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Identity and Spirituality: Conventional and Transpersonal Perspectives

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Though the relation of spirituality to self has long been recognized in established spiritual and religious systems, serious scientific interest in spirituality and its relation to identity has only started to grow in the past 20 years. This paper overviews the literature on spirituality and identity. Particular attention is given to describing and critiquing conventional and transpersonal perspectives with emphasis given to empirically testable theories. Using MacDonald's (1997, 2000) five dimensional model of spirituality, a structural model of spirituality is proposed as is a model of spiritual identity formation.

*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience
We are spiritual beings having a human experience*
—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Interest in spirituality within the scientific community has grown sharply over the past three decades, especially as it pertains to health, well-being, and living “the good life.” As a part of this swelling interest, attention to the relation of spirituality to identity and identity formation has also seen somewhat of a rise (e.g., Chae, Kelly, Brown, & Bolden, 2004; Cooney, 2006; Goldstein, 2006; Juang & Syed, 2008; Kiesling, Sorell, Montgomery, & Colwell, 2006; Lerner, Roeser, & Phelps, 2008; Poll & Smith, 2003; Poll, 2003; Templeton & Eccles, 2006; Tummala-Narra, 2009; Zinder, 2007).

To what extent does spirituality play a role in a person's sense of self? Do we develop a “spiritual identity” and, if so, what may its significance be for understanding human functioning? The primary aim of this paper is to provide answers to these questions that will help promote future inquiry and theoretical development.

Before we can enter into a discussion of spiritual identity per se, however, there is a need to first grapple with questions of definition. What exactly is spirituality? In order for meaningful science to proceed in this area, there is a need to have a clear understanding of this construct up front.

What is Spirituality?

As noted by myself and others over the past several years (e.g., Hoge, 1996; MacDonald, 2000; MacDonald & Friedman, 2002; Zinnbauer et al., 1997) there is a considerable degree of variability in how

spirituality is defined in the literature. More particularly and most pervasively, there have been and continue to be four overlapping points of confusion regarding spirituality, namely (a) its relation to religion and religiousness, (b) its ontological status (i.e., is spirituality real or merely a product of biopsychosocial processes?), (c) its dimensionality (e.g., is it a single construct or is it multidimensional?), and (d) its relation to and place within personality psychology (i.e., is it best understood to be a part of personality or is it something different?). Following is a brief overview of each in turn, which will lead to a definition of spirituality around which to organize subsequent discussion concerning its relation to, and relevance for, identity.

Spirituality and Religion

While a growing number of researchers proffer that religion and spirituality are related but different (e.g., George, Larson, Koenig, & McCullough, 2000; Hill et al., 2000; MacDonald, 2000; MacDonald & Friedman, 2001), examination of the extant research indicates that the two terms are often treated as synonyms and are used interchangeably and/or are presented as a conceptual fusion—“religion/spirituality” (e.g., Fleck & Fleck, 2006; Juang & Syad, 2008).

Notwithstanding the traditional confounding and confluence of these two constructs¹, a common distinction now made between spirituality and religion concerns the extent to which they are personal and

experiential versus learned and social, respectively. Religion is generally seen as “relating to beliefs, doctrines, and practices associated with membership in a religious institution” (MacDonald & Friedman, 2001, p. 20; see also Shafranske & Malony, 1990). Spirituality, in contrast, is considered to entail an experientially grounded sense of connection with, or participatory consciousness of, the “sacred,” “transcendent,” “numinous” or some form of higher power or intelligence (Elkins, 1990; Grof & Grof, 1990). Within this distinction, while religion may be seen as facilitating the emergence of spirituality, and could even be thought of as a significant agent of socialization in things spiritual (e.g., it gives people the language, concepts, and practices that can help them understand and develop their spirituality), religion alone is not seen as necessary for such emergence to occur (Grof & Grof, 1990).

The Reality of Spirituality

Nested within this somewhat clear-cut delineation resides another more subtle but very significant issue: Is the stuff of spirituality (i.e., the “sacred” or “transcendent”) real? That is, does it exist independent of an experient or is it a quality of human experience that can be explained in similar terms to other areas of human functioning and experience (e.g., it is a product of biology, learning, socialization, and psychical dynamics)? This issue is really a question of metaphysics (i.e., it concerns whether or not the so-called “transcendent” is supernatural and, as such, knowable)² and, as has been argued by Slife, Hope, and Nebeker (1999) as well as myself (MacDonald & Friedman, 2001), this issue has not been adequately addressed in current scientific approaches to spirituality. In fact it has been essentially ignored, with some prominent researchers (e.g., Pargament, 1997) advocating for the functional study of religious and spiritual phenomena in lieu of substantive approaches aimed at testing the veridicality of claims of the reality of the transcendent and the existence of a higher power or intelligence.

Despite this fundamental problem, and, in fact, probably in response to it, many supposed non-religious conceptualizations of spirituality can be bifurcated into two groups—theistic and existential—with the former typically being grounded in the Judeo-Christian theological tradition (e.g., they assume in the existence of a soul and a single deity which serves as the primal causal principle of reality) and the latter in humanistic/existential theory and philosophy (e.g., the transcendent is a function of the human mind that is concerned

with meaning-making). Examples of the former can be found in Richards and Bergin (1997) and Poll and Smith (2003) while existential approaches are illustrated by Elkins et al. (1988) and Wink and Dillon (2002).³ Consequently, notwithstanding efforts to differentiate the two constructs, the appearance of a confound with religion (theology) continues to exist in many definitions of spirituality.

The Dimensionality of Spirituality

Given the manner in which spirituality is differentiated from religion, it may appear that spirituality may be understood as a relatively straightforward construct (i.e., it is the extent to which a person experiences and acknowledges the reality of the numinous or transcendent either or both as something that exists separately from the person and/or aids the person in ascribing meaning to existence). However, a perusal of the available theory and research quickly leads one to question such a simple conceptualization. Examination of available measurement instrumentation makes this issue quite salient; while there are many measures of spirituality and related constructs currently available (MacDonald, LeClair, Holland, Alter, & Friedman, 1995; MacDonald, Kuentzel, & Friedman, 1999; MacDonald, Friedman, & Kuentzel, 1999), there is an almost breathtaking variety of descriptive and conceptual models, some of which treat spirituality as a unidimensional construct (e.g., Kass et al., 1991; Whitfield, 1984; Corrington, 1989) and others as a multidimensional one (e.g., Elkins et al., 1988; Howden, 1992). Within the latter models, which, incidentally, have become more prominent in spirituality research since the 1990s, the number of dimensions included can range from two (e.g., Ellison, 1983) to nine (e.g., Elkins et al., 1988) with only some obvious correspondence in their content. To help the reader appreciate the range of models, Table 1 presents the dimensions of four different tests.

