

Chapter 15

Positive Psychology and Religion/ Spirituality Across Cultures in Europe, Non-US North America, and South America



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In an interview with an atheist Italian intellectual and founder of the newspaper *La Repubblica*, Pope Francis (Vatican, 2013) addressed the spiritual dimension of human life:

Let me ask you a question: You, a secular nonbeliever in God, what do you believe in? You are a writer and a man of thought. You believe in something. You must have a dominant value. Don't answer me with words like honesty, seeking, the vision of the common good—all important principles and values—but that is not what I am asking. I am asking what you think is the essence of the world, indeed the universe. You must ask yourself, of course, like everyone else, who we are, where do we come from, where we are going. Even children ask themselves these questions. And you?

This quote highlights that finding meaning in life, searching for purpose, and experiencing hope and transcendence reflect universal aspects of human existence. This fact is underscored by the presence of religion/spirituality (R/S) across a wide variety of cultural settings as an important part of many people's lives. The fields of positive psychology and psychology of R/S both emphasize clinical implications of existential and core issues for human beings, including virtues, relational experiences, and meaning making (Davis et al., Chap. 1, this volume). In addition, within

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positive psychology, R/S is one of the universal character strengths that promotes well-being and contributes to a life worth living (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Nevertheless, the contribution of R/S to well-being may vary across cultures. For example, cultural dimensions such as country, world region, socioeconomic level, race/ethnicity, and gender can influence the results of studies on R/S and well-being and the effectiveness of different psychotherapies focused on R/S and well-being (see Captari et al., Chap. 26, this volume).

Culture is defined as a community of members who share beliefs, traditions, behaviors, values, habits, and institutions, despite a degree of individual variability and change over time (Jensen, 2021; see Mattis, Chap. 9, this volume). Jensen (2021) has proposed three main reasons to acknowledge culture in psychological research and clinical practice: (a) humans are a uniquely cultural species and the human brain is continually adapting to a cultural context, (b) the digital and globalizing world permits people to have influences from different cultures, and (c) there is a need for cross-cultural studies to improve the ecological validity of psychology interventions.

However, scientific research at the intersection of positive psychology and R/S is not equally represented across different continents and cultures. Much of this research has been focused on participants living in the United States and Western Europe, and it has largely oversampled Christians. Yet increasing evidence indicates the relevance and often beneficial effects of R/S on well-being are not limited to Christians or the Western world but extend globally across a diverse range of religions and cultures (Tay & Diener, 2011).

The purpose of this chapter is to examine research on positive psychology and R/S that has been conducted in Europe, non-US North America (Canada and Central America), and South America. In light of the importance of considering cultural differences and similarities across religions and continents, this chapter synthesizes how cultural factors may affect research and practice on positive psychology and the psychology of R/S in these world regions. We start with a brief overview of the sociocultural and religious backdrop of these regions (see also Appendix 15.S1, Table 15.S1). Then we turn to reviewing the research in each region, such as what topics, populations, and contexts have been examined in that region's research on positive psychology and R/S. Finally, we consider implications for research and clinical practice, gaps in the current literature, and future directions for research.

Overview of the Cultural and Religious Background of the Reviewed Regions

Europe

Europe is the second-smallest world continent, covering about 2% of the Earth's surface. The total population is almost 749 million (9.51% of the world's population), and it is the second-most densely populated continent (second to Asia).

Politically, Europe is comprised of 48 sovereign countries, of which Russia is the largest (World Population Review, 2021).

Religion has profoundly influenced the history, societies, cultures, and laws of the European continent. Christianity has played a particularly predominant role (Davie, 2006), both for good (e.g., influencing art, literature, science, and philosophy) and ill (e.g., motivating wars, conquests, and oppression). In Europe, Christianity still has the most adherents (74.5%), with Catholics tending to cluster in southern Europe, Protestants in northern Europe, and Orthodox Christians in eastern Europe (Pew Research Center, 2017). Even so, notwithstanding the historical influence of religion, Europe has become a relatively secular continent, with an increasing number of irreligious, atheist, and agnostic people (who collectively comprise about 18.8% of Europe's population). Although the Asia-Pacific region has the largest share of the world's religiously unaffiliated population (75.9%), Europe has the largest share in the Western world (12.4%; Pew Research Center, 2015).

