Construction of Social Psychology
Advances in Psychology and Psychological Trends Series

Introduced and edited by: Professor Brij Mohan

inScience Press

CONTENTS

Contents

Chapter #15

THE SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION
The importance of studying religion using scientific methodologies

Joel R. Anderson
Université de Genève, Switzerland

ABSTRACT

Religion plays a vital role in the formation of communities and the interaction of cultures, yet is largely ignored in psychological texts. Contemporary religious trends across the globe are rapidly changing. For example, less people are adhering to traditional forms of religious practice, Atheism and secular beliefs are becoming increasingly common and valid, and acts of terror are commonly perceived as motivated by religion. This chapter discusses the operationalization of religion as a variable in scientific research (i.e., religious affiliation vs. use of religion in daily life) before discussing how this operationalization impacts our existing understanding of the relationship between religion and intra- (e.g., coping, personal decision making) and inter-personal (e.g., attitudes and behaviors towards outgroup members) psychological processes. The chapter closes with a discussion of challenges for the future of this field and recommendations for the measurement of this complex variable.

Keywords: religion, religious, religiosity, spirituality, religious fundamentalism, religious affiliation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The psychology of religion comprises the use of scientific methods to understand the effects of religious traditions, practices, and beliefs on religious and non-religious individuals from a psychological perspective. In the specific case of social psychology, understanding the effects of religion on beliefs and behaviors is paramount given the pivotal function that religion plays in the formation, functioning, and interactions of societies (Durkheim, 1915). This chapter has two broad aims: to discuss methods of quantifying religion for use in social psychological research, and then to discuss the implications of these quantifications by reviewing trends resulting from their use in the existing literature. Before approaching these aims, I will first give a brief overview of the history and purposes of the psychology of religion. After addressing the central aims of this chapter, I will close by discussing future challenges to the field and presenting a discourse on implications for the future of this important sub-discipline of social psychology.

1.1. The History of the Psychology of Religion

The trajectory of scientific investigations into religion has oscillated across the years from being considered a core research variable with profound societal implications, to being effectively ignored by mainstream psychology (for reviews, see Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003; Gorsuch, 1988). Indeed, much of the early theoretical and empirical work in social psychology (e.g., G. S. Hall, 1904, 1917; James, 1902, 1907; Starbuck, 1899) was motivated by an innate drive, almost an obligation, of the researchers at the time to understand psychological aspects related to religion (see Wulff, 1991). The psychoanalytic zeitgeist of the decades following the 1920s saw many theoretical contributions to the broader field of psychology, which usually encompassed religion (e.g., Adler, 1925; Freud,

1927; Jung, 1938). This acted as a catalyst for hypothetical and speculative frameworks on the topic, but did little to further related empirically based understandings of religion.

Different scientific sub-disciplines have had resurged levels of interest in understanding the effects of religion on psychological processes at different times. For social psychology, the 1960's witnessed a revival in data-driven interests in religion (see Hester, 1998). Social dilemmas of the time (e.g., the post-war era, the sexual revolution, racial integration) acted as a catalyst for the popularity of social psychology, which led to research into important issues such as prejudice, aggression, obedience, and of course religion. Subsequent seminal works in the science of religion by the likes of Gordon Allport (1954, Allport & Ross, 1967) paved the way for a new generation of social psychologists who had the same innate interest in understanding humans and religion as the early researchers of the field. However, this new cohort of social psychologists had the innate drive, combined with advanced scientific training, which has propelled the study of religion to become the theoretically founded and empirically validated discipline that it is today.

1.2. The Importance of the Continued Research of Religion

Religion has been a central component of individual- and society-level existence throughout recorded history, and the magnitude of its impact to human functioning should not be understated (see Albright & Ashbrook, 2001). Recent global upheavals have resulted in rapid developments in how religion manifests in contemporary society. These developments will subsequently shape the need for continued research in this field. The two key trends are a decline in religion, and an increase in perceptions that religion is related to terrorism.

1.2.1. A Decline in Religion

The documented decline in religious belief in the postindustrial world (Norris & Inglehart, 2011) suggests that the effects of religion on the beliefs and behaviors of self-identified religious people may be attenuated. Social perceptions and norms around identifying as non-religious are also changing (Gervais, Shariff, & Norenzayan, 2011), which has led to a subsequent rapid increase in self-identified Atheists (Zuckerman, 2007). A recent Pew Research Centre (2012) survey revealed 1.1 billion of the world's population (estimated at 6.9 billion) are now religiously unaffiliated, making Atheism the third largest 'religious category' in the world[i], after Christianity and Muslim[ii]. The majority of the existing literature has focused on the effects of religion on the religious. This trend of decreasing religious beliefs suggests that research will need to also focus on the effects of religion on the non-religious.

