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Edited by Gisela Trommsdorff and Xinyin Chen

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Part One

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON VALUES,
RELIGION, AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT
IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

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1 Cultural Perspectives on Values and Religion in Adolescent Development

A Conceptual Overview and Synthesis

Gisela Trommsdorff

Abstract

This chapter discusses why research on adolescent development will benefit from a focus on values and religion using a culture-sensitive approach. In the first part, the relations among culture, values, and religion in adolescent development are briefly summarized. The second part deals with the topic of adolescent values, and the third part addresses religion and religiosity. Each part discusses relevant research from a multidisciplinary perspective and highlights major issues, results, and gaps in sociological and psychological research. Finally, the theoretical and empirical contributions of this volume are discussed, and suggestions are made for future research in order to achieve a better understanding of adolescent development in a changing cultural context.

Can a cultural perspective on adolescent values and religion contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of adolescent development? Adolescents experience major biological, psychological, and social transitions that may be characterized as relatively universal developmental challenges (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). However, research has primarily focused on European-American adolescents, disregarding the cultural context of development. This is surprising given that Bronfenbrenner (1979) introduced an ecological perspective into developmental psychology more than three decades ago. Even globalization and growing awareness of the cultural and socioeconomic diversity of adolescent environments have rarely resulted in empirical research (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Only recently were some culture-informed edited volumes (e.g., Arnett, 2012; Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002) and theoretically based culture-sensitive reviews (Arnett, 2011) on adolescent development published.

What can a culture-sensitive approach to adolescent development contribute? First, it may help clarify questions about how values and religion impact adolescent development. Values and religion are assumed to be important in adolescent development as part of the formation of a meaningful view of the self and the world (Rothbaum & Wang, 2010; Trommsdorff, 2012). The construction of self- and world-views is often motivated by identity development, one of the main developmental tasks in adolescence (Erikson, 1968). Identity has been seen as providing a sense of coherence and continuity in one's life, thereby reducing uncertainty and confusion in understanding oneself, one's relation to others, and the world. However, it is not clear which factors contribute to the processes and outcomes of identity development. For example, an extension of the social and cultural boundaries and contexts because of an increasing globalization has given rise to multiple choices in identity development (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2008).

The present volume attempts to clarify the role of culture, values, and religion as the assumed major factors in adolescent development. These factors are seen here as part of interrelated meaning systems influencing self- and world-views. They are also seen as part of social institutions and personal (e.g., peer, parent-child) relationships representing distant and proximal contexts for adolescents' development. A number of open issues have to be dealt with to achieve a better understanding of how adolescent development is related to the cultural context, values, and religion, and how these affect the development of adolescents' self- and world-views, goals, behavior, everyday practices, and social adjustment.

In this overview, I begin with a brief outline of the main issues in past research on adolescent development in cultural context. This is followed by sections on values and youth and on religion and youth, both from a culture-informed perspective. These two sections note open questions from past research and highlight insights from this volume regarding the interrelations of culture, values, and religion in adolescent development. As a whole, this volume is organized around four major issues in research on adolescent development, each of which is affected by the multiple interrelations of culture, values, and religion: (1) theoretical perspectives, (2) universal and culture-specific functions of values and religion in adolescent development, (3) adolescent adjustment in times of social change, and (4) socialization processes of values and religion in adolescent development.

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Culture, Values, and Religion in Adolescent Development

What do we know about adolescent development cross-culturally in a globalizing world where different values and religions prevail?

Developmental science assumes basic processes of development ranging from biological, psychological, and social functions to societal, ecological, cultural, and historical levels (e.g., Lerner, Lewin-Bizan, & Warren, 2011). Adolescent development is a period in the lifespan that includes systematic successive changes in the person, based on changes at the biological, psychological, social, and cultural levels, with nature and nurture interacting in the dynamics of development. The dynamic systems approach to adolescent development (Kunnen, 2012) attempts to provide explanations for stability and change based on nonlinear interaction processes. Normative and history-graded factors are especially relevant in adolescence and early adulthood (Baltes & Brim, 1980). These factors are regarded here as part of individual-context relations, assuming that their influence is modified by cultural phenomena and individual agency in development. This assumption has recently stimulated some culture-informed research (see Arnett, 2006, 2011, 2012; Brown et al., 2002), but many questions still remain unanswered. Therefore, a main purpose of this volume is to clarify whether and in which aspects adolescent development is similar or different in varying parts of the world, and what role values and religion play in adolescent development in different cultural contexts.

