15 Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Adolescents' Religiosity and Family Orientation

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Abstract

This chapter explores cultural and individual religious roots of adolescents' family orientation on the basis of multilevel analyses with data from 17 cultural groups. Religion and the family are seen as intertwined social institutions. The family as a source of social support has been identified as an important mediator of the effects of religiosity on adolescent developmental outcomes. The results of the current study show that religiosity was related to different aspects of adolescents' family orientation (traditional family values, value of children, and family future orientation), and that the culture-level effects of religiosity on family orientation were stronger than the individual-level effects. At the cultural level, socioeconomic development added to the effect of religiosity, indicating that societal affluence combined with nonreligious secular orientations is linked to a lower family orientation, especially with regard to traditional family values. The authors suggest that individual religiosity may be of special importance for adolescents' family orientation in contexts where religiosity has lost some significance but religious traditions are still alive and can be (re-)connected to.

Religion and the family represent closely linked social institutions. Both function through psychological processes that may vary during development and across cultures. Religious socialization takes place in families, and religions in turn can influence family life. The focus of the current chapter is on the relation between adolescents' religiosity and their family orientation. Taking a cross-cultural and multilevel perspective, we will both theoretically and empirically explore three major questions: How are adolescents similar or different across cultures with respect to the importance of religious beliefs and family orientation? How are adolescents'

religiosity and family orientation related in different cultures? And, how is nation-level religiosity as well as nation-level socioeconomic development related to adolescents' family orientation? We deal with these questions on the basis of data from the cross-cultural research project "Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations" (Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2005).

Adolescence is a sensitive period for religious and spiritual development. Because of the intermediate position between childhood and adulthood and the related insecurities, adolescents' identity development comes with an intense striving for meaning and a need for autonomy and relatedness (Erikson, 1968; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Therefore, adolescents often engage in religious and spiritual exploration (Elkind, 1964; Good & Willoughby, 2008; Oser, Scarlett, & Bucher, 2006). According to Elkind (1999), adolescents (especially those in Western societies) prefer an intense personal religiosity and consider the formal aspects of religiousness (e.g., regular church attendance) to be less important (see also Lopez, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2011). Therefore, our focus here is on adolescents' subjective importance subscribed to religious beliefs.

Numerous cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have shown that religiosity is associated with better physical and mental health (George, Ellison, & Larson, 2002; Hackney & Sanders, 2003). For adolescents, Wagener, Furrow, King, Leffert, and Benson (2003) showed that religiosity was related to lower risk-taking, successful coping, and higher prosocial values and behavior (see also French, Eisenberg, Sallquist, & Purwono, Chapter 6 in this volume). Similar results with respect to moral outcomes (e.g., empathic concern and altruism) were reported by King and Furrow (2004) and Youniss, McLellan, and Yates (1999).

As mechanisms or mediators of these effects, some studies have identified religion's positive influences on social support, community inclusion, and on a stable sense of identity (Cohen, 2002; George et al., 2002; Steger & Frazier, 2005; Wagener et al., 2003). Critical voices argue that religion is not the only source of these (secular) mediators and suggest that researchers focus on the mediators themselves rather than on religion per se (Funder, 2002). On the contrary, Pargament (2002b) points to the unique effects of religion emphasizing the "sacred" as a powerful defining feature of religion. Furthermore, the kind of religious practice and religiosity also play a role: whereas an intrinsically motivated religiosity has been positively linked to well-being, an imposed and unexamined religiosity has been negatively linked (Pargament, 2002a) (see also Kornadt, Chapter 2 in this volume;

Saroglou, Chapter 17 in this volume). Whether religion's effects on adolescent development are unique or mediated, there is no doubt that the *family* as an essential source of social support plays an important role for the link between religiosity and adolescent developmental outcomes (Regnerus & Burdette, 2006; Sabatier, Mayer, Friedlmeier, Lubiewska, & Trommsdorff, 2011). Therefore, the focus of the current chapter is to understand the relations between adolescent religiosity and their family orientation. Before dealing more closely with this issue, the necessity of a cross-cultural perspective will be emphasized.

Most studies on psychological functions of religiosity are based on Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD, see Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) samples. The question arises as to what extent (if at all) results based on these samples can be generalized to adolescents from different cultural contexts. In spite of growing global connections through the Internet along with the dissemination of mainstream (North American) pop music and movies that have arguably led to a universal popular youth culture (Dasen, 2000; Jensen, 2003; Schlegel, 2000), cross-cultural and cross-ethnic studies on several aspects of adolescents' lives show that large cultural differences still prevail (Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Mayer & Trommsdorff, 2010). Furthermore, a globalized youth culture in modernizing, but in large part still traditional, cultural contexts like India or China may be restricted to adolescents from urban areas and a Western-oriented middle-class youth. Even the concept of "emerging adulthood" may only hold for Western developmental contexts (Arnett, 2010).

Few studies shed light on the function of religiosity for adolescent development across cultures. In samples of African American and European-American 11th graders, Markstrom (1999) found that various forms of religious involvement were associated with indicators of ego strength and psychosocial maturity. In a recent study comparing the mediating role of adolescents' family orientation in the relation between religiosity and life satisfaction across four Christian cultures, Sabatier et al. (2011) found that religiosity was indirectly related to adolescent life satisfaction via family orientation across all four cultures (France, Germany, Poland, and the United States). In a study of U.S. adolescents with Latin American, Asian, and European backgrounds, Lopez, Huynh, and Fuligni (2011) showed that regardless of religious and cultural background, changes in adolescents' religious identity were closely related to changes in their family identity.