1.2.2. Religion and Terrorism

The September 11 attacks in 2001 on the World Trade Center in New York marked the start of a new era for stigma associated with religion. The organization claiming responsibility for this attack (and also the 1998 embassy bombings, the 2002 Bali bombing, etc.) was comprised of militant Islamic individuals (see Ranstorp, 2007 for the history of Al-Qaidah). The United States led a coalition of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations, who collaboratively responded to these attacks with the 'war on terrorism'. This fuelled the perceptions of Westerners that Islam is related to (and thus, Muslims are responsible for) terrorism (Kfir, 2014; Neer & O'Toole, 2014)[iii]. Indeed, a body of research grounded in Terror Management Theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986) has revealed that exposure to information about terror attacks leads to subsequent prejudice towards religious out-groups (Das, Bushman, Bezemer, Kerkhof, &

Vermeulen, 2009), even when those groups were not related to the terror attack (Echebarria-Echabe & Fernández-Guede, 2006). In response to this, the psychology of religion will need to take into account exacerbated inter-group relations. In combination, these global trends suggest that the continued research into the psychology of religion is necessary, not only for the sake of understanding the effects of religion on psychological processes, but because these trends will likely permeate other aspects of social psychology, and have serious implications for the dissemination of such research to the public.

2. OPERATIONALIZING RELIGION

The literature pertaining to the role of religion in social psychology is complex, and a large body of research now exists surrounding its specific influence on inter- and intra-group psychological processes. Part of the complexity pertaining to this literature has revolved around the question of how to best measure an individual's religion (Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; Gorsuch, 1988; Saroglou, 2002, 2009). William James, often considered the father of the psychology of religion, discussed differences between institutional (i.e., organized religion) and personal religion, and posited the variety of religious experiences that an individual could have regardless of their culture or religious allegiance (James, 1902, 1907). This sparked an interest in the question of how to quantify personal religion. Two primary approaches are indeed reflected throughout the literature.

The most parsimonious method for quantification is to simply ask people which religion they affiliate with. However, early researchers in the area (e.g., Allport, 1954; Allport & Ross, 1967) recognized that more important than the religion with which an individual affiliates is the degree to which people are involved in that religion, known as religiosity (Saroglou, 2009; Whitley, 2009).[iv] Each method is discussed below.

2.1. Religious Affiliation

The first option for operationalizing religion is religious affiliation - simply asking people which religious category they identify with (i.e., Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Atheist, etc.). This simple categorical quantification of religion can easily be used as the independent variable in psychological research. This is somewhat problematic because of the broad application of such labels. Consider the Catholic individual who attends church several times a week compared to the Catholic individual who attends only at Christmas and Easter. On a survey measuring religious affiliation, these two individuals would fall into the same category, although the impact that religion likely has in their respective lives would presumably be quite different.

Religious affiliation is frequently included in representative national and cross-cultural surveys, including the *World Values Survey* (www.worldvaluessurvey.org), the *European Values Study* (www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu), and the *Afrobarometer* (www.afrobarometer.org). This means there are vast sets of longitudinal and cross-cultural data that have been measured using this method of religious quantification.

The benefits of quantifying religion with religious affiliation are clear. In terms of data collection, it is non-invasive, simple and can be easily included as a demographic question. In terms of statistical analysis, it allows clear between-group comparisons at the group, national, and cross-cultural level. Finally, it allows the individual to self-identify their preferred allegiance to a religious (or non-religious) group. It has the usual downfalls of a self-report measure (i.e., people may adjust their responses in order to avoid being identified as a member of a stigmatized minority group; e.g., Katz & Hass, 1988), and is a

single-item measure of religion, but its ease of administration might outweigh associated problems.

2.2. Religiosity

An alternative option for operationalizing religion is through measuring *religiosity* (Saroglou, 2002) as an individual difference dimension (also sometimes called religiousness, religious experience, or transcendence). Religiosity broadly defined is the degree to which people are involved in their religion (Whitley, 2009) or how they integrate religion into (Ahrold & Meston, 2010) or refer to transcendence in their daily lives (Saroglou, 2009). Recent contributions to the religion-psychology research relationship suggest that religiosity (i.e., the frequency or intensity of how the individual uses religion in their daily lives) might be a more useful variable in religion-based research (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Jonathan, 2008; Saroglou, 2009, 2013; Whitley, 2009). In the case of the two Catholic individuals discussed previously, using measures of religiosity allows for a different, and arguably more meaningful, measurement of religion using this method quantification.

The literature on religiosity has produced many versions of what a personal religion paradigm might actually contain. Often using factor analysis (a statistical data reduction technique that identifies latent variables) to explore religiosity dimensions, a plethora of religiosity constructs have been reported, with an equally numerous amount of religiosity measures to capture these constructs (see Hill & Hood, 1999 for a corpus of measures). Following other disciplines of psychology, some have focused on models of affect (feeling religious emotions and spiritual sensations), behavior (religious practices or rituals), and cognition (thoughts and beliefs about religious concepts; e.g., Cornwall, Albrecht, Cunningham, & Pitcher, 1986). Others have defined a specific dimension of personal religiosity and strive to quantify it. Notable religiosity measures (and sample items) are:

• The *Religious Fundamentalism* scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004) which measures a dimension concerned with religious meaning that is drawn directly from doctrine, and which is unchangeable in nature (e.g., 'There is a religion on this earth that teaches, without error, God's truth').