Though it may be contended that the availability of a variety of models and associated measures is to the benefit of science since it permits for cross-examination and verification of findings across different models, when researchers have reviewed the literature from the point of view of multidimensional models, it has been observed that the relation of spirituality to such things as health and well-being varies across dimensions. For instance, using a five dimensional model of spirituality developed by MacDonald (1997, 2000), MacDonald and Friedman (2002) examined the published research

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Table 1. Examples of Multidimensional Models of Spirituality

	<i>Spiritual Orientation Inventory</i>	<i>Psychomatrix Spirituality Inventory</i>	<i>Spirituality Assessment Scale</i>	<i>Spiritual Assessment Inventory</i>
Primary Citation	Elkins et al. (1988)	Wolman (1997)	Howden (1992)	Hall & Edwards (1996)
Dimensions	(a) Transcendent Dimension (b) Meaning and Purpose in Life (c) Mission in Life (d) Sacredness in Life (e) Material Values (f) Altruism (g) Idealism (h) Awareness of the tragic (i) Fruits of spirituality	(a) Awareness of a higher power (b) Spiritual Activities (c) Use of healing practices (d) Experience of trauma (e) Body Awareness (f) Religious history (g) Current religious practices	(a) Unifying interconnectedness (b) Purpose and Meaning in life (c) Innerness (d) Transcendence	(a) Instability (b) Defensiveness/disappointment (c) Awareness (d) Realistic acceptance (e) Grandiosity

concerning spirituality and health and found different patterns of association depending on the dimension of spirituality used.⁴ Ostensibly, this raises questions about the meaning of the available research and the claims that spirituality is ubiquitously linked to health.

Spirituality and Personality

The final area of ambiguity concerns the relation of spirituality to personality. For the sake of this discussion, I am using the term personality to refer to a broad construct domain that concerns those aspects of human functioning (e.g., biology, learning) responsible for the consistency of behavior across time and situations. In this context, identity or self-concept may be understood as being subsumed by personality (and seen as at least partially a function of it) but not the other way around (i.e., a person’s conscious sense of self does not account for all causal influences on behavior that might be attributed to personality).

Within the area of personality psychology, with its general emphasis on causes of behavior that are either endogeneous to the individual or, at best, are an interaction of these internal factors with interpersonal and social processes, spirituality has come to be viewed as a component of personality that helps to account for behavioral consistencies (e.g., Cloninger, Svrakic, &

Pryzbeck, 1993; Piedmont, 1999; Piedmont & Leach, 2002; Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006). Though this unto itself is not surprising—psychology after all concerns itself mostly with the scientific study of the mind, consciousness, and behavior of individuals—what has been more controversial is whether or not spirituality is best understood as a function of common personality traits (e.g., is it an aspect of Openness to Experience in the well-known Five Factor Model of personality? [Costa & McCrae, 1992]), and/or neuroanatomical structures and processes that are associated with known personality traits, or if it represents an entirely new domain of individual functioning (MacDonald, 2000; Piedmont, 1999). As I have argued elsewhere, in order for spirituality to hold any import for science, it needs to uniquely and incrementally account for differences in human behavior and experience above and beyond conventional aspects of functioning.

Even more controversial, however, is the matter of whether or not personality (both in terms of its psychological and biological causes) is best viewed as the cause of spirituality. For example, though they relate spirituality to personality and brain functioning, Grof (1985) and Levin (2001) suggested that spirituality may involve nonphysical and nonmaterial

processes (e.g., psychic energy) which themselves may not be wholly understood in terms of the brain and individual personality. Even within more conventional neurobiological approaches to spirituality there are arguments offered that brain structures implicated in spirituality may not be the cause but rather may only be correlative expressions of it, expressions which, of themselves, do not reduce spirituality to neurobiology but instead suggest that spirituality can be meaningfully studied in a manner consistent with the assumptions of naturalistic science (Joseph, 2000; Newberg, D'Aquili, & Rause, 2001).

Spirituality Defined

As the reader can no doubt appreciate, defining spirituality in a manner that is scientifically sound is not an easy task. In fact, if one were to evaluate the success of available efforts at defining the construct that also give sufficient attention to the issues and controversies mentioned above, one might be quick to conclude that little systematic progress has been made over the past several years. One might in the end be tempted to agree with Hoge (1996) who stated that “the term spiritual has such vague and unbounded meanings that it is barely useful, and fits poorly—if at all—with prevailing psychological theories” (p. 21).

Fortunately, if one is discerning in reviewing the literature, one will discover that there has been some positive movement toward a better understanding of what spirituality is, at least as it concerns some of the various issues outlined above. For instance, there is some empirical evidence supporting the distinction between religiousness and spirituality, and between spirituality and the five factor trait model of phenotypic personality (MacDonald, 2000; Piedmont, 1999; Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Further, and perhaps most importantly, research strongly indicates that spirituality is a complex multidimensional domain of human functioning (Elkins et al., 1988; Howden, 1992; MacDonald, 2000; Wolman, 1997).

What precisely are the dimensions comprising the content domain of spirituality? While many of the existing multidimensional models are laudable attempts to identify the main components (e.g., both Elkins et al., 1988 and Howden, 1992 completed exhaustive literature reviews in an effort to identify all the main facets), most are ultimately of marginal value because they do not bring order to the myriad of models already found in the literature. Instead, they simply add to the confusion about what is and is not spirituality. What is needed is

research that examines the available models empirically so as to uncover salient latent constructs that cut across them and can be used as a framework for organizing and defining the content domain of spirituality.

Recognizing the value that multivariate techniques have had in bringing order in the areas of personality (e.g., five factor model) and intelligence (e.g., hierarchical factor models), MacDonald (1997, 2000), completed a large scale factor analytic study aimed at identifying common latent traits underlying existing spirituality measures. In particular, he completed a series of factor analyses of about 20 available measures of spirituality and associated constructs using data obtained from a total of 1400 participants and found evidence of the existence of five robust factors. These dimensions were labeled Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (i.e., spiritual beliefs about the existence of the transcendent and its relevance to self and day-to-day life), Experiential/ Phenomenological Dimension (i.e., spiritual experience), Existential Well-Being (i.e., sense of meaning and purpose and of being able to cope with the existential uncertainties of life, such as the meaning of death), Paranormal Beliefs (i.e., beliefs in the possibility that parapsychological phenomena are real), and Religiousness (i.e., beliefs in the existence of a higher power/intelligence and behavioral practices consistent with religious traditions such as prayer and meditation, similar to the well-known notion of intrinsic religious orientation—see Allport & Ross, 1967). MacDonald (2000) contended that these dimensions, while not necessarily exhaustive of what may be considered spirituality, “reflect the expressive modalities of spirituality that form core descriptive components of the construct” (p. 185-186).

There are several aspects of MacDonald's (1997, 2000) work and model that make it particularly appealing and potentially useful for the purposes of understanding spiritual identity. First, he took care in acknowledging many of the controversies surrounding the measurement of spirituality and attempted to address them by generating a set of working assumptions that guided his subsequent empirical work. For example, in light of the fact that it has been characterized as fundamentally ineffable (MacDonald et al, 1995) he recognized the limitations of language in adequately and accurately capturing spirituality as it is directly experienced; he also conceded up front that spirituality per se cannot be measured but that its expressions, as manifest in thought, feelings, and behavior can be

in a manner consistent with conventional scientific methods. As another example, MacDonald (1997, 2000) maintained that spirituality is related to, but ultimately not the same as, general religiousness. Nonetheless, he argued that intrinsic religiosity (aka intrinsic religious orientation, ultimate religion, esoteric religion) that involves personal investment and involvement in religion in order to facilitate genuine spiritual development through the lived realization of the transcendent or the sacred, should be treated as a component of spirituality.

Second, MacDonald (1997, 2000) took care to ensure that the widest possible number of spiritual constructs were considered and incorporated into his factor analytic study, especially those represented within the more rigorously developed multidimensional models available at the time (e.g., Elkins et al., 1988; Howden, 1992). When explicit measures of an important aspect of spirituality could not be found, MacDonald devised items to operationalize them (e.g., he could not find any instruments that directly measured spiritual identity so he wrote several items for use in an experimental measure to cover it). Thus, he made concerted efforts to best guarantee that no significant area of spirituality was excluded in model development.