Researchers have also taken cross-cultural perspectives on the role of religion for the study of *value orientations* (see Bond, Lun, & Li, Chapter 5 in this volume; Schwartz, Chapter 4 in this volume). Values represent standards of behavior (“oughts” and “shoulds”) that are transmitted by various social institutions, such as religion. Early studies on the relation between religiosity and values found that religious participants reported a higher importance of values like salvation, forgiveness, and obedience than did nonreligious participants, who reported a higher importance of independence, pleasure, and intellectualism (Rokeach, 1969). Later studies using the Schwartz’ circumplex model of values tended to find similar associations (e.g., Schwartz & Huismans, 1995). In a meta-analysis, Saroglou, Delpierre, and Dernelle (2004) corroborated these findings across 21 samples from 15 countries and three denominations (Christians, Jews, and Muslims): higher religiosity was positively related to values supporting the preservation of the social order and to prosocial values whereas it was negatively related to values promoting openness to change and autonomy as well as to hedonistic values. These cross-cultural relations between religiosity and prosocial, as well as socially conservative values, are related to the main question of this chapter: what is the relation between adolescents’ religiosity and their family orientation? Religion has been identified as a “propagator” of family ideologies (Pearce & Thornton, 2007, p. 1227) which are in turn related to family-relevant behaviors like the decision to have children (Barber, 2000). The link between religiosity and family orientation is an understudied field (Pankhurst & Houseknecht, 2000) and is especially important during the transition to adulthood (Pearce & Thornton, 2007). We understand family orientation as a construct encompassing traditional family values, values of children, and the importance of a future family. This broad definition allows us to study the effects of religiosity on several aspects of family orientation including normative and subjective emotional aspects, and general as well as personal future-oriented aspects.

The following empirical portion of this chapter consists of three sections. First, we analyze cross-cultural similarities and differences in adolescents’ religiosity and their family orientation. Second, we focus on the relation between religiosity and family orientation within different cultures and on a potentially moderating role of culture-level religiosity for this relation. The third section is concerned with culture-level effects of religiosity and of a nation’s socioeconomic development on adolescents’ family orientation. In all three sections we introduce the respective topic theoretically and subsequently present results of cross-cultural and multilevel analyses from the Value of Children Study.

Adolescents’ Religiosity and Family Orientation across Cultures: The Roles of Secularization and Modernization

The cross-cultural study of the psychology of religion is an understudied field (Tarakeshwar, Stanton, & Pargament, 2003). In this section, we will first discuss the phenomenon of secularization and the related topic of the transmission of religiosity in different cultural contexts. Then we will discuss to what degree modernization processes affect the significance of the family across cultural contexts. Subsequently, we will introduce the sample of the Value of Children Study and present cross-cultural empirical findings on adolescents’ religiosity and family orientation.

Decline of Religiosity: The Secularization Thesis

The question of a decline of religiosity and a rise of secular orientations is quite controversial (e.g., see Halman & Pettersson, 2006). In a large-scale longitudinal study of religion and its intergenerational transmission, Bengtson and colleagues analyzed the changes of religious beliefs, values, and practices across three decades and three connected generations in the United States (Bengtson, Copen, Putney, & Silverstein, 2009). From 1971 to 2000 there was a considerable decline of reported religious affiliation for all three generations. This result is in line with the phenomenon of secularization, reflecting a continuous decline of religiosity in Western Europe and the English-speaking world during the second half of the 20th century (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Secularization has been described as resulting from modernization, economic development, and individualization. Though it is acknowledged that traditional religious values can persist to some degree (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Inkeles, 1998), some authors assume that sooner or later all cultures will overcome traditional religious values and come to prefer secular-rational and autonomous self-expressive values (“human development sequence,” see Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

This view has not been unchallenged. Georgas (2006) argues that the thrust of modernization itself is based on religious and cultural values that developed out of Calvinist Protestantism. In a similar vein, Eisenstadt (1973) postulates that the development of transcendental religions during the axial age (Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and later Islam) are the basis of later modernization processes. According to this view, axial civilizations are characterized by a tension between transcendental and worldly orientations. This tension leads to the conception of the world and human beings as in need of redemption and correction or improvement. Instead of a single modernity as implicated by Inglehart’s

model, Eisenstadt (2006) suggests the presence of multiple modernities based on each culture's unique way of dealing with this tension.

In a study of Christian societies with data from the International Social Survey Programme, Höllinger and Haller (2009) conclude that although traditional forms of religion have declined considerably in some cultures, religion continues to play an important role in the public sphere as well as in private life in other cultures. They argue that the worldviews and doctrines of Protestantism have led to a greater "disenchantment of the world" (p. 281) and to a subsequent decline of religiosity as compared to Catholicism and Orthodoxy (see also Georgas, 2006). Furthermore, bureaucratic state churches (as in some Western European countries) and Communism in Eastern Europe were related to lower religiosity. The historical significance of religion in the United States owing to an emphasis on religious freedom (in contrast with Europe) has possibly contributed to the relatively small decline in the importance of religion in this country. A declining importance of religion has also been accorded to socioeconomic development; economic prosperity and the rise of welfare state provisions can buffer existential risks related to religious needs. However, there is no direct link: in a cross-cultural study, Georgas, van de Vijver, and Berry (2004) showed that religion and economic prosperity (at the cultural level) were related to psychological variables in different and partly contrasting ways.

Transmission of Religiosity: Family and Society

Closely related to the issue of religious decline or persistence is the question of how religiosity and related value orientations are transmitted from generation to generation within a specific cultural context (see also Knafo, Daniel, Gabay, Zilber, & Shir, Chapter 16 in this volume). This question has been studied from a socialization theoretical perspective focusing on transmission processes between generations from the same family (vertical transmission) and from a cohort approach focusing on the influence of peers, culture, and the *zeitgeist* (i.e., the general intellectual and political climate within a nation or cultural group) (horizontal and oblique transmission). How do these transmission processes contribute to the decline versus stability of religion in different cultural contexts?