• The *Religious Orientation Scale* (Allport & Ross, 1967) that is used to distinguish between instrumental uses of religion from the practice of religion as a self-contained goal. An intrinsic religious orientation refers to the motivation of an individual's goal arising from religious tradition (e.g., 'My religious beliefs are really what lie behind my whole approach to life'). In contrast, an extrinsic religious orientation refers to religious beliefs and attitudes being motivated for utilitarian purposes such as personal coping or social ends (e.g., 'The church is most important as a place to formulate good social relationships').

• The *Quest* Scale (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991) which is characterized by existential questions arising from contradictions, religious doubts and tragedies in life. This scale refers to the level of which an individual's religion involves a tentative and responsive stance towards religious convictions based on such existential concepts (e.g., 'I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs').

• The *Christian Orthodoxy Scale* (e.g., 'Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried but on the third day He arose from the dead'; Hunsberger, 1989), and the *Islamic Doctrinal Orthodoxy Scale* (e.g., 'I believe that Mohammad is God's prophet'; Ji & Ibrahim, 2007) assess the degree to which a person accepts the beliefs of their respective religious affiliation.

The advantages of using religiosity measures are numerous; such measures provide a nuanced alternative to (and theoretically should operate independently from) religious

affiliation. It allows for refined research questions and more complex statistical analysis techniques to be employed, due to the parametric nature of the data provided by such measures. The downfalls include a more time consuming and complex administration and scoring protocol, and that some items in these scales might contain questions about sensitive topics, or may be affiliation specific (i.e., reference to church vs. synagogue vs. mosque). Although religiosity measures are well used in social psychology, they do not share the same popularity in other scientific disciplines. Finally, there has been some controversy between social psychologists as to whether or not religion should be conceptualized as multidimensional (see Wulff, 1991).

As methods for quantifying religion, both religious affiliation and religiosity can contribute differently to research in the psychology of religion. Each also has unique challenges to overcome, and limitations that need to be acknowledged. The following section synthesizes their use through the existing social psychology literature.

3. RELIGION AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

The literature pertaining to the role of religion in social psychology is complex, and a large body of research now exists surrounding its specific influence on social processes. A summary of the literatures relevant to inter- and intra-personal processes follows, which also attempts to highlight systemic differences as a function of how religion is quantified (i.e., religious affiliation vs. religiosity).

3.1. Religion and Intra-Personal Processes

Intra-group social processes tend to be related to religion in a relatively simple fashion, in that religious affiliation and religiosity tend to be linked to outcome variables in similar ways, although a non-exhaustive review of the literature revealed a clearer pattern of results when quantifying religion with religious affiliation rather than with measures of religiosity. For example, research has revealed that individuals with a religious affiliation experience higher levels of guilt than the non-affiliated (Albertsen, O'Connor, & Berry, 2006; Ellis, 1980); Christians have higher reported levels of guilt than Jews (London, Schulman, & Black, 1964), Buddhists (Albertsen, 2002) and the religiously unaffiliated (Braam, Sonnenberg, Beekman, Deeg, & Van Tilburg, 2000). However, the relationship between religion and guilt is less parsimonious when quantified using religiosity; positive correlations have been reported between religiosity and general guilt (Luyten, Fontaine, & Corveleyn, 2002), guilt related to sexual and hostile instincts (Fehr & Stamps, 1979), and also to shame-free guilt (Albertsen, 2002). However, Quiles and Bybee (1997) found that only predispositional (an individual difference in propensity to experience circumstance-based guilt) but not chronic guilt (ongoing experiences of guilt) was related to religiosity. Watson, Morris, and Hood (1987) found that belief in an unconditional forgiveness from a higher power alleviates guilt in individuals with higher levels of religiosity, thus moderating this relationship.

In a meta-analysis, religiosity was revealed as being related to personality traits (Saroglou, 2002; see also Saroglou, 2009). Specifically, it was revealed that religiosity is generally positively related to Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, and that Religious Fundamentalism is negatively related to Openness. A single study on religious affiliation found that non-affiliated individuals scored lower on all traits of the five-factor model of personality (except Openness) than individuals affiliated with Christianity (Taylor & MacDonald, 1999).

This pattern of results extends to other intra-personal social processes; higher levels of happiness (Bergan & McConatha, 2001), life satisfaction (Dezutter, Soenens, & Hutsebaut, 2006), moral reasoning (Walker, 2003), personal coping (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013), lower levels of substance abuse and impulse control (Gartner, Larson, & Allen, 1991), and intelligence (Zuckerman, Silberman, & Hall, 2013) are related to general religiosity. While these are also sometimes related to religious affiliation, scholars have argued that these effects are mediated by side effects of religious affiliation, such as notions of belonging and involvement in community, rather than from the effects of religion themselves (Bloom, 2012; Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012; McGuire, 2002).

