
RESEARCH

A Research Note on the Relation
Between Religiosity and Racism:
The Importance of the Way in Which
Religious Contents Are Being Processed

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According to Wulff (1991, 1997), the various approaches to religion can be located in a 2-dimensional space along the bipolar dimensions Exclusion vs. Inclusion of Transcendence and Literal vs. Symbolic. Previous research has suggested that these dimensions are differently related to racism. Racism would be unrelated to the Exclusion vs. Inclusion of Transcendence dimension, whereas it would be negatively related to the Literal vs. Symbolic dimension. Results of the present study, using the Post-Critical Belief Scale (Duriez, Fontaine, & Hutsebaut, 2000) as a measure of Wulff's concepts in 3 different samples (total $N = 2,171$) gathered in Flanders (Belgium), support these hypotheses. The Literal vs. Symbolic dimension was found to significantly contribute to the prediction of racism, even after differences in right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance, and empathy were taken into account.

The relationship between religiosity and prejudice is probably the most important paradox within the psychology of religion. Whereas all world religions proclaim brotherly love, history is littered with moments in which religion has provided a justification for, or has given cause to, atrocities directed toward people from a different religion, a different culture, a different race, a different sex, or a different sexual orientation. A number of historians and theologians have concluded from this

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that religion should be considered as a catalyst for prejudice and intolerance, and a lot of psychological and sociological research has been carried out to investigate whether this is true.

Allport and Kramer (1946) were among the first to empirically examine this question. They concluded that Christians and Protestants were more prejudiced than those who were not involved in any church. This conclusion led to massive research. Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis (1993) summarized 47 findings concerning the relationship between religious involvement and prejudice and intolerance, 37 of which gave evidence of a positive relation between religious involvement and prejudice whereas only 2 pointed in the opposite direction. Soon it became generally accepted that, at least among White middle-class Christians in the United States, religion is positively associated with prejudice and intolerance.

These findings were painful for religious leaders as well as for a number of researchers. This prompted Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) and Allport (1950) to argue that it is insufficient to examine religious involvement or to search for an explanation of the findings in the belief system itself. According to them, if one wants to understand the relation between religion and prejudice, instead of “lumping together” all White middle-class people who identify themselves as Christians, one should focus on how people believe. In this way, a number of conceptual dichotomies came into existence—of which the most widely known is Allport’s (e.g., Allport & Ross, 1967) distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic religiousness, that is, the distinction that should be made between attaching importance to religion because of its instrumentality versus doing so out of conviction (cf. extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation). Batson et al. (1993) summarized 41 findings concerning the relationship between intrinsic versus extrinsic belief and prejudice and intolerance, 39 of which gave evidence in favor of the hypothesis that religion is positively associated with prejudice only among the extrinsically religious. Research could, however, not provide evidence in favor of the hypothesis that intrinsic belief would foster tolerance (Donahue, 1985a, 1985b). Batson et al. even repudiated the conclusion that intrinsic religiosity would relate to rather low prejudice scores. According to Batson et al., this only appears to be the case because the intrinsically religious are more concerned about what is socially desirable. Hence, the intrinsic religiosity dimension would be related to the appearance of low prejudice only. In contrast, Batson’s well-known quest dimension was quite consistently found to relate negatively to measures of prejudice, even after correction for social desirability (Batson et al., 1993). In sum, it can be concluded from this line of research that there is no intrinsic relation between being religious or not and being prejudiced, but that it all depends on how people deal with religion.

A NEW RELIGIOSITY MEASURE

Recently, Wulff (1991, 1997) has provided an interesting new perspective on religiosity. According to Wulff, all possible attitudes toward religion can be located in