According to Boyatzis, Dollahite, and Marks (2006) the factor with the greatest impact on children's religious development is the socialization experience within the family. In their three-generation longitudinal study, Bengtson et al. (2009) found that parents as well as grandparents substantially influenced several aspects of their offspring's religiosity. Thus, for most adolescents, the importance of a specific religious belief is strongly

influenced by their family's religious beliefs (see also Regnerus, Smith, & Smith, 2004; Trommsdorff, 2009a). Kelley and De Graaf (1997) analyzed the transmission of religious beliefs by way of parental socialization in 15 nations in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). The focus was on the moderating influence of the cultural religious environment on how religious beliefs are transmitted across generations. The results showed that after controlling for a nation's level of economic development and for exposure to Communism, "people living in religious nations will, in proportion to the religiosity of their fellow-citizens, acquire more orthodox beliefs than otherwise similar people living in secular nations" (p. 639). Furthermore, in more secular nations, parents' religiosity had a greater impact on children's religiosity, and the national religious context had a smaller impact than in more religious nations. In turn, parents' religiosity was less related to child religiosity in cultures with a high normativity of religion whereas the national context had a greater effect in these cultures. Thus, the relative importance of vertical and horizontal/oblique transmission processes depends on the cultural context. In cultures where most people are religious and where one specific religion prevails, the family is only one among many socialization agents for religious beliefs. In these societies, peers, schools, the media, and religious institutions contribute to religious socialization and enculturation, building on the highly normative and shared collective notion of religious truth. As Baumeister (2002) notes,

It is easier for an individual to maintain religious faith if he or she lives in a community where everyone else holds that same faith [and] it is far more difficult to maintain one's own faith while living amid people who do not share your faith and who instead either subscribe to other, alternative religious beliefs or reject religious belief altogether (p. 166).

Differential transmission processes depending on the nation-level religious context thus may reinforce a culture's tendency to either change to more secular values (as in the case of a plurality of religious beliefs and/or an already lowered normativity of religion) or to keep religious values at a constantly high level (as in the case of a high normativity and exclusivity of one specific religion). Taken together, the above theorizing lets us expect substantial cross-cultural differences in the religiosity of adolescents from cultures that differ with regard to the normativity of religion, economic development, and basic value orientations.

Because values regarding the family are deeply rooted in many religious traditions, a parallel decline of family orientation can be expected for cultures where religious beliefs are on the decline. Indeed, modernization

theoretical approaches support this argument, but they are not uncontested, as will be shown in the next section.

Modernization and Family Change

Discussion about the decline of the family can be traced back to the French Revolution, which disturbed the equilibrium of the traditional extended family system and patriarchal authority (according to Auguste Comte, as cited in Georgas, 2006). Similarly, Parsons (1949) argued that the industrial revolution required the formation of a nuclear family that became more and more alienated from its extended kin network. There are manifold indicators of this decline continuing today: an increasing number of single-parent families; an increasing divorce rate; an increase of step-families and patchwork families; and, most of all, a declining birth rate (Georgas, 2006; Goode, 1963). The post-nuclear family (Popenoe, 1988) is characterized by a further decreasing family size, fewer joint activities and less quality contact between parents and children, and reduced contact with collateral kin (e.g., aunts, nephews, etc.), but more contact with grandparents. According to Bengtson (2001), this increasing importance of multigenerational bonds may signify a qualitative change in family solidarity structures rather than a decline of the family. Pankhurst and Houseknecht (2000) argue that in spite of the manifold changes that religion and the family undergo in the modern era, both institutions are not on the decline but still vital and important in most societies, raising doubts with regard to the general validity of the secularization thesis and the thesis of family decline.

Whereas it is commonly agreed that the above-mentioned indicators reflect a weakening of familial bonds in modernized Western cultures, the implications for modernizing non-Western cultures remain unclear. In many modernizing societies, a trend toward a separate residence for the nuclear conjugal family can be observed. However, can we also observe a functional nucleation, or do the relationships to the extended kin network stay intact (Inkeles, 1998)? In India, for example, the extended family members are still psychologically and normatively connected to each other despite being separated by large distances (Mishra, Mayer, Trommsdorff, Albert, & Schwarz, 2005; Sinha, 1991).

Yang (1996) suggests that psychological change in modernization is restricted to those cultural and psychological characteristics that are incompatible with a modern way of life. The question is here whether these characteristics include a decline in personal closeness between family members and kin as proposed by classical modernization theory (Inkeles & Smith, 1974). Kagitcibasi (2007) contends that despite socioeconomic development, a shift towards lower emotional closeness among family members is not taking

place in modernizing cultures. Rather, she postulates a shift toward a *family model of emotional interdependence* in these cultures, characterized by continuing emotional interdependence but declining material interdependence (and rising personal autonomy). Studies directly testing these assumptions are rare. In a large study of families in 30 cultures, Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kagitcibasi, and Poortinga (2006) examined cross-cultural differences on a number of measures (family values, family roles, etc.) both from the perspective of the ecocultural framework (e.g., Georgas et al., 2004) and from Kagitcibasi's theory of family change. Results showed that with socioeconomic development of a culture, family values became less traditional, family networks and emotional cohesion less strong, and family roles less expressive, in line with the expectations of the ecocultural framework. The expectations with regard to Kagitcibasi's model were also partly confirmed: nuclear family relationships were close in modernizing cultures and even in Western individualistic cultures, suggesting a trend to the emotionally interdependent family model. Thus, modernization in terms of socioeconomic development does have a weakening effect on the significance of the family in society, but more traditional (hierarchical and patriarchal) aspects of the family seem to be more affected than the importance of the family in general (see also Trommsdorff, 2009b). A more direct test of the theory of family change was carried out recently by Mayer, Trommsdorff, Kagitcibasi, and Mishra (2012). Using mothers' and adolescents' data from three cultures in the Value of Children Study (Germany, Turkey, and India), the authors identified three patterns of family values that could be related to the three ideal-typical family models suggested by Kagitcibasi (2007). Furthermore, the cross-cultural and cross-generational differences with regard to these family value patterns were in line with predictions based on the theory of family change.