Non-US North America (Canada and Central America)

Canada is situated above the northern part of the continental U.S. It covers 3.8 million square miles and is physically the second largest country in the world (behind Russia: 6.61 mi.²; World Population Review, 2021). Canada was an indigenously inhabited territory until French and British colonization began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The French and British influence on Canadian culture remains strong (e.g., Canada's two official languages are French and English). Canada has the tenth largest economy in the world, and its population is around 38,000,000 (0.48% of the world's population; World Population Review, 2021).

Historically, Christianity has been the predominant religion in Canada, but the number of Canadians who identify as Christian is declining. Presently, around 55% of adults identify as Christian (including roughly 29% Catholic and 18% Protestant), with a high and growing percentage of Canadians identifying as religiously unaffiliated (29%). Most Canadians (64%) say religion's influence on Canada's public life is waning (Lipka, 2019).

Moving south, Central America is the region that includes the eight countries between the United States on the north and Colombia on the south. Its eight countries are Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. The combined population of Central America is 181.7 million, with Mexico and Guatemala having the largest populations in the region (128.9 million and 17.9 million, respectively; Worldometer, 2021). Its countries tend to be rather socioeconomically poor (Ventura, 2021).

Although Central America is technically part of North America, it has more in common culturally with South America, given shared ties to ancient cultures (e.g., the Aztec, Olmec, Mayans, and Incas) and European colonial rule (World Population Review, 2021). Hence, Central America often is considered a part of the broader

region labeled *Latin America–Caribbean*, comprised of the Central American, South American, and Caribbean countries (Pew Research Center, 2014). In the sixteenth century, the Central American region was subjected to Spanish colonial rule, and therefore its countries are still largely influenced by Spanish culture (Woodward & Bushnell, 2021).

Central American countries tend to be highly religious, and they are overwhelmingly comprised of Christian adherents (ranging from 86% to 91%). Given the region's historical ties to Spanish culture, Central American countries have historically been comprised of predominantly Catholic Christian affiliates. For example, in Mexico, currently, 81% of adults identify as Catholic and 9% as Protestant; this gap is evident in Panama (70% vs. 19%) and Costa Rica (62% vs. 25%) as well. In other Central American countries, the gap between Catholic and Protestant affiliates is decreasing, as more adults “switch” to a Protestant tradition. These countries include El Salvador (50% Catholic, 36% Protestant), Guatemala (50%, 41%), Honduras (46%, 41%), and Nicaragua (50%, 40%; Pew Research Center, 2014).

South America

South America is comprised of 14 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela, French Guiana, and the Falkland Islands. It has a population of 434.3 million people. Culturally, it has similar historical origins to the Central American countries, with ties to thriving indigenous civilizations that were subjugated to European colonial rule (mostly by Spain and Portugal), starting in the sixteenth century. Contemporary cultures in South America often reflect a fusion of indigenous and colonial influences (World Population Review, 2021).

Yet when it comes to religion, South American cultures heavily reflect European colonial influences. In most South American countries, the vast majority of adults are adherents of Christianity, typically ranging from 81% in Chile to 96% in Paraguay. The only exception is Uruguay, which has a uniquely low proportion of Christian adherents (57%) and a uniquely high proportion of religiously unaffiliated people. The overwhelming majority of Christians in South America are Catholic affiliated, but the number of adults “switching” to Protestant affiliation (mostly a Pentecostal tradition) is rising steadily, especially in Brazil (61% Catholic, 26% Protestant) and Chile (64%, 17%). As in Central America, most South American countries are highly religious (Pew Research Center, 2014, 2015), and many are rather socioeconomically poor (Ventura, 2021; World Population Review, 2021).

Purpose of the Current Review

The overview above serves not only to familiarize the reader with the cultural and religious characteristics of Europe, non-US North America, and South America. From the backdrop of these distinct and varied cultures, we sought to conduct a literature review that examined and synthesized the past three decades of these regions' empirical research on positive psychology and the psychology of R/S.