Third, arising from his factor analytic work, MacDonald constructed a paper-and-pencil scale, called the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI) to be used in spirituality research. In examining its psychometric properties, he has found evidence indicating the ESI has satisfactory reliability, and excellent factorial, convergent, discriminant, and criterion validity (e.g., all five dimensions correlate in expected directions with theoretically similar and dissimilar measures; dimensions can differentiate between people who are actively religious versus non-religious and who report having had a spiritual experience versus not having had such an experience; minimal confound with age, sex, and social desirability). Using this instrument, he has been able to demonstrate that the dimensions differentially relate to several aspects of human functioning including complex-partial epileptic-like signs (MacDonald & Holland, 2002a), boredom proneness (MacDonald & Holland, 2002b), and psychopathology (MacDonald, 1997; MacDonald & Holland, 2003). As well, he has found that the ESI dimensions are related to, but conceptually unique from, the domains of the Five Factor Model of personality (MacDonald, 2000) and six of the seven components of the seven factor model of temperament and character (MacDonald & Holland, 2002c).⁵

Based upon these considerations, MacDonald's five dimensional model will be used as the framework for discussing the relationship of identity to spirituality.

Identity and Spirituality

While this paper started with a statement that interest in spiritual identity has been on the increase in recent times, the fact of the matter is that spirituality and identity or one's sense of self have been intimately linked in the spiritual, religious, and psychological literature for many years. For instance, within both Buddhism and Hinduism, two venerable traditions, there is extensive discussion given to the self and how to attain an understanding of its true spiritual nature (e.g., see Byrom, 1990; Cleary, 1989; Suzuki, 1957; Suzuki, Fromm, & DeMartino, 1960). Within psychology, one can trace ideas regarding the relation of identity to spirituality back to William James (1890, 1902) as well as to other prominent figures including Erik Erikson (e.g., Erikson, 1958, 1969, 1996; Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986), Gordon Allport (e.g., Allport 1955), Carl Jung (e.g., Coward 1985; Jung 1967, 1969) Abraham Maslow (e.g., Maslow 1970, 1971) and Carl Rogers (e.g., Rogers, 1961, 1963, 1980; Cartwright & Mori, 1988), to name just a few. More recently, scholars and practitioners in the subdiscipline of transpersonal psychology⁶ have advanced sophisticated theoretical models integrating spirituality and self, often within a developmental framework (e.g., Grof, 1985, 1988; Grof & Grof, 1990; Washburn, 1988; Wilber, 1980, 2000; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986).

When examining the variety of perspectives available concerning the relation and interplay of spirituality and identity, it becomes readily apparent that there is a distinction to be made based upon how identity itself is conceptualized. In most conventional psychological theory, which for better or worse is heavily influenced of psychodynamic thought, identity is typically defined in egoic terms. That is, a person's sense of self is generally seen as circumscribed (i.e., has defined boundaries), is highly individualized, and is, for the most part, subjective. This applies not only to explicitly psychodynamic theory (such as the ego psychology of Erikson) but also to many humanistic and existential views of the individual (e.g., see Schneider, 1987, 1989). Within such conceptualizations, spiritual identity most often is defined as how the individual ego relates to and incorporates spirituality into its personal sense of self. Stated differently, insofar as spirituality relates to the "transcendent," then spiritual identity involves how one

experiences and integrates their sense of relationship to the transcendent into their egoic self-sense. Given this, it might be said that spiritual identity involves the egoic identification with aspects of experience considered spiritual (i.e., it is the identification with specific contents of experience that are defined as spiritual). As illustrative of this perspective, Wink and Dillon (2002, p. 79) defined spirituality, and by association spiritual identity, as “the self’s existential search for ultimate meaning through an individualized understanding of the sacred.” In a similar vein, Kiesling and coauthors (2006) considered spiritual identity to be “a role-related aspect of an individual’s overall sense of ego identity” which manifests “as a persistent sense of self that addresses ultimate questions about the nature, purpose, and meaning of life” (p. 1270).

In contrast, there is another view, best represented in the mystical, philosophical, and spiritual literature but now formalized most ostensibly in transpersonal theory, that argues identity may not be delimited to ego and egoic functions but rather is fundamentally spiritual in nature. From this perspective, the boundaries that demarcate the ego (i.e., self from not-self), are not absolute and immutable but rather are constructed, malleable, and even arbitrary, capable of being modified (e.g., expanded or contracted) or dissolved altogether. Nowhere in the modern psychological literature is this view better articulated than by Maslow (1968) who, after his studies of exceptional human functioning inclusive of religious and spiritual considerations said,

I should say also that I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology to be transitional, a preparation for a still “higher” Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interests, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization, and the like. (pp. iii-iv)

From this point of view, spiritual identity not only relates to the extent to which the content of egoic identity may be construed as spiritual, it also involves both an analysis of the fundamental nature of the structure (i.e., self-not self boundary) and the processes (e.g., identification and disidentification) through which identity is developed and expressed. In the end, identity and spirituality are seen as being ultimately the same—both reflect the inherent true nature of reality as expressed in absolute unitary consciousness where distinctions between self and not-self cease to operate (Wilber, 2000).⁷

Identity and Spirituality

The discussion will now turn to overviewing some of the more substantive available theory and research as they relate to these two broad approaches to identity and spirituality.

Ego and Psychosocial Approaches

As noted by Kiesling et al. (2006), Erik Erikson’s lifespan psychosocial model has served as a catalyst for research and theoretical development on identity development and, from what can be found in the literature, provides much of the context in which current studies of spiritual identity are done. According to this model (Erikson, 1980), identity may generally be understood as being the product of the interaction of the individual (in terms of experiences and personality) with socio-historical influences which results in a sense of continuity of one’s sense of self both subjectively and interpersonally. More specifically, however, Kiesling and colleagues (2006) cited Marcia (1966) as being among the first to systematically explore how spirituality (actually religion) relates to identity formation and credited him for stimulating subsequent work (e.g., Hunsberger, Pratt & Pancer, 2001; Marcia, 1993; Markstrom, 1999; Tisdell, 2002). They also criticized earlier research on the basis that it tended to focus on spirituality/religion in adolescent identity formation. Since spirituality is often seen as something that is more commonly expressed in later life, they asserted that there is a need to study spiritual identity in adults.

In their own study, Kiesling et al. (2006) used an adaptation of Marcia’s (1966, 1993) identity status model to study role salience (i.e., importance of spirituality to sense of self—seen as analogous to Marcia’s notion of exploration) and role flexibility (i.e., extent to which consideration has been giving to changing one’s sense of spiritual identity—seen as an extension of Marcia’s concept of commitment) in a sample of 28 adults identified as being spiritually devout. Using a highly detailed interview schedule, they obtained extensive information about the motivational, emotional, ego-evaluative, and behavioral aspects of a variety of social roles related to different aspects of identity, including spiritual identity. They also included questions asking about the extent to which they have considered changing each role.