a two-dimensional space along two orthogonal bipolar dimensions. The vertical axis in this space, the Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence dimension, specifies the degree to which the objects of religious interest are granted participation in a transcendent reality (which is equivalent to the degree to which a person can be labeled religious). The horizontal axis, the Literal versus Symbolic dimension, indicates whether religion is interpreted literally or symbolically. In this way four quadrants are defined, each covering a specific attitude toward religion: literal affirmation, literal disaffirmation, symbolic affirmation, and symbolic disaffirmation. Batson's (Batson et al., 1993) quest dimension, which refers to an open-ended search for the meaning in religious contents, can be situated at the symbolic end of Wulff's model. In contrast, Allport's dimensions (Allport & Ross, 1967) of extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity cannot be situated in this model. Whereas Allport made a distinction between the underlying motivations of the religiously, Wulff's model is situated at the level of social cognitions. Therefore, the classification of Allport and Wulff are logically unrelated. An extrinsically religious person can either deal with religious contents in a literal way or in a symbolic way. The same is true for an intrinsically religious person. In addition, Wulff's model can be extended to nonreligious persons as well. A nonreligious person can neither be extrinsically religious nor intrinsically religious. However, he or she can be dealing with religious contents either in a literal way or in a symbolic way.

Building further on this line of research, Hutsebaut (1996) developed the Post-Critical Belief Scale to measure individual differences in the approaches toward religion that Wulff described (1991, 1997). Only recently, however, have thorough assessments of its construct validity been made. Duriez, Fontaine, and Hutsebaut (2000) showed that the four subscales of the Post-Critical Belief Scale provide accurate measures of Wulff's four approaches to religion, and Fontaine, Duriez, Luyten, and Hutsebaut (2003) have shown that, once individual differences in acquiescence are corrected for, two components are sufficient to explain the empirical relations between the items of the Post-Critical Belief Scale and that these two components can be interpreted in terms of the dimensions Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence and Literal versus Symbolic. There are three main reasons why the extraction of these two components is statistically superior to using the four subscales of the Post-Critical Belief Scale. First, because of the correction for individual differences in acquiescence, which was done prior to the extraction of the two components, the scores that are used to represent an individual's position in Wulff's model are no longer contaminated by differences in acquiescence. Second, using factor scores instead of the traditional unweighted sum of item scores guarantees a reliability equal to or greater than that which is obtained by using the unweighted sum of item scores (see Armor, 1974). The reason for this is that factor scores allow items to contribute to a construct in a more appropriate way. An unweighted sum score does not allow items to contribute differentially to a construct. In contrast, factor scores allow some items to make a greater contribution to the construct than other

items. In this way, the factor scores are based on all of the items included in the Post-Critical Belief Scale instead of being based on only some of them. Hence, the scores that are derived to represent an individual's position in Wulff's model are not only more reliable but also more accurate. Third, representing an individual's position in Wulff's model on the bases of the factor scores allows researchers to clearly disentangle the effects of being religious or not (Exclusion vs. Inclusion of Transcendence) from the way in which religion and religious contents are approached (either in a literal or in a symbolical way). At the same time, people who are interested in the results that would have been obtained using the four subscales can easily compute an accurate version of these results from the results obtained with the two factor scores (as is illustrated later in this article). Because the Post-Critical Belief Scale allows researchers to disentangle the effects of being religious or not from the way in which religion and religious contents are approached, the use of this scale was thought to offer the possibility of shedding new light on the relationship between religion and prejudice.

PREJUDICE AND ITS DETERMINANTS

In general, prejudice involves the tendency to negatively evaluate and reject an out-group and its members. This tendency may take on different forms, including racism (i.e., prejudice toward ethnic groups), homophobia (i.e., prejudice toward individuals with a different sexual orientation), and sexism (i.e., prejudice toward individuals of a different sex). The tendency for different forms of prejudice to be related to each other has been found repeatedly (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950; Allport & Kramer, 1946; Altemeyer, 1996), with correlations usually being around .50 (Duckitt, 1992). This finding of the generality of prejudice has been interpreted as suggesting stable attributes of individuals that cause them to hold prejudiced attitudes. This idea was the basis of Adorno et al.'s (1950) classic theory of the authoritarian personality, which was later revived by Altemeyer (1981, 1988, 1996).