Method of Review

We conducted three sets of database searches (one for each region) in PsycINFO. Specifically, we sought to identify relevant peer-reviewed scholarly articles that were published from January 1, 1990 until January 1, 2021. We searched for records with titles or abstracts that contained keywords associated with R/S (i.e., *relig**, *spirit**, *worship**, *pray**, *faith*, *sacred*) and positive psychology (i.e., *altruism**, *compassion**, *forgiv**, *gratitude*, *hope*, *humility*, *patience*), crossing these terms with the names of the specific countries in each region. Nonempirical articles, empirical articles that did not intersect positive psychology and the psychology of R/S, and topically relevant empirical articles that did not include at least one sample from a geographic region of interest were excluded from the review.

The database searches that were performed for each region yielded a combined total of 937 unique records (Europe: $k = 580$; non-US North America: $k = 343$; South America: $k = 64$). After examining the titles and abstracts of each record, 226 articles were retrieved for further screening. We then reviewed the full texts of those articles, which resulted in the exclusion of 116 articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria. Metadata (e.g., title, year of publication), key details about the research context (e.g., country/countries, study focus), methodology (e.g., research design, sampling approach), participants (e.g., sample type, size, and age), and main findings were extracted from each retained article (see Appendix 15.S2).

Results of the Review

Across the three regions, a total of 110 articles met inclusion criteria (see Appendix 15.S3 for citations). The largest proportion was from Europe ($k = 50$), followed by non-US North America ($k = 34$), and South America ($k = 12$). Fourteen studies were multiregional.

Publication Activity, Research Context, and Utilized Methodology

In Europe, 50 articles met inclusion criteria; all but five have been published since 2010. Almost all the studies used quantitative methods (94.0%); there were only 3 qualitative or mixed-methods studies (6.0%). Altogether, there were 11 longitudinal studies (22.0%) and four experiments (8.0%). Germany and Poland were the two European countries that had the most publications on positive psychology and the psychology of R/S.

In non-US North America, 34 articles met inclusion criteria; again, all but nine were published since 2010. Regarding methodology, 15 studies (44.1%) used quantitative methods and 19 studies (55.9%) used qualitative or mixed methods. There were three longitudinal studies (8.8%) and two experiments (5.9%). Canada was the country with the most research published on positive psychology and R/S, with 61.8% ($k = 21$) of this region's articles.

In the region of South America, 12 articles met inclusion criteria, three published prior to 2011. Regarding methodology, 7 studies (58.3%) used quantitative methods and 5 studies (41.7%) used qualitative or mixed methods. There was one longitudinal study (8.3%) but no experiments. Brazil was the country with the most studies in the region ($k = 7$, 58.3%).

Topics and Variables of Interest

Identifying the topics and variables examined in each region's articles on positive psychology and psychology of R/S can offer clues about the role and influence of culture on complex entities such as R/S. Thus, we next endeavored to identify the topics of positive psychology and psychology of R/S that were studied in each article (see Appendix 15.S2).

Positive Psychology

Forgiveness In European studies, the topic of forgiveness has often been examined ($k = 16$, 32.0%). This topic has been studied in a variety of populations, such as cancer patients (van Laarhoven et al., 2012), soldiers (Büssing et al., 2018), married adults (Jose & Alfons, 2007), and inpatients in alcohol abuse treatment (Braun et al., 2018).

Forgiveness has also been studied in non-US North America ($k = 6$, 17.6%) and South America ($k = 5$, 41.7%). For example, it has been examined in adult Canadian survivors of childhood sexual abuse (Gall, 2006), ethnic minority youth in Canada

(Kubiliene et al., 2015), and two samples of disaster survivors in Colombia (Chen et al., 2021).

Hope The topic of hope has been studied quite extensively in Europe ($k = 15$, 30.5%), non-US North America ($k = 10$, 29.4%), and South America ($k = 4$, 33.3%). Across European studies, hope has been studied as a coping strategy (Wirth & Büssing, 2016; Wnuk, 2015; Zarzycka et al., 2019) and linked to coping efficacy (Ferreira-Valente et al., 2020), perceived posttraumatic growth (Kroo & Nagy, 2011), life satisfaction (Oliver et al., 2017), meaning in life (Wnuk & Marcinkowski, 2014), lower anxiety (Zarzycka et al., 2019), and lower suicide risk (Stefa-Missagli et al., 2020). Similarly, in non-US North America and in South America, hope has been studied as a coping and social behavior (Aquino & Zago, 2007; Gall et al., 2009; Gall & Bilodeau, 2017) and has been associated with positive youth development (e.g., confidence and connectedness; Tirrell et al., 2019), benevolent God representations (Gall et al., 2007), self-efficacy at work (Duggleby et al., 2009), forgiveness and well-being (Chen et al., 2021), and happiness and faith (Holt & Reeves, 2001).