Content analysis of the interview data led Kiesling et al. (2006) to identify three main themes which they labeled salience and meaning, influence and investment, and reflectiveness/continuity and change, respectively. Participants were then categorized into

identity status categories of foreclosed, moratorium, and achieved identities. Eleven participants were assigned to the foreclosed group while four were placed in moratorium and 13 in achieved. Table 2 presents a summary of some of their more salient qualitative findings, organized in terms of the three themes identified in the content analysis. Based on their results, Kiesling et al. concluded that role-related spiritual identity is an important part of ego identity in adults. Further, they indicated that (a) spirituality appears to foster a sense of connection

with either a higher power, a spiritual community, or with highly valued aspects of self, (b) interactions with significant others strongly influences how spirituality is used for “meaning-making,” (c) adults’ efforts to realize their positive traits and avoid or deny negative ones contributed to the creation of spiritual identity, (d) spiritual identity appears to require conscious effort to develop and maintain, and (e) spiritual identity seems to embody patterns of continuity and change in a manner similar to other aspects of identity seen in adulthood.

Table 2. Summary of some key findings of Kiesling et al’s (2006) study of spiritual identity (SI)

	Foreclosed	Moratorium	Achieved
Salience/ Meaning	Saw SI as inherited and a part of childhood.	Motivated by Psychological benefit or by intellectual and ethical considerations	Saw SI as a choice
	Reliance on authority and family		Highest ratings of motivation intensity; researchers had difficulty classifying motivation quality. Many reported psychological benefit of SI
	Saw spirituality as important role in life; could not foresee implications of abandoning SI	No reliance on authority to define truth	
	Motivated to have intimate and secure relationship with higher power	Mostly positive affect about SI with negative identity fragments that prompted change	Highest level of affect intensity and impact of SI on self-perception and worth
Influence/ Investment			Could foresee consequences of loss of SI
			SI used to ascribe meaning to tragedy/trauma
	SI had notable impact on self-perception and self-worth	SI had variable impact and import on self-perception and self-worth	SI seen as governing behavior for most participants
Continuity/ Change	Family, ethnicity, and religious tradition strong determinants of self-evaluation	Less “ease” in relating to higher power	
	Role related SI organized daily behavior	Variable investment and impact on daily behavior	
	Little to no questioning of SI	Serious doubts and extensive reflectiveness	High ratings for reflectiveness and behavioral change

In contrast to Kiesling et al. (2006) who contextualized their study entirely in terms of identity status theory and utilized a somewhat simplistic existential definition of spiritual identity, Poll and Smith (2003) attempted to construct a new theory of spiritual identity development through the integration of current theories of identity (i.e., psychodynamic, cognitive, narrative, and systems) as they relate to spirituality. Borrowing the theistic assumptions of Richards and Bergin (1997), which include belief in the existence of God and a soul, they defined spiritual identity as “an individual’s belief that she or he is an eternal being and connected to God” (p. 129), and proposed a four stage model of how spiritual identity develops across the lifespan. Though they maintained that spiritual development can and does occur in childhood, they also suggested, based ostensibly upon Christian doctrine (they even cite Biblical scripture), that spiritual identity can emerge in adulthood as a result of a “second birth” or rebirth. Consequently, they stated that the development of spiritual identity may not occur in a linear manner. As well, Poll and Smith contended that the mechanism by which spiritual identity develops is through the interaction of spiritual experiences and the efforts of the individual to integrate such experiences into a constructed sense of self. Finally, they indicated that the extent to which spiritual identity positively impacts overall functioning and well-being is a product of the extent to which there is a match between a person’s experiences and behavior, and their God image.

The four stage model of Poll and Smith begins with the stage of Pre-awareness during which individuals do not have any conscious awareness of themselves as eternal beings in relationship to God. In this stage, people do not think of themselves in spiritual terms, despite the possibility that they may have had spiritual experiences. The second stage, Awakening, is said by Poll and Smith to be activated by a period of crisis, conflict, and/or learning which prompts the individual to begin thinking of themselves as a spiritual being. The quality of this awareness, however, is described as inconsistent, fragmented, and typically situationally specific (e.g., a person only thinks of God when involved in a crisis). Stage three, Recognition, involves the recollection of earlier spiritual experiences which are then compared to the experiences arising in stage two. The individual begins to generalize across situations and starts to develop a more stable sense of spiritual identity. The salience and importance of this sense of self, however, is still not fully expressed (i.e., other more social aspects of identity

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will typically be given more weight and attention). The fourth and final stage, Integration, involves the fusing of spiritual experiences with one’s self-concept and an emergence of a sense of one’s eternal spiritual identity. For people in this stage, spirituality comes to occupy a core place in their sense of identity.

Outside of these studies, a number of publications have appeared examining the role of spirituality in one’s overall ethnic identity (e.g., Fukayama & Sevig, 2002; Paranje, 1998), and in the identity of women and adolescents, respectively. In the case of the former, research indicates that different ethnic groups, most notably African Americans, appear to consider spirituality a more central part of their self-concepts and ethnic identities than White Americans (Chae, Kelly, Brown, & Bolden, 2004; Markstrom, 1999; Zinder, 2007). With regard to adolescents, evidence suggests that spirituality, religion, and ethnicity hold a fair degree of import to their sense of identity, and that this in turn appears to be related to a variety of positive outcomes (Juang & Syed, 2008).

Comment on the Ego and Psychosocial Approaches

Though the available theory and research provide an interesting starting point for exploration of the spirituality-identity relationship from an ego and psychosocial theoretical framework, the existing work leaves much to be desired with regard to its conceptual and methodological rigor. This is especially so with regards to the manner in which spirituality and spiritual identity are defined. In the case of the Kiesling et al. (2006) study, spirituality is essentially treated as a unidimensional construct and spiritual identity reduced to a mere social role with existential overtones. As importantly, and as the researchers admit, the use of a small non-representative sample of adults which did not reflect the entire range of identity statuses (i.e., diffused spiritual identity was not included) constrains generalizability of findings as does the use of a narrative based qualitative methodology requiring subjective interpretation of the data by the researchers. Such methods are prone to confirmatory biases.

While adopting a seemingly simplistic definition of spiritual identity, Poll and Smith (2003), appeared to explicitly acknowledge and incorporate a variety of components of spirituality, most notably beliefs and experiences as well as existential considerations, into their model. They even attempted to address the metaphysical problems related to the veridicality of the transcendent (i.e., the existence of God and a soul). Unfortunately,

their solution to the problem seems inadequate since it amounts to the religionizing of spirituality. That is, by adopting a clearly Judeo-Christian set of assumptions about the existence and nature of God and the soul, Poll and Smith end up marginalizing their theory and limiting it, at best, to socio-cultural contexts and populations for which the Judeo-Christian worldview is the predominant way of understanding spirituality. Given this, it is difficult to see how their model would apply to people of differing religious and spiritual traditions.

Transpersonal Approaches to Spiritual Identity

While transpersonal theories acknowledge the existence of ego and of the various influences on the formation and maintenance of egoic identity (e.g., socialization, relationships, social roles), unlike conventional psychological theory, they also assert that the content and structure of one's sense of self can differ from typical ego-based identity. This assertion is largely derived from Eastern spiritual and philosophical traditions (Buddhist and Hindu philosophy most specifically) which maintain that the ego or one's separate self-sense is illusory and that the fundamental nature of self is synonymous with the insights garnered through the states of enlightenment. In the case of Hindu-based philosophy, this is understood in terms of the inherent sameness between one's self (Atman) and the causal principle of the manifest universe (Brahman). In Buddhist thought, this is articulated in terms of the realized non-reality of any sense of self (e.g., as can be seen in the notion of nirvana or extinguishing of the self). In either case, one sees a significant departure from traditional Western psychological views of self and identity.