Although the motive for domineering others was considered to be an integral part of authoritarianism (Adorno et al., 1950; Eysenck, 1954; Maslow, 1943), this motive was somewhat overlooked as attention primarily focused on authoritarian submission (see Altemeyer, 1981). Recently, a renewed interest in this authoritarian dominance led to the study of the social dominance orientation (SDO) in its own right. Because SDO and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) were found to be unrelated and to independently predict prejudice (Altemeyer, 1998; Lippa & Arad, 1999; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Whitley, 1999) and to relate differentially to variables such as religiosity, value orientations, and ideological attitudes (Altemeyer, 1996; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; McFarland, 1998, 1999; McFarland & Adelson, 1996), it was concluded that RWA and SDO constitute different kinds of prejudice. According to Duckitt (2001; Duckitt, Wagner, du

Plessis, & Birum, 2002), RWA-based prejudice is driven by fear and feelings of threat, whereas SDO-based prejudice is driven by viewing the world as a competitive jungle characterized by a ruthless struggle for resources and power.

Recently, McFarland (1998, 1999, 2001; McFarland & Adelson, 1996) made an extensive review of all the known individual differences that correlate with one or more forms of prejudice and set up a series of studies to identify the most important prejudice dispositions. According to McFarland (2001), people's predisposition toward prejudice consists of three categories of personality characteristics: RWA, SDO, and empathy. RWA, SDO, and lack of empathy would constitute the "three pillars," or the "Big Three," of prejudice.

HYPOTHESES

Although some researchers have concluded that religion should be considered as a catalyst for prejudice and intolerance, others (e.g., Allport, 1950; Batson et al., 1993) argued that there is no real relation between being religious or not and being intolerant or not, but that it all depends on how people deal with religion. Hence, the Literal versus Symbolic dimension is expected to be substantially related to prejudice. Literal thinking was also found to relate to RWA and SDO (Duriez, 2002; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002) and lack of empathy (Duriez, 2002), as well as to modes of cognitive functioning that are known to relate to RWA and SDO such as closed mindedness, dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, and need for closure (Duriez, 2002; Sidanius, 1985). In short, the Literal versus Symbolic dimension is expected to be negatively related to prejudice, with people scoring high on this dimension (i.e., scoring more to the symbolic end) being less prejudiced. In contrast, when the effects of being religious or not and the effects of the way in which religious contents are approached are disentangled, the Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence dimension is expected to be unrelated to measures of prejudice.

In the present study, a measure of racism was included to assess whether the relationship between religiosity and one particular form of prejudice (i.e., prejudice toward ethnic groups) substantiates the hypotheses. Preliminary research with the Post-Critical Belief Scale that made use of its four subscales has already suggested that it is mainly the Literal versus Symbolic dimension that relates to racism (with people dealing with religion in a literal way being more inclined to hold racist attitudes; Duriez et al., 2000; Duriez & Hutsebaut, 2000). As far as the Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence dimension is concerned, whereas some of the findings suggested this dimension to be unrelated to racism, other results suggested this dimension to be slightly positively related to racism (with religious people being somewhat more inclined to hold racist attitudes; Duriez et al., 2000; Duriez & Hutsebaut, 2000). The more accurate and more reliable factor scores should allow a direct test of these relationships. Moreover, to be able to assess the

overall importance of the Literal versus Symbolic dimension, we included measures of RWA, SDO, and empathy to investigate whether this dimension contributes to the prediction of racism beyond these three pillars of prejudice.

METHOD

Samples

Three different samples were gathered in Flanders (Belgium; total $N = 2,171$). All participants had Belgian nationality and belonged to the Flemish-speaking part of the country. In Belgium, Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion, and although only about 10% of Belgians attend church services regularly, about 90% are baptized by the Roman Catholic church. Thus, all of the participants were either Roman Catholics or had a fair knowledge of Roman Catholic doctrines and customs. Sample 1 ($N = 338$) consisted of pupils from a secondary school who were contacted by undergraduate students. The mean age was 16 years ($SD = 0.93$), and 50% of the participants were male. Sample 2 ($N = 1,133$) consisted of university students following an introductory course in psychology. Participation was obligatory, and participants received course credit. The mean age was 18 years ($SD = 1.43$), and 30% of the participants were male. Sample 3 ($N = 700$) consisted of adults. Questionnaires were distributed by undergraduate students who asked their neighbors to participate in order to obtain heterogeneous samples. The mean age was 44 ($SD = 13.36$), and 42% of the participants were male. Participants having more than two missing values on any of the scales included in the questionnaire were excluded from further analyses. In total, 3% of the participants ($N = 9$) had to be removed from Sample 1, 4% ($N = 47$) had to be removed from Sample 2, and 1% ($N = 7$) had to be removed from Sample 3. For participants who were not removed, missing values were replaced by the sample-specific mean of the item. In total, 66 missing values were replaced in Sample 1, 82 missing values were replaced in Sample 2, and 142 missing values were replaced in Sample 3.