3.2. Religion and Inter-Personal Processes

Allport summarized the paradoxical relationship between religion and social attitudes, and the potential for religion to lead to both pro- and anti-social attitudes in this classic observation:

> *The role of religion is paradoxical. It makes prejudice and it unmakes prejudice. . . .*
> *The sublimity of religious ideals is offset by the horrors of persecution*
> *in the name of these same ideals. (Allport, 1954: p413)*

This paradoxical relationship has been widely debated with conflicting empirical data (Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010). The impact of religion on inter-personal social psychological processes is inevitable. Individuals are socialized into a family who subscribe (or not) to a particular religion, and indeed, we choose to be friends with people who have similar religious beliefs and affiliations as our own (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001; Wagner, 1979). As discussed, the paradoxical impact of religion becomes problematic with intergroup relations. Researchers have debated the potential for religion to result in either positive (e.g., increasing intergroup tolerance; Hunsberger, 1995) or negative (e.g., increasing intergroup hostility; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005) contributions to societal attitudes and behaviors. This is driven by conflicting messages from doctrine (an exemplar from Christianity is "Love thy neighbor" [Mark 12:31] vs. "An eye for an eye" [Leviticus 24: 19–21]).

In terms of pro-sociality, religiosity has been linked to altruism and empathy (Saroglou, 2013; Saroglou, Pichon, Trompette, Verschueren, & Dernelle, 2005; Watson, Hood, Morris, & Hall, 1984), although a review by Norenzayan and Shariff (2008) reveals that prosocial behaviors and religiosity only auto-correlate in situations where there is a concern for reputation. It has also been linked to helping the less fortunate (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997), and kindness towards strangers (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Thus, religiosity tends to be linked to prosocial attitudes and behaviors. Typically, research in this area has compared individuals with high religiosity to individuals with low religiosity (which is a combination of those who place low importance on their religious affiliation and the completely non-affiliated; see Galen, 2012). This makes comparisons between religious affiliation and religiosity difficult.

In terms of anti-sociality, it appears that most forms of prejudice are proscribed by religions, while other forms of prejudice are permitted against prejudice targets that are perceived as violating religions' value system (Batson & Burris, 1994; Herek, 1987; McFarland, 1989; Whitley, 2009). The literature generally reports that those affiliated with a religion demonstrate more prejudice than the religiously non-affiliated (e.g., Finlay & Walther, 2003; Herek, 1987; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005).

The literature also shows that religiosity is positively correlated with various forms of prejudice (Whitley, 2009), however the pattern becomes more complex if one compares

results based on the different measures of religiosity. Generally, religious fundamentalism strongly and positively correlates with prejudice (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Rowatt, Franklin, & Cotton, 2005). In terms of religiosity orientations, Allport and Ross (1967) argued that only extrinsically religious people tended to be more prejudiced, whereas there was no such relation for those who were intrinsically motivated. This holds true except for attitudes toward gay people in which the pattern is reversed (see Whitley, 2009; except in an Islamic sample, Anderson & Koc, 2015). Quest is the only form of religiosity that is contemporarily found to be non-related to prejudice (Batson & Ventis, 1982).

3.3. Trends of Quantification in Social Processes

Across studies in the psychology of religion, the use of either religious affiliation or religiosity dimensions tend to produce similar patterns of findings. Particularly in the case of inter-personal processes, the effects of religion seem to be relatively clear with the literature tending to produce clear results with relatively simple interpretations. However, the case of intra-personal processes produces patterns of findings that are less clear, particularly concerning how to treat various out-group members (individuals who are different on various social dimensions). This is unsurprising because intergroup processes are infamously complex and hard to predict (Tajfel, 1982) without introducing further complicating processes by exploring their relationship with religion. Given that most religions will prescribe treatment for outgroups (e.g., most world religions condemn ame-sex sexual orientation) which may or may not conflict with an individual's personal ideologies (e.g., a religiously affiliated individual might also be pro-gay). As such, within each religious affiliation, there will be individuals who choose which parts of their religious teachings they will adhere to and which ones to discount.

4. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The future of the social psychology of religion appears promising. The religious trends associated with the social ramifications of contemporary global upheavals (as discussed in the introduction) have acted as a catalyst for new work that extends existing social psychological theories, primarily in Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1986), System Justification Theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994), and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The social psychology of religion is established as a valid sub-discipline of psychology in its own right, and has gained respect from other researchers of psychology. There are several journals and associations now dedicated exclusively to the scientific study of religion. However, as with any rapidly evolving field, there is much exciting new research that needs integrating (review papers in this field are high quality, but sparse relative to other psychology disciplines; see Bloom, 2012; Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003; Gorsuch, 1988). Thus, in this penultimate section of the chapter, I propose three challenges to the field that also act as suggestions for future research:

1. *To synthesize findings across religions.* Certain social phenomena has been well studied within religions, but there is a need to separate which phenomena are related to the broad (and non-affiliated) construct of religion, and which are peculiar to specific religious affiliations. In particular, there have been calls for cross-cultural studies to better integrate religion into research (e.g., Tarakeshwar, Stanton, & Pargament, 2003), and these could consider using measures of religiosity to complement existing cross-cultural research that quantifies religion using affiliation.