While there are a variety of theories available that attempt to articulate a transpersonal perspective on identity, two such will be overviewed here.⁸ The first is the model of self-expansiveness proposed by Friedman (1983) which is a wholly transpersonal theory, and the second is the concept of self-transcendence proposed by Cloninger as part of his seven factor model of temperament and character (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Pryzbeck, 1993).

Realizing the need for scientific investigation to test the validity of transpersonal psychological theory, Friedman (1983) attempted to develop a model of identity that reconciles conventional views of self-concept with those of the great spiritual traditions. In his model, he considered the "Self" (i.e., the term used to denote the fundamental nature of identity, consciousness, and reality as per some of those spiritual traditions) to be inherently embedded in the universe and maintained that

the relation of self to not-self is arbitrary and potentially unlimited—anything that is part of the universe may serve as an object with which one might identify and consider part of one's personal identity. Consequently, the Self can be conceived of as the ground upon which one's self-concept is derived. While he asserted that the Self is "invariant and unmeasurable" (Friedman, 1983, p. 38), the self-concept, defined as that which is experienced as forming an individual's personal sense of identity, is measurable. As an extension of this, Friedman adopted the position of a psychological cartographer and advanced a two-dimensional model of self-concept expansiveness which permits the understanding of the self-concept in terms of its boundaries in demarcating aspects of the Self that are, and are not, experienced by the individuals as components of their personal identities. The dimensions themselves are a combination of Sampson's (1978) notion of identity spatiality (i.e., locus of identity in space) and Shostrom's (1963) concept of temporality of self-concept (i.e., the degree of present-centeredness versus past or future orientedness of identity). In essence, Friedman created a two dimensional framework that can be used to map the self-concept onto the Self. In this model, greater expansiveness of self-concept is viewed as representing "the degree of self-realization, or...spiritual development" (Friedman, 1983, p. 39).

Using this cartographical model, Friedman then identified three general levels of self-expansiveness which he called the Personal (wherein the self-concept is experienced in terms of the here-and-now; seen by Friedman as similar to typical conceptualizations of self-concept), the Transpersonal (where the self-concept is extended to include aspects of the universe that go beyond the here-and-now into other times and places), and the Middle (the area between the personal and transpersonal; self-concept goes beyond the here-and-now but not to the point where there it would be considered as involving a dissolution of a separate self-sense; identification with social roles, relationships, and groups might be viewed as falling at this level). In addition, using only the personal and transpersonal levels, Friedman (1984; Friedman & MacDonald, 1997) developed a matrix wherein health is predicted based upon low versus high identification with both levels. Low identification with both the personal and transpersonal levels is viewed as being reflective of neurotic disorders. Low identification with the Personal combined with high identification with the Transpersonal is viewed as consistent with the presence of psychotic processes. High identification with

the Personal level in conjunction with low identification with the Transpersonal is seen by Friedman as indicative of conventional egoic health. Finally, high identification with both the Personal and Transpersonal levels is seen as a sign of transpersonal health (i.e., expanded self-sense and conventional ego functions are integrated).

Based on his theoretical model, Friedman (1983) constructed an 18-item paper-and-pencil test called the Self-Expansiveness Level Form (SELF) which has been found to have satisfactory reliability (both inter-item and test-retest) and fairly good validity (factorial, criterion, discriminant) with American, Canadian, and Indian samples. As well, the scale operationalizing the transpersonal level of self-expansiveness has been found to be uncorrelated to measures of normal personality including the NEO Personality Inventory (a measure of the five factor model of personality) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (a measure of Jungian psychological types), suggesting that it may represent a unique dimension of identity not adequately captured in predominant trait and type models of personality (MacDonald, Tsagarakis, & Holland, 1994; MacDonald, Gagnier, & Friedman, 2000; Friedman, MacDonald, & Kumar, 2004; Pappas & Friedman, 2007).

Turning to the work of Cloninger and colleagues (see Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993), self-transcendence is a dimension of character that is included as a one of the seven factors in Cloninger's psychobiological model of personality. In this model, a distinction is made between components of personality that are biologically based (temperament) versus learned (character).⁹ Character in this model may be understood as those aspects of personality that relate explicitly to self-concept. In the researchers' words, "self-concepts vary according to the extent to which a person identifies the self as (1) an autonomous individual, (2) an integral part of humanity, and (3) an integral part of the universe as a whole" (Cloninger et al., 1993, p. 975). The character dimensions are viewed as maturing "in adulthood and [as] influenc[ing] personal and social effectiveness by insight learning about self-concepts" (p. 975). More specifically, the character dimensions are portrayed as reflecting the "development of increasingly inclusive concepts of the self" leading up to identification of self "as an integral part of the universe (self-transcendence)" (p. 986).

Self-transcendence is defined as "identification with everything conceived as essential and consequential parts of a unified whole" (Cloninger et al., 1993, p. 981) and was included in the model in order to accommodate

the findings and insights from the humanistic and transpersonal literature. In its original incarnation, the character trait was made up of three subcomponents which, in turn, were viewed as reflecting a three stage developmental process. These subcomponents were labeled self-forgetful versus self-conscious experience, transpersonal identification versus self-differentiation, and spiritual acceptance versus rational materialism. However, the number of subcomponents was subsequently revised and expanded to five (Cloninger, 1996). The newer five are called self-forgetfulness and fresh experience versus self-conscious experience, transpersonal identification versus self-isolation, spiritual acceptance versus rational materialism, enlightened versus objective, and idealistic versus practical.

To assess his seven factor model, Cloninger developed the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), a paper-and-pencil personality questionnaire that now exists in a variety of forms ranging in length from 125-items to 293-items. In a 1996 version of the full test (i.e., Cloninger, 1996), self-transcendence was made up of five subscales corresponding to the subcomponents mentioned above. However, another revision of the test was made in 1999 (TCI-Revised; Cloninger, 1999) and the number of subscales was essentially returned to the original three.

In general, empirical support for TCI and TCI-R Self-Transcendence has been mixed; while there is evidence indicative of good reliability for the dimension as a whole, interitem reliability coefficients for the subscales have been less satisfactory. Moreover, factor analytic work has not consistently supported the subscale structure of Self-Transcendence nor has it shown that Self-Transcendence is independent of the other dimensions (Farmer & Goldberg, 2008ab; MacDonald et al., 1995; MacDonald, Friedman, & Kuentzel, 1999; MacDonald & Holland, 2002c). While Cloninger et al. (1993) reported that Self-Transcendence demonstrates independence from the Five Factor Model of personality, other investigations have found a moderately strong association between it and Openness to Experience (De Fruyt, Van De Wiele, & Van Heringen, 2000; MacDonald & Holland, 2002d). Nevertheless, the TCI has found itself used in an impressive amount of research and Self-Transcendence has been found to demonstrate some empirical relations with a variety of variables related to health and pathology (see Cloninger, 2008; MacDonald, Friedman, & Kuentzel, 1999; Farmer & Goldberg, 2008a, 2008b).