Measures

Participants completed the Post-Critical Belief Scale (Duriez et al., 2000; 33 items). All items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *completely opposed*, 7 = *completely in agreement*). In order to control for differences in acquiescence, the average score across the items was subtracted from the raw scores (for a detailed description, see Fontaine et al., in press). For each sample, a principal-components analysis was then carried out on the corrected scores. A scree test pointed to a two-componential solution for all samples (cf. Fontaine et al., 2003). In all samples,

after orthogonal Procrustes rotation toward the average structure reported by Fontaine et al., these components could be interpreted in terms of Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence and Literal versus Symbolic. In all samples, Tucker's phi indices were above .90 for both components, suggesting good congruence (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). Estimates of internal consistency (theta; Armor, 1974) were .87, .89, and .88 for Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence and .80, .81, and .80 for Literal versus Symbolic in Samples 1 to 3, respectively. A high score on Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence indicates a tendency to include transcendence. A high score on Literal versus Symbolic indicates a tendency to deal with religion in a symbolic way.

Participants also completed a 9-item racism scale (Billiet & De Witte, 1991). The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *completely opposed*, 5 = *completely in agreement*). According to Billiet and De Witte, the racism scale consists of two components: racism and xenophobia. An example of a racism item is: "We have to keep our race pure and fight mixture with other races." An example of a xenophobia item is "In general, immigrants are not to be trusted." However, a scree test pointed to one component only in all samples (cf. Duriez et al., 2000; Duriez & Hutsebaut, 2000). Estimates of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha's) were .87, .87, and .86 in Samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

As a measure of RWA, participants completed a shortened RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1981, translated by Meloen, 1991; 11 items), and as a measure of SDO, participants completed the SDO scale (Pratto et al., 1994, translated by Van Hiel & Duriez, 2002; 14 items). All items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *completely opposed*, 5 = *completely in agreement*). Estimates of internal consistency (Cronbach's alphas) were .70, .71, and .75 for RWA and .81, .87, and .83 for SDO in Samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

As a measure of empathy, all of the participants in Samples 1 and 2 and some of the participants in Sample 3 ($N = 397$) completed the Perspective Taking and the Empathic Concern scales (7 items each), both of which are subscales of the 28 item Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983; translated by Duriez, 2002). The Perspective Taking scale measures the tendency to adopt the viewpoint of other people in everyday life. The Empathic Concern scale measures the tendency to experience compassion and concern for other people. The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *completely opposed*, 5 = *completely in agreement*). Estimates of internal consistency (Cronbach's alphas) were .67, .71, and .65 for Perspective Taking and .70, .72, and .70 for Empathic Concern in Samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Both scales were positively related ($r = .37, .35, \text{ and } .37, p < .0001$, in Samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively). Therefore, following McFarland (2001), the items of both the Perspective Taking and the Empathic Concern scale were used to compute a general empathy scale. Estimates of internal consistency (Cronbach's alphas) were .75, .76, and .75 in Samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

RESULTS

Correlational Analyses

The relation between the religiosity dimensions and racism was investigated by means of bivariate correlations. Results show a consistent pattern of relations across the samples (see Table 1). Results show that the correlation between racism and the Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence dimension was significantly positive in Sample 2. However, although significant, this correlation was only a moderate one. In Samples 1 and 3, this correlation was nonsignificant. In contrast, the correlation between racism and the Literal versus Symbolic dimension was strongly negative in all three samples. Hence, these results appear to be quite stable in spite of the different characteristics of the samples.