2. *To isolate constructs of religious identity from other identity constructs.* While many social psychologists have taken care to do this (e.g., Muldoon, Trew, Todd, Rougier, & McLaughlin, 2007; Weissbrod, 1983), it is of upmost importance to continue research that divorces notions of religion from other identities. For example, all followers of Islam are often victims of prejudice because they are automatically associated with militant Islamic terrorist groups, even though most do not share their ideologies. Thus, research that detaches pure religious identities from other associated identities needs to be continually conducted and then, importantly, disseminated to the general public.

3. *To refine a measure religiosity suitable for all religious and non-religious affiliations.* Key researchers in the field have noted a surplus in the quantity of scales of religiosity (e.g., Gorsuch, 1988; Hill & Hood, 1999), however those in existence tend to be Christian-centric and tend not to accommodate the increasingly non-religious population. This is evidenced by some items that cannot be answered by those who do not self-identify with a religion[v]. Equally as problematic is the scoring protocol of most religiosity measures. For example, a hypothetical low religiosity score would be expected from an Atheist. It would also be expected from an Agnostic individual, and also from an individual who identifies with a religion but has low levels of personal religiosity. Future research could consider a scale of religiosity that is valid for the religious and non-religious.

5. CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

This chapter has discussed the relationship between social psychology and religion, and in particular the importance of careful operationalization of religion as a variable for use in scientific study. As reviewed, the psychology of religion has spent the majority of its existence attempting to address concerns of measurement (Gorsuch, 1988), with a large portion of the literature teasing apart different constructs of personal religion, and the development of scales to measure these constructs (Hill & Hood, 1999). I have discussed two key methods for quantifying religion as a variable in scientific research (i.e., religious affiliation vs. individual difference measures of religiosity), and discussed how they have been used throughout the literature. To summarize, it appears that for intra-personal processes religion quantified through affiliation or through religiosity dimensions tends to produce similar patterns of results. However, in inter-personal processes, religion quantified as religiosity appears to reveal nuanced trends in the results of research that religious affiliation does not.

I would suggest that the more complex results produced by religion quantified as religiosity is an issue of categorization hierarchy. Within each religious affiliation group, the importance of the religious affiliation will vary between members, which arguably makes individual-level measures of religion (i.e., religiosity) a subordinate, and thus more meaningful method for quantification than the superordinate group-level measure (i.e., religious affiliation). Arguably, categories of religion are over-inclusive, and religion might need to be compartmentalized into smaller categories, such as captured by measures of religiosity.

Although trends in the literature suggest that the field has moved beyond a focus on measurement, the conundrum of which quantification to use still exists. I suggest that to resolve this conundrum, researchers must simply conduct a costs-benefits analysis; religious affiliation is crude yet simple, religiosity provides a more sophisticated variable which allows refined hypothesizing and requires superior understanding and interpretations. Both methods of quantification appear valid, and have unique benefits, however measures of religiosity should be used where possible as they provide a more sophisticated

understanding of the social psychology of religion than can be achieved by simpler quantification through categorical religious affiliation.

REFERENCES

Adler, A. (1925). The *practice and theory of individual psychology*. Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Company.

Ahrold, T. K., & Meston, C. M. (2010). Ethnic differences in sexual attitudes of US college students: Gender, acculturation, and religiosity factors. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 39*(1), 190-202. doi: 10.1007/s10508-008-9406-1

Albertsen, E. (2002). *Interpersonal guilt, spirituality, and religiosity: An empirical investigation of relationships*. The Wright Institute. Berkeley, CA.

Albertsen, E., O'Connor, L. E., & Berry, J. W. (2006). Religion and interpersonal guilt: Variations across ethnicity and spirituality. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 9*(1), 67-84. doi: 10.1080/13694670500040484

Albright, C. R., & Ashbrook, J. B. (2001). *Where God lives in the human brain*: Sourcebooks Naperville, IL.

Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Allport, G. W., & Ross, J. M. (1967). Personal religious orientation and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 5*(4), 432-443. doi: 10.1037/h0021212

Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. (2004). A Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale: The Short and Sweet of It. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 14*(1), 47-54. doi: 10.1207/s15327582ijpr1401_4

Anderson, J., & Koc, Y. (2015). Exploring patterns of explicit and implicit anti-gay attitudes in Muslims and Atheists. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 45(6),* 687-701. doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2126

Batson, C. D., & Burris, C. T. (1994). Personal religion: Depressant or stimulant of prejudice and discrimination. In M. P. Zanna & J. M. Olson (Eds.), *The Psychology of Prejudice: The Ontario symposium* (Vol. 7, pp. 149-169). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Batson, C. D., & Schoenrade, P. A. (1991). Measuring religion as quest: 2) Reliability concerns. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 30: 430-447.

Batson, C. D., & Ventis, W. L. (1982). *The religious experience: A social-psychological perspective*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Beit-Hallahmi, B., & Argyle, M. (1997). *The psychology of religious behaviour, belief and experience*: London: Routledge.