Our interest in cultural perspectives on values and religion in adolescent development is informed by ecological theorizing (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), questions regarding interactions between person and context (“goodness of fit”), and the assumption of adolescents as agents of their development. From an ecological perspective, values and religion constitute developmental contexts where family, peers, and school play important roles in adolescents’ socialization in the respective culture. The goal of the culture-informed ecological approach is to take into account cross-cultural and intracultural differences in adolescent development while also analyzing universal processes. However, research to date has largely neglected the role of culture with respect to the function of values and religion in adolescent development. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the relevant literature, note unanswered questions, and describe the contributions of chapters in this volume, all of which highlight the importance of cultural variables for values and religion in adolescents’ development.

Cultural variables have been related to various macrolevel variables such as aspects of socioeconomic status (e.g., economic growth, educational level,

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urbanization, etc.), and to the individual-level variables of value orientation and religiosity. Both levels of cultural variables are relevant for developmental processes and outcomes. “Culture” has been conceptualized in different ways in past research. Sociologists have described culture with collective and individual representations (Durkheim, 1981) or as “norm-cycles” in line with an “objective” culture (Elder-Vass, 2010). Anthropologists have described cultures with respect to rituals, myths, symbols (Jahoda, 2007), cultural practices (Cole & Packer, 2011), or “*Gemeinschaft*”–“*Gesellschaft*” (Greenfield, 2010). Psychologists have used the concepts of cultural dimensions (e.g., individualism, collectivism; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995), tight and loose cultures (Gelfand et al., 2011), shared meaning systems (Bruner, 1990), cultural tasks (Kitayama & Imada, 2010), or cultural models of agency (e.g., independence, interdependence) describing how specific beliefs, values, and practices vary across nations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Here, I perceive culture as a complex, major developmental context offering specific *cultural models of agency*, which imply certain self- and world-views (Rothbaum & Wang, 2010; Trommsdorff, 2012). These cultural models of agency influence further developmental contexts on different levels of socialization, such as at the macrolevel of economic, educational, and religious institutions and the microlevel of the family.

Developmental contexts can undergo processes of *historical* and *social change*. Adolescents in many parts of the world experience sociopolitical, economic, and cultural changes that have an impact on their lives (e.g., regarding family, employment, technology, mobility, health). Several reviews on adolescent development have shown that the experience of transitions and changes does not necessarily result in problematic or difficult development (e.g., Coleman, 2011; Steinberg, 1999). Empirical research has dealt with questions of whether certain political and socioeconomic changes include risks and chances and how these impact adolescent development (e.g., Chen, 2012; Chen & French, 2008; Elder & Shanahan, 2006; Kagitcibasi, 2006, 2007; Trommsdorff, 2009b). However, several questions remain, some of which are dealt with in this volume by focusing on different cultures, values, and religious orientations. For example, issues during times of social change are examined by discussing the impact of values for adjustment (see Norasakkunkit & Uchida, Chapter 9 in this volume, for Japanese youth; Chen, Wang, & Liu, Chapter 10 in this volume, for Chinese youth).

An important aspect of adolescents’ development is related to *values* in the cultural context. Adolescents undergo processes of identity development that reflect on cultural and individual values and beliefs as part of one’s relation to the world. During this developmental period of constructing

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self- and world-views (see Kornadt, Chapter 2 in this volume; Rothbaum, Wang, & Cohen, Chapter 3 in this volume), adolescents are determining which values to adopt to guide their own individual development, including goal setting, decision making, and behavior (e.g., Alsaker & Kroger, 2006). Because there is little research on the role of cultural factors in the development of values, related questions – including questions of cultural fit (as a condition for positive development) and processes in the socialization and transmission of values among peers or from parents to their adolescent children – are addressed in all sections of this volume.