To conclude, both socioeconomic development and the role of religion have important implications for the role of the family in a culture. As previously discussed, however, socioeconomic development cannot be equated with religious decline/secularization. In this sense, religious traditions may be an important factor for canalizing changes brought about by modernization processes. Consequently, both phenomena (socioeconomic development and religion) are assumed to have unique effects on the significance of the family in a society.

The Value of Children (VOC) Study

The data presented here is part of the cross-cultural and international research project "Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations" (Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2005), which studied family-related values, intergenerational relations and support, as well as family-related future orientation of adolescents

in connected samples of families (grandmothers, mothers, and adolescents). The data for the current chapter includes the adolescent samples from 17 cultural groups (see Table 15.1). In all cultures, participants were surveyed by members of the local collaborating team, completing a questionnaire either at home or in school. In cultures where strong urban-rural differences continue to exist (i.e., China, India, Indonesia, Poland, South Africa, and Turkey), samples from both rural and urban areas were included. In all other cultures, adolescents from suburban or urban regions were considered typical for the cultures. The participants were between 12 and 23 years old, with 98 percent of the sample being between 13 and 19 years old ("teenagers"); the overall mean age was 15.6 years ($SD = 1.65$ years). All adolescents over the age of 20 came from Switzerland (M age: 19.8 years). Because participants' ages differed significantly across cultural groups, age was included as a covariate in all cross-cultural comparisons. Participants from Israel were all Jewish, partly from secular and partly from Orthodox Jewish contexts. Participants from South Africa were recruited from the Northern Sotho cultural group (Limpopo Province), whose standard of living is considerably below the South African average (Sam, Peltzer, & Mayer, 2005). There were two Indian samples: one from Northern India (Varanasi area), and one from Southern India (Puducherry area). Because the two Indian samples are culturally diverse and speak different languages (Hindi in the North, Tamil in the South) we consider them as separate cultural groups for our analyses.

The cultures represent a wide range of economic development, considerable differences in exposure to Communism, and in secular-rational value orientations, all of which should be related to lower religiosity and to a lower family orientation. To assess adolescents' religiosity, we asked for their religious belief/affiliation and for the importance of these religious beliefs. The latter was a one-item measure, with ratings ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*very important*); it was only to be answered if a specific religious belief was indicated before. If participants indicated that they were not religious/had no religious affiliation, a value of 1 (*not important at all*) was set a posteriori in the importance measure. Of the overall sample, 22 percent were Roman Catholic Christians, 9 percent were Protestant Christians, 7 percent were Orthodox Christians, and 4 percent were of other Christian denominations. Thirteen percent were affiliated to Islam; 12 percent to Hinduism; 4 percent to Judaism; 2 percent to Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism or Confucianism; and 1 percent believed in Animism, Paganism or reported a personal religious belief. The largest group of 26 percent reported no religious belief (see Table 15.1 for further information).

Table 15.1. Cultures, Sample Composition, and Religious Affiliation

Region/Country	<i>n</i>	% Female	% Non-religious	Highest Religious Affiliation (%) ¹
North America				
United States	337	64	12	Protestantism (58 %)
Europe				
France	200	55	35	Roman Catholicism (58 %)
Germany	311	56	44	Roman Catholicism (26 %)
Switzerland	131	58	26	Roman Catholicism (28 %)
Italy	381	54	15	Roman Catholicism (84 %)
Poland	327	60	2	Roman Catholicism (94 %)
Czech Republic	260	100	79	Roman Catholicism (17 %)
Estonia	300	51	84	Protestantism (6 %)
Russia	334	54	12	Orthodox Christian Church (86 %)
Middle East				
Turkey	308	53	3	Islam (93 %)
Israel	194	63	9	Judaism (90 %)
Africa				
South Africa	317	62	1	Protestantism (incl. Zion Christian Church) (48 %)
Southeast Asia				
India (North)	300	51	1	Hinduism (94%)
India (South)	300	50	2	Hinduism (98%)
Indonesia	300	50	0	Islam (98 %)
East Asia				
China	306	58	83	Confucianism (7%)
Japan	208	63	66	Buddhism (15 %)

Note: ¹ Religious denomination indicated by the highest percentage of adolescents in the respective culture (and its proportion in the full cultural sample), regardless of whether "No religion" was the dominant category or not.

Adolescents' Religiosity across Cultures. A comparison of the importance of adolescents' religious beliefs yielded large cross-cultural differences with culture explaining half of the variance in adolescents' religiosity, $F(16, 4610) = 285.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .50$. Figure 15.1 shows that adolescents from Indonesia reported the highest importance of religion, followed by Northern Indian, South African, Polish, Turkish, and Southern Indian adolescents. An importance of religion at or slightly below the midpoint of the scale was reported by U.S., Israeli, Russian, and Italian adolescents. Swiss, French, and German adolescents reported a low importance of religion and Japanese, Czech, Chinese, and Estonian adolescents reported a very low importance of

Figure 15.1. Cultural and gender differences in the importance of religious beliefs.

religion. Gender and its interaction with culture each explained ≤ 1 percent of the overall variance and are not considered in detail here.