Bergan, A., & McConatha, J. T. (2001). Religiosity and life satisfaction. *Activities, Adaptation & Aging, 24*(3), 23-34. doi: 10.1300/J016v24n03_02

Bloom, P. (2012). Religion, morality, evolution. *Annual Review of Psychology, 63*, 179-199. doi: 10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100334

Braam, A. W., Sonnenberg, C. M., Beekman, A. T., Deeg, D. J., & Van Tilburg, W. (2000). Religious denomination as a symptom-formation factor of depression in older Dutch citizens. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 15*(5), 458-466. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-1166(200005)15:5

Bryant-Davis, T., & Wong, E. C. (2013). Faith to move mountains: Religious coping, spirituality, and interpersonal trauma recovery. *American Psychologist, 68*(8), 675-684. doi: 10.1037/a0034380

Cornwall, M., Albrecht, S. L., Cunningham, P. H., & Pitcher, B. L. (1986). The dimensions of religiosity: A conceptual model with an empirical test. *Review of Religious Research*, 27, 226-244.

Das, E., Bushman, B. J., Bezemer, M. D., Kerkhof, P., & Vermeulen, I. E. (2009). How terrorism news reports increase prejudice against outgroups: A terror management account. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*(3), 453-459. doi: doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2008.12.001

Dezutter, J., Soenens, B., & Hutsebaut, D. (2006). Religiosity and mental health: A further exploration of the relative importance of religious behaviors vs. religious attitudes. *Personality and individual differences, 40*(4), 807-818. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2005.08.014

Durkheim, E. (1915). The *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York, NY: MacMillan Co.

Echebarria-Echabe, A., & Fernández-Guede, E. (2006). Effects of terrorism on attitudes and ideological orientation. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 36*(2), 259-265. doi: 10.1002/ejsp.294

Elkins, D. N., Hedstrom, L. J., Hughes, L. L., Leaf, J. A., & Saunders, C. (1988). Toward a humanistic-phenomenological spirituality definition, description, and measurement. *Journal of humanistic Psychology, 28*(4), 5-18. doi: 10.1177/0022167888284002

Ellis, A. (1980). Psychotherapy and atheistic values: A response to A.E. Bergin's" Psychotherapy and religious values.". *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 48*(5), 635-639. doi: 10.1037/0022-006X.48.5.635

Emmons, R. A., & Paloutzian, R. F. (2003). The psychology of religion. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54*(1), 377-402. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145024

Fehr, L. A., & Stamps, L. E. (1979). Guilt and shyness: A profile of social discomfort. *Journal of personality assessment, 43*(5), 481-484. doi: 10.1207/s15327752jpa4305_8

Finlay, B., & Walther, C. S. (2003). The relation of religious affiliation, service attendance, and other factors to homophobic attitudes among university students. *Review of Religious Research*, 44, 370-393.

Fox, C. (2009). It's hatred and intolerance, not fear. *Gay & Lesbian Issues & Psychology Review, 5*(3), 160-166.

Freud, S. (1927). *The future of an illusion*. London: Hogarth Press.

Galen, L. W. (2012). Does religious belief promote prosociality? A critical examination. *Psychological bulletin, 138*(5), 876-906. doi: 10.1037/a0028251

Gartner, J., Larson, D. B., & Allen, G. D. (1991). Religious commitment and mental health: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 19*, 6–25.

Gervais, W. M., & Norenzayan, A. (2012). Analytic thinking promotes religious disbelief. *Science, 336*(6080), 493-496. doi: 10.1126/science.1215647

Gervais, W. M., Shariff, A. F., & Norenzayan, A. (2011). Do you believe in atheists? Distrust is central to anti-atheist prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 101*(6), 1189-1206. doi: 10.1037/a0025882

Gorsuch, R. L. (1988). Psychology of religion. *Annual Review of Psychology, 39*(1), 201-221. doi: 10.1146/annurev.ps.39.020188.001221

Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., & Solomon, S. (1986). The Causes and Consequences of a Need for Self-Esteem: A Terror Management Theory. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *Public Self and Private Self* (pp. 189-212). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Hall, D. L., Matz, D. C., & Wood, W. (2010). Why don't we practice what we preach? A meta-analytic review of religious racism. *Personality and social psychology review, 14*(1), 126-139. doi: 10.1177/1088868309352179

Hall, G. S. (1904). *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*. New York, NY: Appleton.

Hall, G. S. (1917). *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology* (Vol. 2). New York, NY: Appleton.

Hardy, S. A., & Carlo, G. (2005). Identity as a source of moral motivation. *Human Development, 48*, 232-256. doi: 10.1159/000086859

Herek, G. M. (1987). Religious Orientation and Prejudice: A Comparison of Racial and Sexual Attitudes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 13*(1), 34-44. doi: 10.1177/0146167287131003

Hester, M. P. (1998). The status of psychology of religion: An interview with Raymond F. Paloutzian. *Teaching of Psychology, 25*(4), 303-306. doi: 10.1080/00986289809709724

Hill, P. C., & Hood, R. W. (1999). *Measures of religiosity*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.