Other Character Strengths and Virtues Across all three regions, many other character strengths have been examined as well, including compassion ($k = 15$), altruism ($k = 17$), and gratitude ($k = 3$). For example, compassion has been identified as a core motivation for family caregivers of cancer patients in Mexico (Juarez et al., 2014), for palliative care professionals in Germany and the United Kingdom (Wasner et al., 2005), and for charity donors in Portugal (de Abreu et al., 2015). Additionally, in a large multiregional study across 36 countries (including all three regions examined in this chapter), altruism has been robustly and cross-culturally associated with higher religiousness and more positive attitudes toward outgroups (Ashton & Lee, 2019). Within this chapter's regions of interest, altruism has been linked to authenticity in two Canadian samples (Cornwell et al., 2017) and to religiousness in four samples of Belgian adults (Saroglou et al., 2005). Furthermore, gratitude has been associated with life satisfaction among Catholic pastoral workers in Germany (Büssing et al., 2017) and with well-being among adolescents in Canada (Bosacki et al., 2018). Moreover, increases in gratitude have been found among participants in alcohol treatment in Poland (Charzyńska, 2015) and among teletherapy participants in Romania (Tulbure et al., 2018).

Well-Being and Other Positive Psychology Constructs Of the 110 studies of positive psychology and R/S included in this review, the topic of well-being has been examined in 66 studies (60.0%). Across cultures and samples, there is evidence that people's psychological well-being is related to their religious/spiritual well-being (e.g., higher perceived closeness with God and lower spiritual struggle or distress). Studies have found that people often utilize R/S to cope with a variety of stressors, including substance use disorders (Braun et al., 2018), cancer (Testoni et al., 2016), natural disasters (Chen et al., 2021), and economic crises (Hendriks et al., 2018). Longitudinal studies in these regions have found that people's

utilization of R/S typically has positive effects on their well-being (e.g., Gall & Bilodeau, 2017; Oliver et al., 2017; Opsahl et al., 2019), although this is not always the case (e.g., Braun et al., 2018; Gall et al., 2009). Longitudinal studies in these regions have also found evidence that R/S may lead to increased life satisfaction (Marques et al., 2013), positive emotions (Inman, 2014), hope and meaning (Aquino & Zago, 2007), and character strengths and virtues (e.g., forgiveness and gratitude; Charzyńska, 2015). Furthermore, experimental studies have found that R/S can cause increased prosociality (Purzycki et al., 2016) and moral behavior (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011) and can be incorporated effectively into psychotherapy (Tulbure et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016).

Besides well-being, several other positive psychology constructs have been examined in these regions, including life satisfaction ($k = 13$), meaning/purpose in life ($k = 12$), social support (positive relationships; $k = 9$), happiness ($k = 6$), and positive emotions ($k = 6$). For example, a cross-cultural comparison of 41 nations found evidence that happiness is tied to the quality of people's social relations and to macrolevel social structures and institutions (Haller & Hadler, 2006).

Religion/Spirituality

Regarding the psychology of R/S topics studied, some similarities and differences were evident in the three regions (see Appendix 15.S1, Table 15.S2). Across all three regions, religious/spiritual belief was studied most frequently, ranging from 41.7% of studies in South America to 50.0% in non-US North America. Religious/spiritual attendance (public religious/spiritual practices) were also examined with similar regularity (between 30.0% and 33.3% across regions). Private religious/spiritual practices (e.g., prayer) were studied slightly more often in Europe and South America than in non-US North America (38.0% and 41.7% vs. 23.5%, respectively); the same was true for religious/spiritual importance (28.0% and 25.0% vs. 14.7%). Religious/spiritual affiliation (identity) was studied much more often in South America than in Europe or non-US North America (41.7% vs. 14.0% and 17.6%).

Discussion

The results of this review show there is growing scholarly interest in positive psychology and the psychology of R/S in Europe, non-US North America, and South America. The varied contexts, populations, and topics that were studied illustrate the breadth of how researchers from different cultures are examining and integrating positive psychology and R/S.