Assuming that the development of adolescents' values is related to more general cultural value orientations, questions also arise as to whether and in which way values are related to *religion* and individual religiosity, and whether religion and religiosity have a specific function in adolescent development. In past research, the relations between values and religion have seldom been studied systematically. Researchers have usually investigated values and religion in relative isolation. Exceptions are Rokeach (1969) and a meta-analysis by Saroglou, Delpierre, and Dernelle (2004).

Past neglect of this issue may be owing to a relative lack of psychological research on the role of religiosity and religion in adolescent development (Roelkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2005). Recently, questions that have been of specific interest include whether the often-assumed increase in secularization, the rise of religious fundamentalism, and the development of new forms of spirituality are relevant to positive youth development (King & Roeser, 2009). For a fruitful study of these questions, researchers must take into account both cultural variables and the effect these variables may have on adolescents' developmental pathways.

Therefore, the present volume attempts to address the relations between culture, religion, and values in adolescent development. These issues are discussed with respect to theoretical approaches and empirical studies focusing on socialization conditions for developmental outcomes such as adolescent adjustment. For example, Kornadt (Chapter 2) discusses theoretical questions on the roles of culture, values, and religion in adolescent development from historical, motivation-psychological, and cultural perspectives. Rothbaum, Wang, and Cohen (Chapter 3) provide a theoretical framework assuming cultural differences in the development and quality of self-awareness related to differences in spirituality. Saroglou (Chapter 17) integrates empirical findings into a theoretical approach on the psychological functions of religiosity as an individual difference dimension, pointing out the different impact of religion on personal stability as compared to personal growth. This approach is related to questions on developmental

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outcomes and conditions. Other chapter topics include the role of culture, values, and religion in adjustment of Indian (Mishra, Chapter 18) and Indonesian Muslim youth (French, Eisenberg, Purwono, & Sallquist, Chapter 6), as well as the role of religion and culture in life-satisfaction (Bond, Lun, & Li, Chapter 5), in future orientation of Israeli Palestinian girls (Seginer & Mahajna, Chapter 11), in career orientation of U.S. girls (Pearce & Hardie, Chapter 12), and in romantic relationships of Israeli and German adolescents (Nauck & Steinbach, Chapter 13). Several authors deal with the socialization and developmental conditions for the role of culture, religion, and values in adolescent development. For example, Granqvist discusses preconditions and implications of attachment in the development of adolescents' self- and world-views. Socialization in the family in different cultures is discussed by several authors (e.g., Knafo, Daniel, Gabay, Zilber, & Shir, Chapter 16; Mayer & Trommsdorff, Chapter 15; Rubin, Malti, & McDonald, Chapter 8), as are the effects of culture and socialization in the peer group (Chen et al., Chapter 10; French et al., Chapter 6; Larson, Jensen, Kang, Griffith, & Rompala, Chapter 7). Cultural socialization in different educational institutions is discussed by Mishra for Indian youth (Chapter 18).

To summarize, the work in this volume assumes that cultural models of agency give meaning to values and religion and also influence their role in adolescent development. However, studies on the nature, correlates, and function of adolescents' values and religious orientations in cultural contexts are rare in developmental research. Therefore, selected major theoretical and empirical contributions to this topic, open questions, and insights from chapters of this volume are summarized in the following overviews on values and religion.

Values and Youth from a Culture-Informed Perspective

Theoretical and Empirical Approaches to Values

From a social sciences and psychological perspective, values are embedded in culture: they impact the societal institutions and they structure, motivate, and give meaning to individual behavior and social interactions. The meaning of certain values is influenced by the self- and world-view transmitted in a certain culture. For example, the values of freedom, honor, and justice have different meanings in different cultural contexts. In line with Schwartz (1992), values are defined here as desirable, transsituationally enduring goals that vary in importance and serve as guiding principles in people's lives. The internalization of cultural values constitutes an important developmental task for adolescents in all cultures.

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Sociological Approaches. Weber (1988) and Parsons (1951), the founding fathers of value research in sociology, distinguished between individual values (motivational aspects) and group values (normative aspects; Parsons & Shils, 1951). Interestingly, although this differentiation is difficult to assess empirically, it still guides most research on values. More recently, theories on modernization and secularization have shifted the perspective in value research, focusing on questions of stability and changes in values.