In order to test whether there exists an interaction between Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence and Literal versus Symbolic, regression analyses were performed in which racism was regressed on the main effects of Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence and Literal versus Symbolic and the interaction of both dimensions. This allowed us to investigate whether the effect of Literal versus Symbolic changes according to the level of Exclusion versus Inclusion of

TABLE 1
Correlations Between the Variables Included in This Study

Variable	Sample	1	2	3	4	5
	No.					
1. Exclusion vs. Inclusion	1					
	2					
	3					
2. Literal vs. Symbolic	1	.00				
	2	.00				
	3	.00				
3. Racism	1	.09	-.38**			
	2	.13**	-.37**			
	3	.02	-.44**			
4. RWA	1	.21**	-.28**	.42**		
	2	.27**	-.26**	.48**		
	3	.38**	-.29**	.50**		
5. SDO	1	.06	-.26**	.53**	.33**	
	2	.10*	-.31**	.56**	.40**	
	3	-.03	-.35**	.51**	.37**	
6. Empathy	1	.15*	.22**	-.25**	-.09	-.35 **
	2	.00	.26**	-.35**	-.20**	-.43 **
	3	.13	.30**	-.23**	-.14*	-.39**

Notes. RWA = right-wing authoritarianism; SDO = social dominance orientation.
* $p < .01$. ** $p < .0001$.

Transcendence. Results show that this is not the case. In none of the samples did the interaction term have a significant effect ($p < .05$).

Given the absence of an interaction effect, the correlations between racism and the subscales of the Post-Critical Belief Scale (Literal Affirmation, Literal Disaffirmation, Symbolic Disaffirmation, and Symbolic Affirmation) can easily be deduced from the correlations with Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence and Literal versus Symbolic. In Sample 1, racism correlates .09 with Inclusion of Transcendence (or $-.09$ with Exclusion) and $-.38$ with Symbolic (or $.38$ with Literal). The correlation between racism and Literal Affirmation then equals $[(.09) + (.38)]/2 = .24$. The correlation between racism and Literal Disaffirmation then equals $[(-.09) + (.38)]/2 = .15$. Similar computations show that the correlations with Symbolic Affirmation and Symbolic Disaffirmation equal $-.15$ and $-.24$. In Sample 2, the correlations with Literal Affirmation, Literal Disaffirmation, Symbolic Affirmation, and Symbolic Disaffirmation equal $.25$, $.12$, $-.12$, and $-.25$, respectively. In Sample 3, these correlations equal $.21$, $.19$, $-.19$, and $-.21$.

In line with the results of McFarland (2001), Table 1 shows that, in all samples, racism was significantly positively related to RWA and SDO and was significantly negatively related to empathy. Also in line with the results of McFarland (2001), the correlations between racism and both RWA and SDO are clearly stronger than between racism and empathy. Empathy was found to relate clearly negatively to SDO, and slightly negatively to RWA. RWA and SDO were found to relate significantly positively (cf. Duriez, 2002; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002). Furthermore, results show that, whereas the Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence dimension was significantly positively related to RWA, it bore no consistent relationship with either SDO or empathy (cf. Duriez, 2002). In contrast, in all samples, the Literal versus Symbolic dimension was found to relate significantly negatively to both RWA and SDO and to relate significantly positively to empathy (cf. Duriez, 2002). Again, the correlations between Literal Affirmation, Literal Disaffirmation, Symbolic Affirmation, and Symbolic Disaffirmation on the one hand and RWA, SDO, and empathy on the other hand can be deduced from these results.

Regression Analyses

To assess whether the religiosity dimensions contribute to the prediction of racism beyond the three pillars of prejudice (RWA, SDO, and lack of empathy), we performed hierarchical multiple regression analyses with RWA, SDO, empathy, and the religiosity dimension as independent variables and racism as the dependent variable. Table 2 reports the findings of these analyses and includes (a) the change in the proportion of variance explained (ΔR^2) when adding, respectively, RWA, SDO, empathy, Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence, and Literal versus

Symbolic to the equation; (b) the standardized regression coefficients (b); and (c) the proportion of variance explained by the overall model (R^2) and the corresponding F values. Note that, for Sample 3, the presented results are limited to the results of the participants who also completed the empathy measure ($N = 397$).