Overall, adolescents from more prosperous nations reported to be less religious than adolescents from less well-off nations. However, the considerable differences between Western European and U.S. adolescents indicate that economic development cannot be equaled with religious decline. German adolescents' low level of religiosity was additionally influenced by the sample composition: one third of the German sample came from East Germany, where the exposure to Communistic ideology resulted in a very low level of religious affiliation. This can also be observed in two Eastern European nations – Estonia and the Czech Republic – where an extremely low level of religiosity was reported. Despite a similar Communist experience in Poland and Russia, a high level of religiosity was reported there. In Poland, Catholicism helped to preserve the Polish national identity during the Communist era, and in Russia, a revival of traditional values has been observed during the last two decades (Höllinger & Haller, 2009; Mayer, Kuramschew, & Trommsdorff, 2009; Stetsenko, 2002). Communism has also had a diminishing effect on Chinese adolescents' religiosity, but here additional factors come into play. Many Chinese (still, and despite Communism) adhere strongly to Confucian philosophy but do not regard themselves as religious. A similar phenomenon with respect to Shintoist or Daoist beliefs may be responsible for the very low level of Japanese

adolescents' self-reported religiosity. Here, cultural differences of religion are relevant (see Trommsdorff, 2012).

Adolescents' Family Orientation across Cultures. As indicated above, adolescents' family orientation is operationalized here as entailing adolescents' values with respect to (traditional) family relations, their value of children, and their future orientation with regard to having their own family (Mayer & Trommsdorff, 2010; Seginer, 2009). In the following sections, we introduce the instruments measuring adolescents' family orientation and present the results of cross-cultural comparisons. The effects of gender and its interaction with culture will not be reported in detail because of negligible effect sizes ($\eta^2 \leq .01$).

- *Family Values* are assessed using a 5-item scale that measures a traditional view on the family and family relationships based on Georgas' (1991) scale. Sample items include: "We should honor and protect our family's reputation" and "Children should obey their parents." With the exception of South Africa ($\alpha = .45$), the internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) were between .57 and .81 for the 17 cultures in the study. The ANOVA showed that culture explained a substantial amount of the variance of family values, $F(16, 4695) = 84.53, p < .001, \eta^2 = .22$. The highest importance of family values was reported by South African adolescents; the lowest by Japanese adolescents (see Figure 15.2).
- *Emotional Values of Children* represent emotional reasons for having children. Sample items include "Because it is a joy to have a small baby" and "Because of the special feeling of love that develops between a parent and a child." The scale was developed for the Value of Children Study (e.g., Arnold et al., 1975; Kagitcibasi, 1982; Schwarz, Chakkarath, Trommsdorff, Schwenk, & Nauck, 2001). The cross-cultural construct equivalence of the value of children dimensions has been demonstrated (Mayer & Trommsdorff, 2010). Cronbach's alphas of this 7-item scale were between .72 and .89. The culture effect was relatively weak, $F(16, 4692) = 23.44, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$. The highest importance of emotional values of children was reported by Southern Indian adolescents, and the lowest by Israeli adolescents (see Figure 15.2).
- *Utilitarian-normative Values of Children* combine economic-utilitarian and social-normative reasons for having children (Kagitcibasi, 1982). Example items include "To have one more person to help your family economically" and "Because some of your older relatives feel that you

Figure 15.2. Cultural differences in family orientation: Family Values, Emotional VOC, Utilitarian-normative VOC, and Family Future Orientation.

should have more children.” With the exception of Southern Indian adolescents ($\alpha = .55$) Cronbach’s alphas for this 8-item scale were between .68 and .86. There was a strong culture effect, $F(16, 4692) = 180.88, p < .001, \eta^2 = .38$. Southern Indian adolescents reported the highest importance of these values, and Swiss adolescents reported the lowest importance (see Figure 15.2).

- *Family Future Orientation* indicates to what extent the statement “Family will be the most important thing in my life; everything else will be less important” corresponds with adolescents’ personal way of thinking on a scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Quite a lot*). Data from Italy was not available for this variable. Cultural differences were substantial, $F(15, 4306) = 27.73, p < .001, \eta^2 = .15$, with adolescents from Southern India reporting the highest importance and adolescents from China reporting the lowest importance of a future family.

Overall, the results indicate strong cultural differences for *Family Values* and *Utilitarian-normative Values of Children*. As shown in Figure 15.2, these differences are also substantially related to a culture’s level of religiosity and economic prosperity, as cultures that were both highly religious and relatively poor (Indonesia, South Africa, and the two Indian samples) reported the highest family values and utilitarian-normative VOCs, whereas the rather secular and wealthy Western European and East Asian cultures (Japan) reported the lowest level of these values. Weaker differences were found for *Family Future Orientation* and *Emotional Values of Children*. Here, no relations with culture-level religiosity or economic prosperity are obvious from Figure 15.2. Thus, we may preliminarily conclude that a decreased importance of the family as a consequence of modernization processes can be observed with regard to the two more traditional and conservative-normative aspects of family orientation (family values and utilitarian-normative VOC), but not for the two aspects related to emotional closeness and more personal issues (emotional VOC and family future orientation). In the remainder of this chapter, we will examine and present concrete empirical evidence for this preliminary observation.

In the next section we turn to our main objective: analyzing the effect of adolescents’ religiosity on their family orientation both within and across cultures. Within cultures, we will explore how individual religiosity affects the four aspects of family orientation (and how the religious context moderates this influence); across cultures, we will analyze how the religious context and other cultural characteristics are related to adolescents’ family orientation at the cultural level.

Relations between Religiosity and Family Orientation: Multilevel Perspectives

The family may be the most important source of social capital for adolescents and functions as an important mediator for the relation between religiosity and well-being. Furthermore, the family plays an important role in religious worldviews and religious moral doctrines (Dollahite, Marks, & Goodman, 2004; Pankhurst & Houseknecht, 2000). Thus, as a cultural system, religion shapes family values and can instill an "ethos" of the family (Chatters & Taylor, 2005). Many religions (e.g., Islam, Judaism, most traditions in Christianity) pronounce family relations and specific family roles and hierarchies as sacred. Moral directives derived from religious doctrines (e.g., that children are advised to honor their parents) "can constitute a key form of religious influence among youth" and can offer "purposes and processes that have no direct equivalent within secular systems of meaning and motivation" (Regnerus & Burdette, 2006, p. 178). The sanctification of family relationships can have desirable implications for family life (Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Murray-Swank, 2003). Taking the Christian tradition as an example, many scriptures in the Bible (especially in the Old Testament) affirm and authorize positive norms of filial obligations and assistance to family members. The milestones of family life, such as birth and marriage, are celebrated through religious rituals and ceremonies.

