

Given the strong interconnection between ethnicity and religion in Jewish identity as well as the quasi-fusion in Westerners' perception of ethnic and religious elements when they refer to Western Muslims born of immigrant parents, it is difficult to classify anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as religious versus ethnic prejudice. Nevertheless, with respect to this issue, some recent studies provide interesting information on anti-Muslim attitudes. We review these next, since the West–Islam dialogue has become a hot issue in the post-9/11 world.

Anti-Muslim prejudice in Western countries seems to be stronger than typical ethnic prejudice. This is found, for instance, in a recent analysis of data from 30 European countries (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). Similarly, religious English Canadians were found to endorse, toward Arab Muslim immigrants but not British immigrants, negative acculturation orientations such as assimilation and segregation (Safdar, Dupuis, Lewis, El-Geledi, & Bourhis, 2008). Muslim Arabs in the United States, compared with Christian Arabs, experience higher discrimination (Awad, 2010) and tend to use more separation and less integration and assimilation as acculturation strategies (Amer & Hovey, 2007). Interestingly, the psychological processes (e.g., value orientations, sociocognitive orientations) and sociodemographic factors seem to be similar for ethnic prejudice and anti-Muslim attitudes (Saroglou, Lamkaddem, Van Pachterbeke, & Buxant, 2009; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). An analysis of U.S. newspaper articles (2002–2003) suggested that Muslim religious identity has come to mimic the inequality of race identity (Byng, 2008). Political scientists have suggested that, given the high fertility of religious immigrants in secularized Europe, in the future, ethnic cleavage between native and immigrant may come to be replaced by a transethnic religious divide between traditionalists and secularists (Kaufmann, 2007). Nevertheless, there is a way to distinguish between ethnic and religious components in Islamophobia. In a study on the native Belgians' attitudes toward the Islamic headscarf, it was found that (general) ethnic prejudice and antireligious sentiments, beyond their common overlap, predict, uniquely and additively, discomfort with this symbol and willingness to ban it (Saroglou et al., 2009).

CONCLUSION: STUDYING RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALS, VARIATION, AND THEIR MECHANICS

The present review of cultural, comparative, and international studies on personality, values, social behavior, mental health, ethnic identity, and acculturation suggests the importance of avoiding both an excessive universalistic and an excessive relativistic stand when trying to understand the psychological aspects of religion.

Overall, religions' major psychological functions seem to be universal, across religious and other cultural groups. Religion, including more contemporary forms of spirituality, provides, very likely universally, beliefs and worldviews, moral norms, rituals and emotions, and sense of community that, together, although in different combinations or with different intensity across cultures (see Saroglou, 2011), are used by many humans in order to face basic universal human needs. These are (1) the need for personal stability and order at the cognitive and/or emotional level; (2) the need for relational security in trusting others and the world (what is manifest even in nontheistic religions such as Buddhism; see Granqvist, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2010); (3) the need to belong to larger groups—from ethnic to pan-human—and to promote social cohesion, in both individualistic and collectivistic cultures, even if it is at the detriment of other groups; and (4) the need for self-transcendence, which, in the case of religion, implies the connection with a transcendent entity that is external and superior to humans (see Demoulin, Saroglou, & Van Pachterbeke, 2008).

The possibly universal character of these psychological dimensions of religion manifests itself better when one focuses on the "big picture," that is, (1) broad psychological constructs such as large personality traits, big values priorities, global indicators of well-being, and general social attitudes and behaviors and (2) predictors, correlates, or outcomes of general individual religiosity within cultural groups or when comparing various religious groups with nonreligious peers. Psychological aspects of religion may then show, to some extent, universality, since (1) several human needs and psychological mechanisms to answer them are universal (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005), (2) religion may have been a by-product of broad evolutionary adaptation processes for humans as species in general (Atran, 2007; Kirkpatrick, Chapter 6, this volume), and (3) no other cultural phenomenon than religion seems to have succeeded, at least until today, in integrating *into one set* various mechanisms to face the just-mentioned diverse psychological needs (Saroglou, 2006, in press). We are, though, cautious not to yet affirm universality, since clearly comparative studies, using methodology typical of cross-cultural psychological research, and especially psychological studies comparing Eastern religions and cultures with Western monotheistic traditions, are only in their beginnings.