Early value research assumed that the cultural context is interwoven with values, norms, and meaning. An example is the famous Values Project by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), which was influenced by sociologists (e.g., Talcott Parsons), social psychologists (George Homans), and anthropologists (John and Beatrice Whiting), among others. This Values Project was a starting point for several studies to focus on value orientations as a means to differentiate cultural dimensions. However, according to D'Andrade (2008), the study of cultural values was left without an organizing framework. In his recent study on value orientations in three societies, D'Andrade (2008) dealt with institutionalized values, personal values, and the degree of fit between both, thus relating issues from sociological and psychological value research in his anthropological approach on personal and cultural values. Across societies, he did not see many differences in personal values due to universal needs and motives; however, differences in institutionalized values were great. The antecedents of values are seen in the cultural heritage of ideas, in institutions (norms, roles), and in individual feelings and motives. Accordingly, some values may be stable while other values may change.

The influential sociological theory on value change by Ronald Inglehart (1977, 1997, 2007) assumes that values change from materialism (traditional values) to post-materialism in industrializing countries. Traditional "materialist" values are seen in the need for security, achievement, and discipline; modern "post-materialist" values include the need for self-realization, participation, and environmental concerns (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Three basic assumptions underlie Inglehart's theory on the "silent revolution": (1) the socialization thesis, which assumes a lifelong stability of values that are formed in early childhood; (2) the thesis of a generation-specific value change, which contrasts to the life-cycle assumption and to the assumption of period effects (historical events such as the postwar period or reunification of Germany); and (3) the basic-need thesis, which refers to Maslow's (1943) assumption of a hierarchy of material and nonmaterial needs. Adolescent development is of special importance to Inglehart because he believes that changes in adolescents' values can drive societal value changes.

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Inglehart's (1977, 1997, 2007) assumptions on long-term effects of socialization experiences in childhood and adolescence, on the validity of Maslow's theory on a hierarchy of needs, and on the effects of modernization as typical for industrial societies has been criticized on theoretical and empirical grounds. Related discussions have stimulated an extensive research program in social and political science based on national comparisons of value change, partly modifying Inglehart's original theory (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). The Eurobarometer, the European Values Study (EVS), the World Values Survey (WVS), and other sources of data were coordinated for the European Social Survey (ESS; e.g., Inglehart, Basañez, & Moreno, 1998; Jowell, Kaase, Fitzgerald, & Eva, 2007). These comparative studies have challenged the assumption that secularization is increasing while the value of religiosity is declining (e.g., Pettersson, 2007).

Another major topic in the discussions on value change is whether an individualization of family values has taken place. In their study on two decades of value change in Europe and the United States (based on the European Values Study), Scott and Braun (2006) concluded that the individualization thesis is overstated because considerable diversity in family values across Western countries can be observed. This result is in line with research on the similarities and differences of family values of adolescents across Western and Asian societies, and across "modern" versus traditional countries (Mayer & Trommsdorff, 2010; Chapter 15 in this volume). Furthermore, cross-cultural studies on value change have shown that value changes do not follow the same patterns; for example, "traditional" and "modern" values can coexist (e.g., Chen, 2012; Kagitsibasi, 2006, 2007; Trommsdorff, 2007; Trommsdorff, Cole, & Heikamp, in press; Trommsdorff, Suzuki, & Sasaki, 1987).

Chapters in this volume focusing on family-related values in different cultures present results that underline the impact of religious belief in the specific cultural context. These results specify the interrelations among culture, values, and religion regarding family values (e.g., Mayer & Trommsdorff, Chapter 15; Nauck & Steinbach, Chapter 13; Seginer & Mahajna, Chapter 11).

In general, the assessment of values and value change has to differentiate between the cultural/societal and the individual levels. More specifically, questions regarding the stability and change of values and the different phenomena of value change over the lifespan and across situations remain to be discussed. Most important, the confounding effects of time period, cohort, and aging have to be disentangled. This brings us to *psychological approaches*.