Most of the literature in the field is concerned with (1) possible links between religion and parents' marital and parental functioning and with (2) the role of religion for the formation of family bonds. In these studies, religion is often not only seen as a promoting factor for family cohesion, but also as a potentially problematic authority legitimizing abusive forms of parental discipline and domestic violence, especially in very traditional families (see the review by Mahoney, 2010, based on studies with mainly Christian denominations and U.S. samples). With regard to the perspective of adolescents, Agate, Zabriskie, and Eggett (2007) reported a positive effect of family religiosity for family functioning (cohesion and adaptability) in a U.S. sample with a diverse religious background. Using data from the American National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Regnerus and Burdette (2006) found that a growing religious salience over time was consistently related to better family relations. Gamoran (1992) found that U.S. Jewish adolescents' synagogue attendance and their family orientation were positively related. In a 31-year longitudinal study, Pearce and Thornton (2007) found that mothers' religious affiliation and religious service attendance at the time when the child was born was significantly

positively related to various indicators of the child's family ideology when the child was 23 and 31 years old, respectively. Furthermore, they found that the child's own religiosity at age 18 was substantially related to his/her family ideology at later ages.

Sabatier et al. (2011) found a weaker positive relation between adolescent religiosity and family orientation in low-religiosity cultures as compared to high-religiosity cultures. A similar moderating effect of the religious context has been found for the link between religiosity and psychological well-being (e.g., Lavric & Flere, 2008). As Okulicz-Kozaryn (2010) summarizes, "religiosity makes people happier in religious nations" (p. 166). However, only forms of religiosity that promote social capital were related to higher life satisfaction in this study (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2010). Thus, sharing religious norms to a substantial degree within a cultural context seems to have a positive effect on the links between individual religiosity, well-being, and family orientation. With regard to the latter, the impact of personal religiosity on one's views about the family may be stronger in highly religious contexts than in contexts where religious norms are not as widely shared. This does not mean that in more secular contexts religious adolescents may not have strong family commitments, but rather that other (nonreligious) pathways to valuing familial bonds may be more important in these contexts. In secular cultures, scientific (psychological and educational) theories such as attachment theory as well as political ideologies emphasize the importance of family life. These provide messages regarding how to maintain and enhance good parental and marital relationships as well as how to create a sense of connectedness in the family (see Agate et al., 2007; Mahoney, 2005).

Individual-Level Relations between Religiosity and Family Orientation and the Moderating Role of Religious Context

Based on the theorizing presented above, we expected that religiosity would be related to our measures of family orientation in all cultures, but that the relation may be stronger for cultures with a high normativity of religious beliefs.

In 13 of the 17 cultures studied, a significant positive correlation was observed between adolescents' religiosity and their *family values* (see Table 15.2). With one exception, the nonsignificant correlations occurred in the cultures with the lowest average importance of religion. For the *emotional value of children*, significant positive correlations with adolescents' religiosity were found in six cultures. The relations were rather weak with the exception of the United States ($r = .33$). Even weaker relations were found

Table 15.2. Relationships between Religiosity and Different Measures of Family Orientation in Different Cultures

Culture	Family Values	Emotional VOC	Utilitarian-normative VOC	Family Future Orientation
Indonesia	.17**	.06	.10+	.04
India (North)	.16**	.15*	.22***	.20***
South Africa	.29***	.09	.11+	.03
Poland	.40***	.07	.08	.29***
Turkey	.18**	.17**	.13*	.16**
India (South)	.06	.05	.09	.05
United States	.29***	.33***	.04	.24***
Israel	.23**	.09	-.13+	.03
Russia	.28***	.22***	.25***	.17**
Italy	.27***	.12*	.21***	na
Switzerland	.25**	.22*	.16+	.21*
France	.30***	.07	.12	.15*
Germany	.20***	.08	-.04	.24***
Japan	.15*	.10	.12+	.10
Czech Republic	.08	-.05	-.03	-.02
China	.03	.01	.08	.04
Estonia	.04	.02	.01	.04

Note: Pearson correlations. Cultures ordered according to average importance of religion in descending order from top to bottom. na: not available.

+ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

between the *utilitarian-normative value of children* and adolescents' religiosity. Here, only 4 out of 17 correlations were positively significant. In eight cultures, adolescents reporting higher religiosity also reported a higher *family future orientation* than did adolescents reporting a lower religiosity.

Thus, highly religious adolescents were overall more family-oriented than were less religious or nonreligious adolescents, although the relations were not very strong. For cultures with a very low average level of religiosity (Japan, China, Czech Republic, and Estonia), hardly any significant relations resulted. Also, it seems that in cultures with a medium level of religiosity (Switzerland, Italy, Russia, Israel, and the United States) adolescents' religiosity was more positively related to their family orientation than it was in cultures with a very low or a very high level of religiosity. Therefore, we may hypothesize that in addition to a linear relationship between culture-level religiosity and the size of the individual-level effect of religiosity on adolescents' family orientation, there may be a negative quadratic effect

signifying an attenuation of the (linear) moderating function for highly religious cultures. In other words, the individual-level effect of religiosity on family orientation may be especially relevant in cultures with a moderate level of religiosity. In secular, low-religiosity cultures, adolescents' family orientation may be fueled by other cultural institutions (including the family), as previously suggested. In cultures with a very high normativity of religious beliefs, the relationship between personal levels of religiosity and family orientation may be weaker than in moderately religious cultures. In this case, personal religiosity may play only a minor role for adolescents' family orientation because the latter is strongly influenced by highly normative cultural expectations. The more various socialization agents (e.g., family, school, church, media) simultaneously favor religion *and* traditional family views, the less relevant individual differences in religiosity may be for family-related values and attitudes.