However, the specific ways of experiencing religion and the specific psychological processes involved in the realization of the religion-related goals seem to vary importantly across groups differing in ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sociocultural group-level factors, theological traditions, and broad cultural dimensions involving culture-specific personality, cognitions, emotions, social relations, and morality. There is a tremendous need to carry out systematic, theory-based, and methodologically rigorous cross-religious psychological research. The causal pathways are multiple, and there is a huge need to clarify them through psychological, but also interdisciplinary (historical, sociological, anthropological), research, including research adopting hermeneutical approaches (in

this volume, see Hood & Belzen, Chapter 4; also Paloutzian & Park, Chapter 1, and Park & Paloutzian, Chapter 33, for a multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm). Religious phenomena, similarities, and differences may cause, or result from, other cultural dimensions; and religion's effects on external outcomes may be moderated or mediated by such nonreligious cultural factors; or, inversely, the effects of the latter on external outcomes may be moderated or mediated by religious factors.

Note also that we usually think of religious differences as *corresponding* with other cultural differences. For instance, Eastern religions should emphasize controlled emotions in collectivistic cultures, whereas Protestant Christianity should emphasize emotional expressiveness in individualistic cultures. However, an alternative, *compensatory model* (between religion and culture) is also plausible. For instance, in collectivistic Eastern cultures, meditation may help people to increase feelings of personal autonomy. In individualistic Western cultures, religious attendance may help people to solidify fragile social bonds.

To advance significantly in cross-religious psychological research, it is important to be inspired by recent methodological advances in cultural and cross-cultural psychology (Cohen, 2007; Matsumoto & van de Vijver, 2010). Three issues, in particular, seem to be of primary importance. The first is the benefits of carrying out experimental studies and using behavioral measures rather than drawing conclusions only from the comparison of scores obtained through self-report measures. Indeed, as noted by Heine (2010), when an independent variable is manipulated within cultures, comparisons across conditions are often not affected by issues such as the *reference group effect* (i.e., people's tendency to compare themselves with their group's norms and standards, which makes cross-cultural comparisons of mean scores unreliable) because the conditions within each culture share similar response styles and reference groups.

The second issue concerns the cross-religious applicability of measures of religiosity and different religious dimensions. If one wants to show that some dimension of religion has the same or a different role across cultures, it becomes necessary to show that the construct being measured is indeed the same. One would thus attempt to document *measurement invariance* to show that the measurement properties of the relevant scale are the same across groups (see Matsumoto & van de Vijver, 2010; Hill, Chapter 3, this volume). There are several issues to be taken into consideration: dimensional invariance (does the same religiosity scale have two factors in each religious-cultural group?), configural invariance (does an item load to the same factor in all groups?), metric invariance (do the common factors have the same meanings across groups?), strong factorial invariance (are the means and variances of scale items the same across groups?), and strict factorial invariance (are the items of a religiosity scale equally internally reliable across groups?). An alternative, complementary issue is to achieve *measurement equivalence:* Different items (e.g., belief in Jesus's divinity vs. belief that Mohammed is the prophet) may be equivalent in tapping religious orthodoxy for Christians versus Muslims, respectively.

A third issue is the importance of including a large number of psychological and social variables, at both the individual and the group level, and subsequently applying multilevel analyses when carrying out multigroup and/or multicountry studies. This is also important in order to consider the multiple possible confounds at play. For instance, many factors may be hidden beside the influence of socioeconomic variables (at the individual or the collective level) on the religion–mental health relation. But it is also

important in order to disentangle religion's effects at the individual level from those at the collective level. Sometimes there exists *isomorphism* between the two levels: For instance, a multilevel analysis of international data showed that high endorsement of Protestant work ethic is typical of both individuals who are culturally Protestant and nations with dominantly Protestant history (Hayward & Kemmelmeier, 2011). However, in other domains, there may be *nonisomorphism*, which asks for further explanation. For instance, at the individual level, within societies, there often exists a positive association between religiosity and many indicators of life quality. Conversely, at the collective level, the more a country is religious, the more it may be characterized by dysfunctional psychosocial conditions, such as murder and suicide rates, mortality, abortions, alcohol consumption, and unemployment (Paul, 2009).

We close this chapter by proposing an additional research agenda, which may be of common interest for (cross-) cultural psychologists and cultural-comparative psychologists of religion. Where do long-term, persistent cultural, including religious, differences come from? Beyond the role of different historical and contextual experiences, human groups have differed between each other for centuries, for reasons probably related to ecological and environmental factors such as temperature, luminosity, climate, geology, and geography (Van de Vliert, 2008). It may be that some differences between religious groups are less dependent on the respective theologies and historical evolutions than on very basic factors having to do with the physical environment: Mediterranean people (Israeli Jews, Greek Christian Orthodox, and Turkish Muslims) may be more similar in their way of experiencing religion compared with Scandinavian and German Protestants and Catholics. Nature may precede both culture and religion.

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