Hill, P. C., Pargament, K. I., Hood, R. W., McCullough Jr, M. E., Swyers, J. P., Larson, D. B., & Zinnbauer, B. J. (2000). Conceptualizing religion and spirituality: Points of commonality, points of departure. *Journal for the theory of social behaviour, 30*(1), 51-77. doi: 10.1111/1468-5914.00119

Hunsberger, B. (1989). A short version of the Christian orthodoxy scale. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 28, 360-365.

Hunsberger, B. (1995). Religion and prejudice: The role of religious fundamentalism, quest, and right-wing authoritarianism. *Journal of Social Issues, 51*(2), 113-129. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.1995.tb01326.x

Hunsberger, B., & Jackson, L. M. (2005). Religion, meaning, and prejudice. *Journal of Social Issues, 61*(4), 807-826. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00433.x

James, W. (1902). *The varieties of religious experience*. New York, NY: Collier Books.

James, W. (1907). *Pragmatism: A new name for some old philosophy, old ways of thinking: Popular lectures on philosophy*. New York, NY: Longmans, Green and Co.

Ji, C.-H. C., & Ibrahim, Y. (2007). Islamic doctrinal orthodoxy and religious orientations: Scale development and validation. *International journal for the psychology of religion, 17*(3), 189-208. doi: 10.1080/10508610701402192

Jonathan, E. (2008). The Influence of Religious Fundamentalism, Right-Wing Authoritarianism, and Christian Orthodoxy on Explicit and Implicit Measures of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals. The *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 18*, 316-329. doi: 10.1080/10508610802229262

Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*(1), 1-27. doi: 10.1111/j.2044-8309.1994.tb01008.x

Juergensmeyer, M. (2001). Terror in the Name of God. *Current History, 100*(649), 357-361.

Jung, C. G. (1938). *Psychology and religion*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Katz, I., & Hass, R. G. (1988). Racial ambivalence and American value conflict: Correlational and priming studies of dual cognitive structures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55*(6), 893-905. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.55.6.893

Kfir, I. (2015). Social Identity Group and Human (In) Security: The Case of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.*, 38(4) 233-252 doi:10.1080/1057610X.2014.997510

Koenig, H.G., King, D., & Carson, V.B. (2012). *Handbook of religion and health* (2nd ed.) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

London, P., Schulman, R. E., & Black, M. S. (1964). Religion, guilt, and ethical standards. *The Journal of social psychology, 63*(1), 145-159. doi: 10.1080/00224545.1964.9922222

Luyten, P., Fontaine, J. R. J., & Corveleyn, J. (2002). Does the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) measure maladaptive aspects of guilt and adaptive aspects of shame? An empirical investigation. *Personality and individual differences, 33*(8), 1373-1387. doi: 10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00197-6

Martin, G. (2012). *Understanding terrorism: Challenges, perspectives, and issues*: Sage Publications.

McFarland, S. G. (1989). Religious orientations and the targets of discrimination. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 28,*, 324-336.

McGuire, M. (2002). *Religion: The social context* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual review of sociology*, 27, 415-444. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.415

Muldoon, O. T. (2004). Children of the Troubles: The impact of political violence in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Social Issues, 60*(3), 453-468. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-4537.2004.00366.x

Muldoon, O. T., Trew, K., Todd, J., Rougier, N., & McLaughlin, K. (2007). Religious and national identity after the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. *Political Psychology, 28*(1), 89-103. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00553.x

Neer, T., & O'Toole, M. E. (2014). The Violence of the Islamic State of Syria (ISIS): A Behavioral Perspective. *Violence and Gender, 1*(4), 145-156. doi: 10.1089/vio.2014.0037

Norenzayan, A., & Shariff, A. F. (2008). The origin and evolution of religious prosociality. *Science, 322*(5898), 58-62. doi: 10.1126/science.1158757

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2011). *Sacred and secular: Religion and politics worldwide*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Pew Research Centre. (2012). *Forum on Religion & Public Life*. Retrieved from: http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/

Quiles, Z. N., & Bybee, J. (1997). Chronic and predispositional guilt: Relations to mental health, prosocial behavior, and religiosity. *Journal of personality assessment, 69*(1), 104-126. doi: 10.1207/s15327752jpa6901_6

Ranstorp, M. (2007). The virtual sanctuary of Al-Qaeda and terrorism in the age of globalization. In J. Eriksson & G. Giacomello (Eds.), *International relations and security in the digital age* (Vol. 31-50, pp. 31). London: Routledge.

Rowatt, W. C., Franklin, L. M., & Cotton, M. (2005). Patterns and personality correlates of implicit and explicit attitudes toward Christians and Muslims. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 44*(1), 29-43. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5906.2005.00263.x

Saroglou, V. (2002). Religion and the five factors of personality: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and individual differences, 32*(1), 15-25. doi: 10.1016/S0191-8869(00)00233-6

Saroglou, V. (2009). Religiousness as a cultural adaptation of basic traits: A five-factor model perspective. *Personality and social psychology review, 14(1),* 108-25. doi: 10.1177/1088868309352322

Saroglou, V. (2013). Religion, spirituality, and altruism. In K. I. Pargament, J. Exline, & J. Jones (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 1, pp. 439-457).