Comment on transpersonal approaches

In general, both of the transpersonal approaches described here tend to place greatest emphasis on identification with aspects of reality beyond both the ego and the social realm as the defining feature of spiritual identity. The centrality afforded to the process of identification in identity formation in these theories seems to fall in line with that seen in more traditional ego and psychosocial approaches. Further, both theories and their associated measurement tools are among only a small number that exclude explicit religious concepts and terminology, making them appropriate for application to a wider variety of respondent populations than most measures.¹⁰ With that stated, there are some problems worth noting. For instance, while TCI Self-Transcendence has been found to be appreciably correlated to four of the five ESI dimensions (all but Existential Well-Being, which was found to be most strongly associated with the traits of Harm Avoidance and Self-Directedness), its subscales have been found to lack factorial stability (MacDonald & Holland, 2002c). Further, there are questions as to whether or not it should be seen as a character trait (Farmer & Goldberg, 2008a, 2008b). The SELF, alternatively, has been found to produce surprisingly small correlations to measures of spirituality (MacDonald, 2000; MacDonald, Gagnier, & Friedman, 2000), raising questions as to whether or not it should be viewed as a measure of spiritual self-concept at all.¹¹

In sum, though available approaches found in conventional and transpersonal psychological literature are certainly intriguing, they all appear to suffer from problems with conceptualization and/or measurement, especially with regards to how spirituality and spiritual identity are defined. What appears to be needed is an empirically testable model that takes what is known about the multidimensionality of spirituality and incorporates it with what is known about key psychosocial and developmental influences on the formation of identity from both conventional and transpersonal perspectives. Using MacDonald's (1997, 2000) five dimensional model of spirituality as the basis, a proposal for such a model will be put forward here.

A Proposal for a Structural Model of Spirituality and Spiritual Identity

MacDonald's multidimensional model appears to provide a good map of the content domain of spirituality; each of the dimensions seems to embody a substantive and unique aspect of spirituality as represented

in existing standardized tests. However, given that it was developed using exploratory factor analytic procedures, it is not a theory-driven model but a data-driven one. That is, it is an atheoretical descriptive model. In order for this model to meet the needs of the current task, something needs to be applied to the model so as to organize the dimensions so their influence on identity can be more clearly delineated. Fortunately, the available theory and research appears to provide guidance in this regard. Specifically, it appears that the dimensions lend themselves to be organized along biopsychosocial lines.

Spiritual experiences, referred to as the Experiential/Phenomenological Dimension in MacDonald's model, have been found in people drawn from both clinical and non-clinical populations to have highly reliable neuroanatomical correlates in the frontal, temporal, and parietal lobes, as measured through EEG and various brain imaging techniques (Beauregard & O'Leary, 2007; Newberg et al., 2001; Persinger, 1984). The robustness of finding has led some investigators to conclude that our nervous systems are hardwired to create spiritual experiences and that such experiences are essentially naturally occurring phenomena that are amenable to scientific study (e.g., Beauregard & O'Leary, 2007; Newberg et al., 2001). Extending from this, and insofar as one may subscribe to the naturalistic assumptions of conventional science that maintain that mind and consciousness are the product of biology, it could be argued that spiritual experiences are part of innate human developmental potential and a potent causal factor in the expression of spirituality in all its forms.

The dimension of Religiousness, in contrast, is ostensibly much more linked to social organizational and socialization processes concerning spirituality. That is, religion in general appears to be best viewed the socially-mediated vehicle through which individuals learn the language and practices that not only facilitate an understanding of things spiritual, but also contribute to the further unfolding of spirituality experientially (e.g., by learning meditation, a practitioner can volitionally induce spiritual experiences). Thus, both religiousness and spiritual experiences seem to interplay and interact to facilitate spirituality as a whole.¹²

Turning next to MacDonald's dimensions called Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality and Paranormal Beliefs, respectively, one finds a shift from experiential and socialization influences to expressions of spirituality involving core beliefs and attitudes about

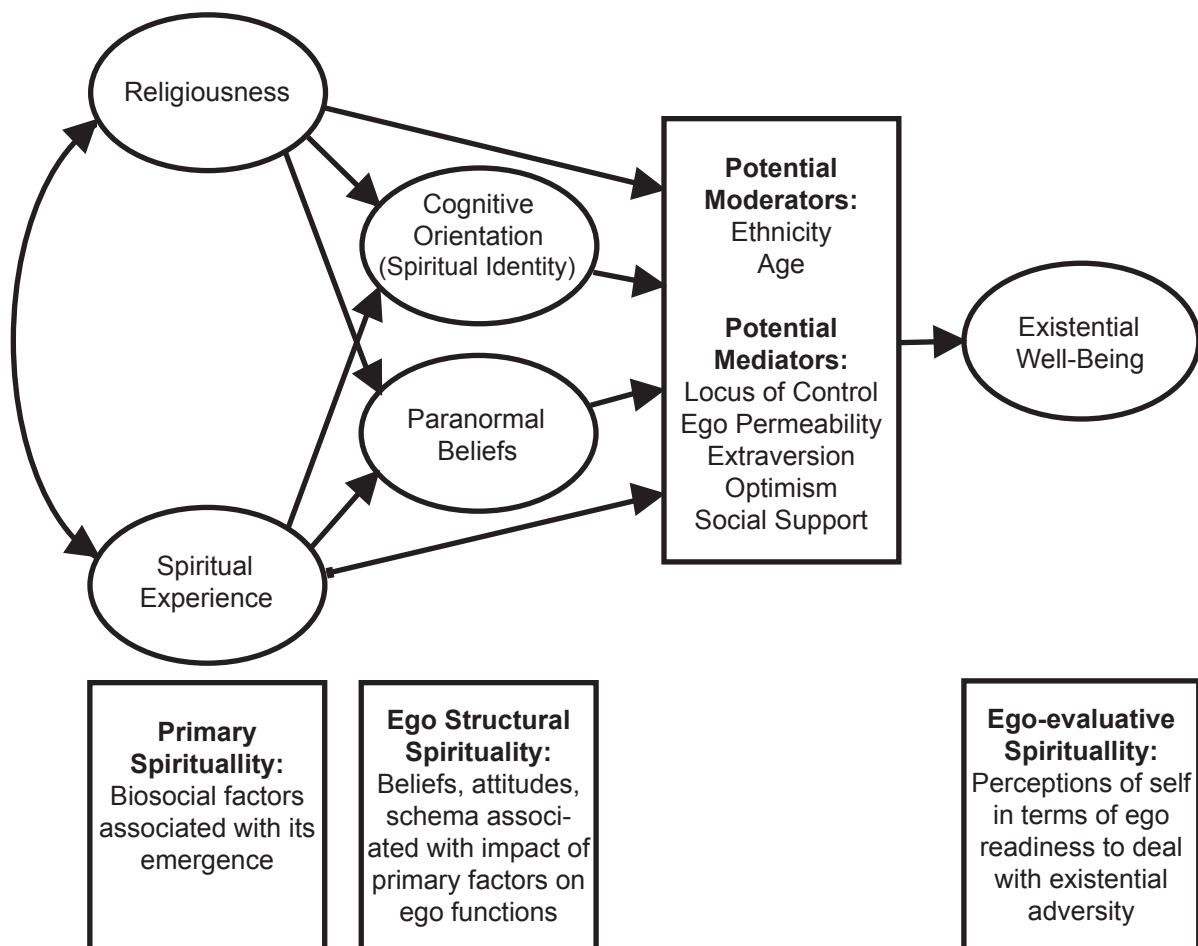
one's self and how spirituality can manifest through human cognition and behavior. These beliefs and attitudes appear to be best viewed as internalized foundational cognitive schema that serve to shape the perceptions a person has regarding the validity of spirituality and its relevance to day-to-day functioning. Included here, as part of the former dimension, are beliefs about one's self as a spiritual being—that is, spiritual identity.¹³ Taken together, it might be argued that these dimensions serve a structural function. That is, these types of beliefs serve to help define the limits/parameters of egoic functions and identity.