To test these assumptions, we computed random coefficient multilevel analyses with linear and quadratic cross-level interactions. Adolescents' religiosity was included group-centered (per culture) to separate individual-level and culture-level variation. The covariates gender and age were included in all models but their effects will not be presented since they were small for all variables. The program HLM 6.08 was used employing full maximum likelihood estimation. We omit technical information regarding the denotation of coefficients in multilevel models (for more information on multilevel models in cross-cultural psychology, see Nezlek, 2010).

The average within-culture effect of adolescents' religiosity on their family orientation was significantly positive for all four aspects of family orientation and the cross-cultural variations of this effect (variance component or random effect of slope) were also all significant.¹ In these models, adolescents' religiosity explained relatively small amounts of the level-1 variance of the different aspects of family orientation (5.4 percent for family values, 1.5 percent for emotional VOC, 1.5 percent for utilitarian-normative VOC, and 1.9 percent for family future orientation). To test the moderation hypotheses, we included linear and quadratic cross-level interactions of culture-level religiosity with the individual-level effect of religiosity in all models (slope-as-outcome models). Results showed positive linear cross-level interactions for *family values* (Coeff. = 0.03, SE = 0.01, $p < .05$) and for the *emotional VOC* (Coeff. = 0.03, SE = 0.01, $p = .05$), indicating stronger individual-level relations between religiosity and family orientation in cultures with higher average religiosity. A trend-level negative quadratic cross-level interaction resulted for *family values* (Coeff. = -0.02, SE = 0.01, $p = .08$), indicating that the linear moderation may be attenuated with high

culture-level religiosity for this variable. All further cross-level interactions were nonsignificant.

To summarize, adolescents' religiosity was significantly related to all four aspects of their family orientation. For family values and emotional VOC, this relation was weaker for cultures with a low level of religiosity; for family values, highly religious cultures may exhibit slightly lower relations than moderately religious cultures.

In addition to a moderating effect of the cultural normativity of religion on the relevance of adolescents' religiosity for their family orientation, culture-level religiosity may also be directly linked to adolescents' family orientation. This is the topic of the following section.

Culture-Level Relations between Religiosity, Socioeconomic Development, and Adolescents' Family Orientation

In this section, we take up our earlier reasoning regarding the interrelations among secularization, economic development, and family change. How are the culture-level importance of religion and the importance of the family related across cultures? To what degree can economic development add uniquely to the explanation of family orientation?

In the random coefficient multilevel analyses, the primary predictor variable at the cultural level is adolescents' religiosity aggregated from individual scores. Thus, the same variable was used at the individual and at the cultural level (Fontaine, 2008; van de Vijver, van Hemert, & Poortinga, 2008). In addition to religiosity, the Human Development Index (HDI, see United Nations Development Programme, 2010) was included as a culture-level predictor.² The HDI is a good proxy for a culture's level of socioeconomic development.

In the following, the focus is on a summary of the culture-level fixed effects (intercept-as-outcome models) and their explanatory power (see Table 15.3). The results showed significant culture-level effects of the HDI and of Religiosity on adolescents' family values (see Table 15.3, Model 1). The higher the HDI, the *lower* were adolescents' family values; and the higher the culture-level religiosity, the *higher* were the family values. Together, HDI and religiosity explained 66 percent of the cross-cultural differences in adolescents' family values. For the emotional VOC, culture-level religiosity was related to higher emotional VOC, explaining 46 percent of the cross-cultural differences in emotional VOC, whereas the HDI had no significant effect. For the utilitarian–normative VOC, a significant negative effect resulted for the HDI and a significant positive effect resulted for religiosity, indicating a higher importance of the utilitarian–normative VOC for

Table 15.3. Culture-Level Effects in Multilevel Analyses with HDI and Religiosity Predicting Different Aspects of Adolescents' Family Orientation

	Coeff.	SE	T	df
Family Values				
HDI	−1.18	.44	−2.71*	14
Religiosity	0.12	.05	3.09**	14
Emotional VOC				
HDI	−0.42	.38	−1.11	14
Religiosity	0.10	.04	2.40*	14
Utilitarian–normative VOC				
HDI	−3.77	.51	−7.36***	14
Religiosity	0.16	.06	2.92*	14
Family Future Orientation				
HDI	−0.24	.56	−0.42	13
Religiosity	0.21	.06	3.53**	13

adolescents from religious cultures and a lower importance of this measure for adolescents from affluent cultures. Together, the HDI and culture-level religiosity explained 88 percent of the cross-cultural differences in adolescents' utilitarian–normative VOC.

Last, for family future orientation, whereas the HDI was unrelated to this outcome variable, a significant positive effect of religiosity resulted that explained 57 percent of the cultural differences in family future orientation. Thus, adolescents from religious cultures had a higher family future orientation.

To summarize the culture-level effects, whereas culture-level religiosity was positively related to all aspects of family orientation, the level of socioeconomic development (HDI) of a culture was negatively related (only) to adolescents' traditional family values and to their utilitarian–normative VOC. Thus, overall, adolescents from more religious and less economically developed cultures were more family-oriented than were adolescents from less religious and richer cultures. However, although religiosity seems to be strongly related to *all* aspects of adolescents' family orientation, economic development seems to affect only the conservative aspects of family orientation as reflected in traditional family values and utilitarian–normative reasons for having children. Thus, religiosity is strongly related to an overall importance of the family independent of economic development, and economic development seems to weaken only traditional aspects of family orientation whereas other aspects like the wish to have an own family in

the future and the importance of emotional bonds parents have with their children remain stable.