Saroglou, V., Pichon, I., Trompette, L., Verschueren, M., & Dernelle, R. (2005). Prosocial Behavior and Religion: New Evidence Based on Projective Measures and Peer Ratings. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 44*(3), 323-348. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5906.2005.00289.x

Starbuck, E. D. (1899). *The psychology of religion*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Tajfel, H. (1982). Social psychology of intergroup relations. *Annual Review of Psychology, 33*(1), 1-39. doi: 10.1146/annurev.ps.33.020182.000245

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worschel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tarakeshwar, N., Stanton, J., & Pargament, K. I. (2003). Religion an overlooked dimension in cross-cultural psychology. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 34*(4), 377-394. doi: 10.1177/0022022103034004001

Taylor, A., & MacDonald, D. A. (1999). Religion and the five factor model of personality: An exploratory investigation using a Canadian university sample. *Personality and individual differences, 27*(6), 1243-1259. doi: 10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00068-9

Wagner, C. P. (1979). *Our kind of people: The ethical dimensions of church growth in America.* Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press.

Walker, L. J. (2003). Morality, religion, spirituality: the value of saintliness. *Journal of Moral Education, 32*(4), 373-384. doi: 10.1080/0305724032000161277

Watson, P., Hood, R. W., Morris, R. J., & Hall, J. R. (1984). Empathy, religious orientation, and social desirability. *Journal of psychology, 117*(2), 211-216. doi: 10.1080/00223980.1984.9923679

Watson, P. J., Morris, R. J., & Hood, R. W., Jr. (1987). Antireligious humanistic values, guilt, and self esteem. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 26,* 535-546.

Weissbrod, L. (1983). Religion as national identity in a secular society. *Review of Religious Research, 24(3),* 188-205.

Whitley, B. E. (2009). Religiosity and Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men: A Meta-Analysis. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 19,* 21-38. doi: 10.1080/10508610802471104

Wulff, D. M. (1991). *Psychology of religion: Classic and contemporary views*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Zuckerman, M., Silberman, J., & Hall, J. A. (2013). The relation between intelligence and religiosity a meta-analysis and some proposed explanations. *Personality and social psychology review*, doi: 10.1177/1088868313497266

Zuckerman, P. (2007). Atheism: Contemporary numbers and patterns. In M. Martin (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to atheism. Cambridge companions to philosophy.* (pp. 47-65). New York NY: Cambridge University Press.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Full name: Joel Raymond Anderson
Institutional affiliation: University of Geneva (Université de Genève)
Institutional address: Université de Genève, Faculté de Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Education (FPSE), Section de Psychologie, Uni Mail - 40 Bd du Pont d'Arve, CH - 1205 Genève, Switzerland.
Short biographical sketch: Joel Anderson is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Geneva. He completed his PhD at the Australian Catholic University, in which his dissertation focused on implicit social cognitions and how they are influenced by religion and religious-relevant factors. His current primary research interests focus on prejudice toward sexual orientation, religious groups, and asylum seekers. He is also conducting research on sexual objectification, gender stereotypes, and cultural identification.

[i] I acknowledge that referring to Atheism as a religious category is not only an oxymoron, but also a contradiction that many Atheists find offensive and simply incorrect. However, when asked to nominate their religious affiliation in a census or survey, this is the only way of identifying as non-religious. This also extends to psychology research using 'religion' as a demographic variable. For this reason, I place this phrase between quotation marks.

[ii] This statistic includes those who identify as Atheist, but also as secular, agnostic, or non-religious. The report citing this statistic did not provide a further breakdown of this figure because this global survey did not offer further options in all cultures. Individuals may also prefer alternative labels in order to avoid stigma associated with identifying as Atheist (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2012; Gervais et al., 2011). Other statistics suggest that approximately 1/5 of those who do not affiliate with a religion are truly atheistic (World fact book, 2013).

[iii] Terrorism is (of course) not unique to Islam. Other religious groups have also been linked to terror (i.e., Irish Republican Army [IRA], Jewish Defense League [JDL]). Indeed, all major religions of the world have at some level been involved with sectarian-based violence or terror (Fox, 2009; Juergensmeyer, 2001; Muldoon, 2004). However, the majority of the psychology of religion literature reveals that violence and terror are associated with Islam, and negative perceptions of Islamic individuals. Dialogue on this topic is beyond the scope of this chapter, however, for a discussion see Martin (2012).

[iv] There is also an ongoing dialogue between social psychologists on the differences between religion and religiosity and other related constructs such as spirituality and indigenous aspects of religion. This is out of the intended scope of this chapter; for a discussion on the evolved meanings of religion and spirituality as constructs, see Hill et al. (2000)

[v] An example of this would be the first item of the Quest Scale ("As I grow and change, I expect my religion also to grow and change"; Batson & Schoenrade, 1991). An individual who does not have a religious affiliation would find this hard to answer.