Across the three reviewed regions, a wide range of settings, samples, and topics were examined. European studies tended to focus on health contexts and issues (e.g., healthcare professionals, nursing students, cancer, COVID-19, chronic pain) and mental health difficulties (e.g., mental disorders, substance use disorders, anxiety, depression, suicide). Similarly, studies in non-US North America frequently examined R/S as a resource to cope with stressors (e.g., discrimination, physical health problems, trauma, or abuse) or treat mental health difficulties. Articles in Europe and non-US North America often focused on studying a special populations, such as youth, older adults, soldiers, prisoners, racial/ethnic minorities, refugees, and patients with mental or medical difficulties. South American studies were also quite eclectic in the settings and samples they examined. For example, studies were conducted with students, rural community members, older adults, religious leaders, spiritist mediums, cancer patients, healthcare professionals, caregivers, and disaster survivors.

Regarding the psychology of R/S, consistent with the model proposed by Saroglou (2011)—in which the R/S is conceptualized as having four cross-culturally evident dimensions (believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging)—there were similar and different patterns of religious/spiritual salience that were evident in the three regions, based on how often particular religious/spiritual topics were studied. The cognitive dimension of religious belief seems most salient across all three regions, because religious/spiritual belief was consistently the most studied topic. The experiential dimension of religious bonding (e.g., private religious/spiritual practices) seems slightly more salient in Europe and South America than in non-US North America. The social dimension (e.g., religious/spiritual affiliation and identity) of religious belonging seems more salient in South America than in Europe or non-US North America. The behavioral dimension of religious behavior (e.g., religious service attendance) seems similarly salient across the three regions. As shown in Table 15.S3 of Appendix 15.S1, most of the European and Canadian studies tended to focus on individually oriented religious/spiritual phenomena (religious believing, bonding, and behaving). Central and South American studies were more apt to incorporate examination of socially oriented religious/spiritual phenomena (religious belonging) as well. This distinction fits with European and North American tendencies toward cognitivism, experientialism, and individualism, as compared to Central and South American tendencies toward collectivism and familialism. These possibilities offer clues about the role culture may have in the experience of R/S in these regions. R/S may be more socially incorporative in Central and South America, whereas in Europe and Canada, it might be more individually focused.

This possibility makes sense in light of the multiregional findings of Diener et al. (2011). In prosperous nations that have achieved high material and social well-being (like Canada and most European countries), R/S is less prevalent, perhaps because the nonreligious can more easily achieve life satisfaction, receive social support, and experience positive emotions and feelings of being respected. On the contrary, the pattern of R/S and well-being is largely reversed in societies in which life conditions are normatively difficult versus benign. The nonreligious in poor

societies, like many countries in Central America and South America, are at the biggest disadvantage, with noticeably lower positive feelings and higher negative feelings, as well as substantial deficits in social support and feelings of respect. In Diener et al. (2011), R/S predicted social support, respect, and purpose/meaning in life, each of which in turn predicted subjective well-being. That is perhaps why religious people in poorer societies were more likely to prosper in terms of subjective well-being if they lived in religious rather than nonreligious societies (Diener et al., 2011). It may also help explain why people in Central and South America tend to be more committed to R/S than most people in Europe and Canada (Pew Research Center, 2018).

Notably, the research activity of psychology in R/S and positive psychology (and consequently, its applicability to clinical practice) may be driven largely by the economic and social resources available to conduct valuable and rigorous studies. Of the three regions we studied, Europe was the most scientifically advanced region in terms of publication activity on positive psychology and R/S. Within non-US North American publications, there is a disproportion between the research activity in Canada versus other countries. South America is the region with fewer articles published compared to the other two regions. Taking into account the economic situation of many Central and South American countries, which often tend to be poorer than Canada and European countries, it is reasonable that there may be less publications in these regions because they have less financial and human resources available for research. Yet compared to the decreasing rates of R/S in Canada and Europe, Central and South America have a much higher percentage of religiously affiliated and practicing people. This means that, in Central and South America, R/S is still quite present as a way of life and a cultural tradition, but it is not a common focus of scholarly study. Even so, research is needed to inform scientific understanding and applied practice in Central and South America (as well as in Canada and Europe), so how can this problem be addressed? The next sections share ideas toward this end and offer suggestions to guide clinicians and researchers more broadly.