The last of MacDonald's dimensions, Existential Well-Being, is similar to the dimensions of Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality and Paranormal Beliefs in that it seems to deal with perceptions of self. However, it differs in one important way. While Cognitive Orientation involves generalized beliefs about the place of spirituality within a person's overall perceptual schema, Existential Well-Being seems to more specifically relate to the evaluation of one's functioning. It appears to involve

the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as coping and adapting adequately to stressors and life events. This can be inferred from the content of items from the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory (ESI), the measure of MacDonald's factor model; within Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality there are items such as "Spirituality is an important part of who I am as a person," while Existential Well-Being includes such items as "I seldom feel tense about things," and "I tend to make poor decisions."

Taken together, it seems that MacDonald's five factors can be organized into three levels of spirituality with spiritual experience and religiousness comprising "primary" spirituality (i.e., core causal factors that extend beyond the psychological sense of self but influence its formation and functioning), spiritual and paranormal beliefs making up "ego structural" spirituality (i.e., core cognitive schema that define the limits of ego structure and functions), and existential well-being contributing to "ego-evaluative" spirituality (i.e., the evaluation of self in terms of perceived effectiveness in coping with

Figure 1. Graphic depiction of the full structural model based upon MacDonald's (1997, 2000) dimensions of spirituality.



stressors). Figure 1 presents a visual depiction of this structural model.

Potential Mediating and Moderating Variables

Upon examining Figure 1, the reader will note that ego-structural and ego-evaluative spirituality are not directly linked in the model. Rather, ego-structural spirituality is presented as influencing ego-evaluative spirituality through a number of potential mediating and moderating variables. The inclusion of such mediating and moderating variables is based upon the finding that Existential Well-Being, while showing itself to be robustly related to measures of well-being, has been found to be minimally correlated with the other dimensions of spirituality when using the ESI (MacDonald, 1997, 2000; Migdal, 2007). The actual variables mentioned in Figure 1 are included based upon both theoretical and empirical considerations. For instance, with regards to moderators, research suggests that spirituality may manifest itself differently as a function of age and ethnicity (Chae, Kelly, Brown, & Bolden, 2004; Heintz & Baruss, 2001; Zinder, 2007). In terms of mediators, locus of control is mentioned because the extent to which a person feels that they are in control of their behavior and their sense of self may be seen as being a central component in their evaluation of self-efficacy. Social support and optimism are included due to the fact that research links it to both actual and perceived adjustment to psychological distress and to spiritual variables (Friedman, 2007; Haber, Jacob, & Spangler, 2007; Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005; Weber & Cummings, 2003; Yakushko, 2005). Emotional stability (aka Neuroticism), and Extraversion are included in response to the finding that ESI Existential Well-Being has been found to be associated to measures of such constructs (MacDonald, 2000; MacDonald & Holland, 2003).

Finally, ego permeability is included as a mediator to address the manner in which ego boundaries (i.e., the psychological boundary demarcating one's sense of self from those aspects of experience that are considered not-self) operate and influence how individuals experience themselves. While both conventional and transpersonal approaches to spiritual identity acknowledge the existence of ego boundaries, with the latter being a bit more explicit in addressing the nature of such boundaries in terms of their expandability (e.g., Friedman, 1983), neither approach gives sufficient attention to the manner in which the boundaries themselves operate. There are a variety of psychological constructs that have appeared in the literature that directly concern themselves with ego

and psychological boundary properties and functions. Though most widely known as Openness due to its representation as a major trait of personality as per the Five Factor Model of personality, this trait, along with the notions of ego permissiveness (Taft, 1969, 1970), boundary thickness (Hartmann, 1991), and transliminality (Thalbourne & Delin, 1994) all relate to the extent to which the ego boundaries are able, on structural grounds, to permit information from different parts of the total psyche or personality to cross into conscious awareness (MacDonald, Holland, & Holland, 2005). To further illustrate this point, specific to the idea of openness, McCrae and Costa (1997) stated that "openness is seen in the breadth, depth, and permeability of consciousness, and in the recurrent need to enlarge and examine experience" (p. 825). Research has shown that malleable/permeable ego boundaries are associated with a number of variables including higher levels of reported spiritual and non-ordinary states of consciousness as well as to both growth enhancing and pathological states (Hartmann, 1991; Houran, Thalbourne, & Lange, 2003; Hunt, Dougan, Grant, & House, 2002; MacDonald et al., 2005; Thalbourne & Delin, 1994).

Mechanisms/Processes

Contributing to Spiritual Identity

In order to make more salient how the proposed model relates to the creation and maintenance of spiritual identity, Figure 2 shows the proposed mechanisms that may be deemed most influential. As can be seen in the figure, primary spiritual factors continue to find representation and are seen as having a direct influence on the formation of spiritual identity. As described earlier, religiousness and spiritual experience both interact to provide meaning and psychological context to an emergent sense of spiritual identity. In addition, there are three mediating variables included—community and family, lifestyle, and ego permeability. As recognized by current psychosocial theories of identity development, the extent to which one's personal experience, values/beliefs, and behaviors are validated and seen as consistent with those of members of social groups to which a person belongs, serves to reinforce one's sense of self and, by association, one's role and place within the group. Though family is included because of its obvious influence on a person's identity development, community is also included to highlight the impact that religious congregations have on their members. Lifestyle is included as a separate variable in order to amplify the influence of religious socialization on behavioral

choices. For instance, a person who is deeply committed to their religious faith appears more likely to engage in private religious practices such as prayer or meditation on a regular basis. These practices, in turn, may be seen as facilitating the occurrence of spiritual experiences which go on to influence one's sense of identity as a spiritual being. Lastly, ego permeability can be seen as a personality influence on the extent to which spiritual experiences enter into consciousness and influence a person's immediate and ongoing awareness of themselves. Stated differently, the extent to which a person experiences and thinks of him/herself as a spiritual being seems likely to be at least partially mediated by ego boundary functions in their effect on moment-to-moment awareness and subsequent beliefs about the nature and parameters of self identity.¹⁴