Results show a consistent pattern of relations across the samples. In line with the results of McFarland (2001), Table 2 shows that, in all samples, RWA and SDO significantly predict racism. However, results also suggest that the importance of empathy was overrated in the studies of McFarland. Empathy proved to yield a significant contribution to the prediction of racism in Sample 2 only. And even in this sample, albeit significant, this contribution is not very strong. As far as the religiosity dimensions are concerned, in all samples, Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence yielded no significant contribution to the prediction of racism. In contrast, Literal versus Symbolic was found to yield a significant contribution to the prediction of racism in all samples in addition to the three pillars of prejudice.

TABLE 2
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Racism

Variable	Statistic	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
Adding RWA	ΔR^2	.18	.23	.24
RWA	Beta	.42**	.48**	.49**
Adding SDO	R^2	.17	.16	.11
RWA	Beta	.27**	.31**	.35**
SDO	Beta	.44**	.44**	.36**
Adding empathy	ΔR^2	.01	.02	.00
RWA	Beta	.28**	.30**	.35**
SDO	Beta	.41**	.38**	.34**
Empathy	Beta	-.08	-.12**	-.05
Adding Exclusion vs. Inclusion	ΔR^2	.00	.00	.01
RWA	Beta	.27**	.30**	.39**
SDO	Beta	.41**	.39**	.35**
Empathy	Beta	-.09	-.12**	-.02
Exclusion vs. Inclusion	Beta	.03	.00	-.12
Adding Literal vs. Symbolic	ΔR^2	.04	.02	.05
RWA	Beta	.23**	.27**	.33**
SDO	Beta	.37**	.36**	.31**
Empathy	Beta	-.06	-.10**	.03
Exclusion vs. Inclusion	Beta	-.04	.02	-.11
Literal vs. Symbolic	Beta	-.21**	-.16**	-.24**
Overall model	R^2	.40	.43	.41
	F	42.03**	160.20**	52.94**

Notes. RWA = right-wing authoritarianism; SDO = social dominance orientation.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .0001$.

DISCUSSION

The correlational analyses showed two important things. First, in all but one sample, racism was not significantly related to Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence. In Sample 2, a significant correlation did occur. However, this correlation was rather weak, suggesting that, although there might be a faint relationship between racism and being religious or not, the importance of this relationship is limited. Second, racism was clearly and significantly negatively related to the Literal versus Symbolic dimension in all of the samples. These findings are compatible with earlier research, which has shown that there is no clear, pronounced relationship between being religious or not and being prejudiced or not, but that this relationship is mainly dependent on how people deal with religion. More specifically, the present findings suggest that what seems to be crucially important is not so much whether one is religious or not but whether one processes religious contents in a literal or in a symbolic way. If religious contents are processed in a literal fashion, one is more likely to be intolerant against people of a different race and/or culture. In contrast, if religious contents are processed in a symbolic fashion, one is unlikely to hold racist attitudes. Hence, these results contribute to the debate about whether religious people are more inclined to hold racist opinions. When the way in which religious contents are processed is taken into account, as is done when using the Post-Critical Belief Scale, the impact of being religious or not is rather trivial. This implies that the danger of religious fundamentalism (RF) does not lie in religion as such but in the cognitive style that is applied when processing religious issues.

This is in line with the reasoning of Altemeyer (2003), who argued that the relationship between religious fundamentalism and prejudice should be accounted for by a general attitude toward whatever belief one holds rather than in terms of particular religious beliefs. According to Altemeyer, religious fundamentalists are characterized by two important tendencies: the tendency to show heightened identification with what they perceive to be the religious in-group and the tendency to show heightened rejection of what they perceive to be the religious out-group. Following this reasoning, it can be argued that RF can also be displayed by nonreligious people. Some nonreligious people, namely those that process religious issues in a literal and closed-minded way, can be expected to show these very same tendencies. The only difference between religious and nonreligious RF would then be the nature of the in-group. Whereas, for religious RF, the in-group will be the own denomination, for nonreligious RF the in-group will be the group of atheists. From this perspective, both religious and nonreligious RF can be expected to go hand in hand with a racial prejudice that is grounded in RF. For instance, when thinking of immigrants, people in Belgium spontaneously think of Muslims. This group of people is especially likely to become a target of RF. They will be a target of nonreligious RF because of their religiousness, and they will be a target of reli-

gious RF because they belong to another, distinctly non-Catholic (and even non-Christian) denomination.