Practical Applications and Recommendations

Clinical Practice

Awareness and understanding of the impact of cultural factors is one of the key factors clinicians need to incorporate into their work, especially when it comes to working with religious/spiritual clients and using religious/spiritually integrated interventions (Vieten & Lukoff, 2022; see Captari et al., Chap. 26, this volume). For example, maybe psychological interventions that integrate R/S in Canada and Europe should be more oriented to individually focused concerns (e.g., to address spiritual struggle or dryness), whereas in Central and South America, interventions

may need to focus more on helping people nurture their social connections (e.g., to their family and community). Given the cultural salience of R/S in Central and South America, it may also be important and effective for clinicians to collaborate with religious leaders and communities (Wang et al., Chap. 29, this volume).

Future Research

Investigating cultural factors affecting the integration of positive psychology and the psychology of R/S is not easy (see Mattis, Chap. 9, this volume). For instance, it often is challenging to (a) differentiate what is R/S and what is culture, (b) isolate R/S from culture, and (c) determine the extent to which both dimensions are implicitly attached to specific values, virtues, and character strengths. However, studies that examine these and other challenging questions are needed to advance scientific understanding of R/S and promote personal and societal well-being. Toward this end, we offer a few recommendations.

Conduct Culture-Focused Studies Among the studies in this review, the ones that specifically focused on how cultural factors may affect R/S and positive psychological phenomena were scarce. As Lomas (2015) has described, one plausible explanation for this is the frequent presumption of universality. Lomas defined the *universalizing perspective* as focused on the commonalities of people across cultures. The alternative option is the *relativizing perspective*, which focuses on the differences between people in different cultures. Both perspectives have strengths and weaknesses. For instance, the relativistic perspective allows a detailed understanding of the impact of culture on well-being and R/S, but a universalistic perspective can contribute to general knowledge about people's common humanity and allow the identification of cross-cultural similarities. Both types of culture-focused studies are needed.

Consider Religion as Culture vs. Religion as an Element of Culture As Saroglou and Cohen (2011) have explained, R/S may be considered part of a culture, may constitute culture, or may interact with culture in influencing cognitions, emotions, and actions. One important consideration when starting to investigate a particular culture is to establish the degree to which religion in that specific group is part of the culture or is just an element that could be present or not. For instance, in some countries, there is only one religion and there is no option for the citizen to choose their religion (or even to choose *not* to be religious), whereas in other countries, it is easy to find great diversity of religions and beliefs. Before studying particular cultures, these relevant issues need to be explored and understood.

Develop and Culturally Validate Measures In order to conduct strong research on culture, R/S, and positive psychology, there is a need for measures that are psychometrically sound and culturally valid. Extant research in these regions does not

attend enough to issues of measurement, such as the need for cultural validation and establishing cross-cultural construct equivalence. Because the study of cultural factors in positive psychology and the psychology of R/S is somewhat new, researchers need (a) to develop and use the same nomenclature to facilitate communication and cross-study, cross-cultural comparisons and (b) to create psychometrically strong instruments that allow the valid measurement of cultural factors and the ability to compare construct-equivalent results in different cultures and countries (because of demonstrated measurement invariance across specific cultural groups).

Conduct Intracultural and Intercultural Studies Cross-cultural studies may be a key method to contrast and define the role of culture in the relationship of R/S and positive psychology. In this chapter, a total of 14 cross-cultural, multiregional studies were identified. However, to find greater relevance of cultural factors between countries across the world, a first step may be to conduct cross-cultural studies between countries in the same continent or region (e.g., within North America, Central America, or South America) and then compare them with other regions of the world. Intracultural studies may help clarify cultural nuances and variations within each continent—before conducting larger-scale, cross-cultural studies across multiple continents. In addition, this could not only promote research on these topics in all cultures, but also allow the poorest countries—often where R/S are more saliently practiced—to raise awareness of the benefits of R/S for people in their cultural context.

Conclusion

Positive psychology and the psychology of R/S are clearly in a position of advancing science and practice at the intersections of culture, R/S, and well-being. Even so, in the culturally and religiously complex, diverse regions of Europe, non-US North America, and South America, there is a lot of work to be done. We are eager to see how scholars and practitioners take up this exciting opportunity in the decades to come, as our world becomes more culturally complex and diverse yet more globally interconnected and interdependent.

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