Conclusions

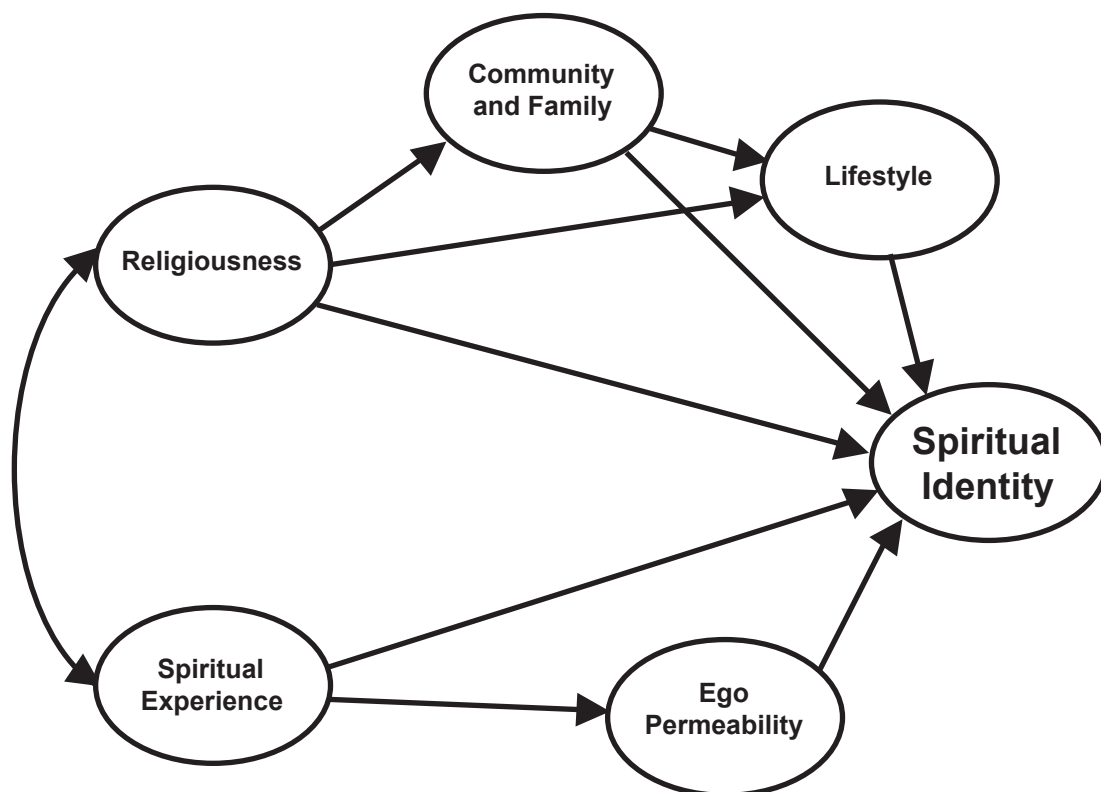
While spiritual identity is garnering more attention within conventional psychological science, the available theory and research does not provide a coherent or compelling picture of what this is as it relates to the broader literature on spirituality. The proposed structural model of spirituality and spiritual identity represents

an effort at utilizing a state-of-the-art descriptive model of spirituality (MacDonald, 1997, 2000) to organize an understanding of how the various aspects of spirituality work together both directly and indirectly to form spiritual identity and, by extension, affect self-perceived sense of well-being. One definite strength of the proposed model is that it readily lends itself to empirical investigation—all concepts included can be measured by existing paper-and-pencil tests. Given this, it is hoped that the proposed model encourages rigorous and systematic research.

Notes

1. As noted by the likes of Zinnbauer and colleagues (1997), historically, religion was the term used to denote spirituality and it has only been in relatively recent times that a distinction is being made between the two by scientist and layperson alike.
2. Arising from the metaphysical challenges of spirituality are other problems with which one must contend. Most notable among these is the claim that

Figure 2. Proposed causal model of spiritual identity.



language is not adequate in effectively representing and communicating spirituality as it is experienced (MacDonald & Friedman, 2001).

3. There have been some efforts to integrate the theistic and existential perspectives into a single model of spirituality. The best example comes from Paloutzian and Ellison (1982) and Ellison (1983) who define spiritual well-being as being composed of a horizontal dimension (existential) and a vertical dimension (theistic or religious).
4. As an interesting point of information, while researchers in America have tended to claim a positive association between spirituality and health (e.g., Plante & Sherman, 2001), investigators and health care professionals in other parts of the world (e.g., United Kingdom) have noted that such a relationship has not been consistently observed (e.g., see Gilbert, 2007).
5. In a number of studies currently in progress, MacDonald has evidence suggesting that the ESI dimensions are fairly reliable and stable across cultures and languages (e.g., the factors have been generally replicated in samples obtained from India, Uganda, Japan, Korea, Poland, and the United States). He also has data indicating that the ESI dimensions are differentially related to measures of self-esteem, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, happiness, and a variety of existential constructs. Findings from both of these studies are currently in process of being prepared for publication.
6. Transpersonal psychology was founded in the late 1960s by Maslow and others and may be generally understood as the area of psychology concerned with the study of human consciousness, especially non-ordinary states and modes of consciousness, and their implications for facilitating health and exceptional human functioning. While controversial because of its subscription to the idea that the true nature of self and reality is essentially spiritual in nature (e.g., our highest developmental potential exceeds that generally seen as possible by conventional psychology), transpersonal psychology has been a fertile area of inquiry and theory development for those interested in incorporating spirituality into their thinking about human functioning and potential.
7. From this point of view, which is probably the most clearly articulated in Buddhist philosophy, the ego is seen as illusory and as having no substance. The interested reader is referred to the Diamond Sutra (Price & Mou-lam, 1990), to learn more about this perspective.
8. Friedman's (1983) and Cloninger's models are presented here because of their accessibility to empirical research- both models have associated paper-and-pencil measures. However, there are some very impressive theories within the transpersonal literature which have substantial significance to identity theory and research. Of particular note is the work of Ken Wilber (Wilber, 1980, 2000; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986) who has proposed a complex stage model of consciousness and development which sees the self and "self-system" as undergoing qualitative change in its content, structure, and functions as it progresses through developmental levels leading up to the highest expressions of self in non-dual consciousness.
9. Cloninger originally started with a three factor model of temperament comprised of dimensions called Novelty Seeking, Harm Avoidance, and Reward Dependence (Cloninger, 1987; Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1991). Subsequent empirical work led him and his colleagues to expand the model to include an additional temperament dimension- Persistence- and three character dimensions called Cooperativeness, Self-Directedness, and Self-Transcendence (Cloninger et al., 1993). The model was developed originally for use in the clinical diagnosis of personality disorders. In fact, Cloninger et al. (1993) have hypothesized that "subtypes of personality disorders can be defined in terms of temperament variables whereas the presence or absence of personality disorder may be defined in terms of the character dimensions" (p. 979).
10. Though not of the Judeo-Christian variety, it may be argued that the very assumptions of transpersonal psychology itself draws from religious systems, mostly those of Eastern origin and, as such, are not any less religious than other approaches to spirituality.
11. More broadly, the models of Friedman and Cloninger (and, in fact of virtually all psychological theories of spiritual identity) do not accommodate the place of disidentification in the development of spirituality. As noted by Vaughan (1977), Eastern spiritual systems, especially Buddhism, put a lot of emphasis on the importance of disidentification with the ego or separate self-sense to facilitate the emergence of true spiritual awakening—"the transpersonal [i.e.,

spiritual] self is paradoxically experienced only as a result of disidentification with the ego or the self defined by one's roles, possessions, activities, or relationships" (Vaughan, 1977, p. 76-77). In fact, according to Vaughan and transpersonal psychology as a whole, it is only through disidentification with the ego that transcendence of one's sense of self can occur.

12. The interaction of religion and spiritual experiences appears to be supported not only by the brain imaging research, but also by genetic research. Waller et al. (1990) completed a twin study examining the genetic and environmental factors contributing to religious values, attitudes, and interests and found that about 50% of the variance of five religious measures was genetically influenced.
13. MacDonald (1997, 2000) deliberately constructed items to explicitly tap spiritual identity when developing his factor model and the Expressions of Spirituality Inventory. He found that all identity items loaded appreciably and reliably on Cognitive Orientation toward Spirituality (COS). This finding makes sense since it can be readily argued that identity, spiritual or otherwise, is based on deeply held beliefs about who and what we are as human beings.
14. Transpersonal and integral developmental models such as that of Ken Wilber (2000) suggest that cognitive structures undergo change as a person moves upward developmentally, much along the lines suggested by Piagetian cognitive developmental theory, except to levels and structures not addressed or even acknowledged by Piagetian theory. Consequently, it would be reasonable to contend that ego-structural spirituality undergoes transformation as a function of such development. This, in turn, would result in fundamental changes in how one perceives spiritual experiences, spiritual and religious concepts and practices, and, ultimately, one's self as a spiritual being.

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