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses further support the claim that the overall impact of being religious or not on racist attitudes is limited. Once RWA, SDO, and empathy are taken into account, being religious or not has no effect at all on racism. In contrast, the results of these multiple regression analyses show that the Literal versus Symbolic dimension remains important toward the prediction of racism even after what McFarland (2001) identified as the three pillars of prejudice (RWA, SDO, and lack of empathy) are controlled for. The fact that the Literal versus Symbolic dimension remains important even after the three pillars of prejudice are controlled for makes it clear that the RF that is inclined in this dimension (whether it is subscribed by religious or nonreligious persons) is distinct from closed-mindedness in general. In the studies of McFarland, closed-mindedness did not contribute to the prediction of prejudice beyond RWA and SDO. This indicates that, although obviously related, RF differs from closed-mindedness, and it suggests that closed-mindedness might operate in a somehow different fashion when religious issues are at stake. Maybe this results from the fact that religion is often given a lot of importance already early in life (cf. Altemeyer, 2003), which might render it of more central importance to the self.

The results of the regression analyses also show that McFarland (2001) seems to have overestimated the importance of empathy. In contrast to the other two pillars of prejudice (RWA and SDO), this third pillar definitely seems less firmly established. One can only speculate about the reasons why empathy did not add to the prediction of racism in two out of the three sample. Maybe it has something to do with cultural differences, or maybe this resulted from the variables that were included. One possible reason is that, whereas the present study was limited to racism, the study of McFarland focused on latent prejudice, with racism only being one part of this. Therefore, the possibility cannot be excluded that empathy turned out to be a predictor of latent prejudice because of its relation to the other aspects of latent prejudice (e.g., homophobia, sexism, or patriotism). Whatever is the case, the current results suggest that, at least in the predominantly Roman Catholic region of Belgium, the third pillar of prejudice does not seem to be lack of empathy but seems to have to be located in the religious domain, and more specifically in the domain of religious cognitions. Again, this result stresses the importance of religion and suggests that religious cognitions occupy a special place in the genesis of racism.

Further research should elaborate on whether the current results can be generalized to other cultures and denominations. For instance, what would have happened if McFarland (2001) had added the Post-Critical Belief Scale to his set of predictors of prejudice? Would the Literal versus Symbolic dimension have turned out to be an additional pillar of prejudice? Or is this pillar culturally dependent? In addition, future research should elaborate on whether the current results can be gener-

alized to other forms of prejudice. In this respect, it should be noted that one of the consistent patterns of this study is that the Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence dimension is positively related to RWA. In addition, this dimension has been shown to relate to cultural conservatism (Duriez, 2003a); conservation values (Fontaine, Duriez, Luyten, Corveleyn, & Hutsebaut, 2003); and preference for order, structure, and predictability (Duriez, 2003b). According to Duriez (2002), this suggests that religious people have a desire to protect their culture and traditions from the influence of deviating opinions and deviating lifestyles. And even though this does not lead to racism (probably because racism is considered to be morally wrong), it might have a direct effect on other forms of prejudice, such as homophobia. Whereas everybody agrees that one cannot choose one's own skin color or one's own cultural background, some people think that one can choose one's own sexual orientation. Therefore, homophobia might be considered less morally wrong by some people. And if it would be the case that Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence relates to other forms of prejudice such as homophobia, can this relation be accounted for by differences in RWA and SDO? And what about the Literal versus Symbolic dimension? Would it also be (far more) important than Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence with respect to these other forms of prejudice? Clearly, all of these questions deserve future attention.

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