Conclusions

The family as a potential source of social and cultural capital, as a safe haven, and as the central place to satisfy basic needs of human dependency represents an important mediating link in the relation between religiosity and well-being. The results presented here indicate that living in a religious culture and personally being religious are both related to a higher family orientation for adolescents. Religiosity may be especially beneficial for adolescents' family orientation in moderately religious cultures where a plurality of worldviews exist, ranging from secular to very religious beliefs. In this sense, individual religiosity may act as a buffer for a decreasing significance of the family. However, the effects of individual religiosity on family orientation were rather weak when compared to the culture-level effects of religiosity. The results also showed that the presence of economic development and secularization in a culture have to be considered independently for predicting adolescents' family orientation: Economic development is clearly linked to processes that release or disconnect adolescents from traditional, hierarchical, and obedience-related views on the family, but it does not contribute to a loss of significance of the family *per se*. When a high level of societal affluence is combined with a low level of societal religiosity, however, all aspects of adolescents' family orientation seem to suffer.

Limitations in the present study include the sole reliance on adolescents' reported importance of religion, not distinguishing between religious denominations. Also, our results from cross-sectional studies cannot indicate cultural change (Thornton, 2005). Further research has to look deeper into the culture-specific aspects of religiosity and its role in adolescent development (Belzen, 2010). Nevertheless, religions share features of spirituality and normativity, rendering religiosity a unique aspect of the adolescent experience across cultures. Although we emphasize the family-consolidating effects of religion, this does not mean that religiosity (or specific kinds of religiosity) cannot also have negative impacts on adolescents' family life, such as when adolescents convert to fundamentalist forms of religiosity that are not in line with the religious beliefs emphasized in their family of origin; nor do we contend that being nonreligious is necessarily related to a low family orientation.

Providing adolescents with opportunities to (re-)discover religiosity for their personal lives may be especially relevant in cultural contexts where

religion has lost some of its significance but individuals can relatively easily reconnect to resources from religious traditions. In these cultures, religion is only one of many possible life orientations, but it may be a powerful one that can satisfy basic needs for relatedness and agency (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, 2007) and fill a void of meaning. In this sense, the cultural and religious context and the fit of developmental pathways within these contexts have to be taken into account in research and interventions with regard to adolescent religiosity and family orientation.

AUTHORS' NOTE

This study is part of the of the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary research project "Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations." Principal investigators: Gisela Trommsdorff, University of Konstanz, Germany, and Bernhard Nauck, Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany. For seven countries (People's Republic of China, Germany, Indonesia, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Poland, Turkey, United States), the study was funded by the German Research Foundation (TR 169/9-1, -2, -3 and NA 164/9-1, -3, -4). In Northern India (Varanasi), the study was co-funded by the University of Konstanz and the German Research Foundation. In Southern India (Puducherry), the study was funded by the Chemnitz University of Technology; in the Czech Republic by the Masaryk University, Brno; in Estonia by the European Social Fund Measure 1.4 "Enhancing Administrative Capacity"; in France by the University Victor Segalen, Bordeaux; in Russia by the Lobatchevskij State University, Nizhnij Novgorod; and in South Africa by the University of Limpopo. We would like to thank the collaborators who carried out the study in the respective countries: Gang Zheng, Shaohua Shi, and Hong Tang, People's Republic of China; Ivo Mozny and Petr Pakosta, Czech Republic; Kairi Kasearu, Estonia; Colette Sabatier and Lyda Lannegrand-Willems, France; Bernhard Nauck, Beate Schwarz, Daniela Klaus, Jana Suckow, and Isabelle Albert, Germany; Ramesh Mishra, Northern India; Arun Tipandjan, Southern India; Lieke Wisnubrata, Samsunuwijati Marat, Kusdwiratri Setiono, and Peter R. Nelwan, Indonesia; Asher Ben-Arieh and Muhammad M. Haj-Yahia, Israel and the Palestinian Authority; Katarzyna Lubiewska, Poland; Zaretkhan Kh. M. Saraliev, Vladimir A. Blonin, and Alexandre A. Iudin, Russia; Karl Peltzer, South Africa; Cigdem Kagitcibasi and Bilge Ataca, Turkey; Wolfgang Friedlmeier and Mihaela Friedlmeier, United States. Data from Italy was collected by Daniela Barni as part of her doctoral dissertation supervised by Eugenia Scabini, Catholic University of Milan, Italy. Data from Japan was collected by Chiaki Yamada as part of her

master's thesis supervised by Collette Sabatier, University Victor Segalen, France. Data from Switzerland was collected by Karen Fux as part of her diploma thesis supervised by Gisela Trommsdorff, University of Konstanz, Germany. The authors would like to thank Tobias Heikamp for valuable comments on an earlier version of the manuscript and Holly Bunje for her assistance in language editing.

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NOTES

1. Family Values (Coeff. = 0.10, SE = 0.01, $p < .001$; Var. Comp. $\chi^2 = 53.69$, $p < .001$); Emotional VOC (Coeff. = 0.06, SE = 0.01, $p < .001$; Var. Comp. $\chi^2 = 33.56$, $p < .001$); Utilitarian-normative VOC (Coeff. = 0.07, SE = 0.02, $p < .001$; Var. Comp. $\chi^2 = 44.70$, $p < .001$); Family Future Orientation (Coeff. = 0.12, SE = 0.02, $p < .001$; Var. Comp. $\chi^2 = 34.79$, $p < .01$).
2. Culture-Level Religiosity and the HDI were substantially correlated ($r = -.53$) but are far from representing collinear variables.

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