Religious Problem Solving and the Complexity of Religious Rationality Within an Iranian Muslim Ideological Surround

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Comparative rationality analysis formally examines the incommensurable social rationalities that theoretically exist within religions and the social sciences according to the ideological surround model (ISM) of the psychology of religion. This study extended these procedures to a new cultural context: 220 Iranian university students responded to the Religious Problem-Solving Scales developed by Pargament et al. (1988). As hypothesized, the Collaborative Problem-Solving Style was consistent, and the Self-Directing Style inconsistent, with Iranian Muslim religious and psychological adjustment. The Deferring Style had ambiguous implications. Comparative rationality analysis demonstrated that sample interpretations of these styles explained greater variance in adjustment than did the original scales. These procedures also yielded the unexpected discovery that the Deferring Style included a secular as well as a religious form of Iranian rationality. These data most importantly support the ISM claim that "future objectivity" requires empirical analyses of the incommensurable rationalities operating within the psychology of religion.

Keywords: Religious problem-solving styles, ideological surround model, Iran, incommensurable rationalities, religious and psychological adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

Over two decades of research have led to the gradual methodological and theoretical development of an ideological surround model (ISM) of the psychology of religion (e.g., Watson 1993, 2011). This model rests upon the postmodern claim that all forms of understanding necessarily reflect the limiting perspective of some specific "interest" (Nietzsche [1887] 1967:119). All knowledge of religion will, therefore, include an ideological element because all views on faith will emerge within the limiting perspectival surround of a somewhat nonempirical, normative, and sociological system of "interests" or beliefs (MacIntyre 1978).

Among other things, the ISM interprets this influence of perspectives to mean that the science of psychology and the faith of religions will operate as incommensurable social rationalities. Taylor (2007) describes social rationalities as "social imaginaries." These are forms of understanding that people use to "imagine their social existence, how they fit together with

others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations" (Taylor 2007:71). To argue that social rationalities and imaginaries are incommensurable is not to say that they are wholly incompatible, only that they are calibrated to different "normative notions and images" or ultimate standards (MacIntyre 1988). In religion, the ultimate standard will reflect some tradition-specific vision of God or Ultimate Reality. Observations consistent with that standard will be normatively "rational" within the sociological boundaries of the relevant religious community. In psychology, the at least implicit and sometimes explicit standard will be found in one or another naturalistic reading of the universe. Observations consistent with this ontological naturalism will be normatively "rational" within the sociological boundaries of professional scientific psychology. These rationalities will be only somewhat nonempirical because the standards themselves can be neither falsified nor confirmed scientifically; yet, each will operate as a rationality that is capable of organizing a vast array of empirical observations.

Incommensurable rationalities will mean that knowledge created within one ideological surround is logically insufficient to falsify another. Above the "Nature" of scientific psychology and above the "God" of religion will be no higher standard for adjudicating assertions about the rationality of these ideological surrounds taken as a whole. In other words, advocates of different ideological surrounds will lack a common standard of evaluation that enables them to agree that interpretations of supposedly falsifying observations are "rational." The incommensurability of scientific and religious rationalities, therefore, threatens to dissolve all knowledge about religion into a postmodern swirl of relativism. A central claim of the ISM is that relativism confronts the psychology of religion as an undeniable logical and empirical reality; yet, the model also emphasizes that relativism can never be a productive normative assumption for any ideological surround. The task is to move beyond postmodernism toward a social science that formally accounts for the influences of relativism. Such a "post-postmodern" psychology of religion will rest upon three foundational assumptions.

First, a social science that accounts for relativism will acknowledge the perspectival nature of all observations about religion. Three broad types of perspectives will require attention. Emic perspectives will develop insightful (and supposedly more "subjective") descriptions of the rationalities that operate within a religious community. Etic perspectives will assess religious beliefs using the outside (and supposedly more "objective") frameworks of science (see, e.g., Headland, Pike, and Harris 1990). A purely etic psychology of religion could usefully clarify religious rationality, but could also misrepresent and colonize (i.e., illogically presume to explain away) a religious faith in terms of an incommensurable rationality. Conversely, a purely emic psychology of religion could help actualize potentials inherent within a religious rationality, but could also encourage a defensive and impoverishing ghettoization of religious thought. A "dialogic" perspective, therefore, is necessary. Dialogic research would bring emic and etic perspectives into formal conversation. The goal would be to determine the degree to which one social rationality could be translated into another and to examine the possible influences of, for example, colonization and ghettoization on religious and scientific thought. ISM methodologies seek to promote such dialog (e.g., Ghorbani et al. 2011; Watson 2011).

Second, progress in the psychology of religion will require processes of interpretation at a level of abstraction that rises above the merely perspectival. A community of interpretation committed to a particular ideological surround will need to articulate an increasingly sophisticated meta-perspective that successfully describes etic, emic, and dialogic findings about the psychology of religion. An essential task of any such interpretative community will be to evaluate its proposed meta-perspectival generalizations by assessing them relative to current understandings of the standard that defines what is rational for the community from "above" and relative to the etic, emic, and dialogic perspectival evidence that clarifies the empirical realities of

the community from "below." That standard above could be either naturalistic or religious. In other words, the community of interpretation could be members of a social scientific society or followers of a particular school of theology dedicated to the advancement of the psychology of religion.

Third, advocates of different meta-perspectives will need to admit relativism as an empirical, but not as a normative, reality. As MacIntyre (1990) emphasizes, incommensurability does not necessitate an embrace of relativism. Communities of interpretation will frequently want to extend their influence across ideological surrounds. Such communities will need to realize that one system of rationality can never overcome another through reason alone because each will operate within the surround of a different standard. The challenges of relativism nevertheless may be addressed by individuals who become increasingly fluent in the rationalities of multiple perspectives, a skill once described as the "future objectivity" by Nietzsche ([1887] 1967:19). Such individuals will realize that the broader sociological challenges of relativism cannot be met through reason alone, but rather through narration. Different communities of interpretation will want to out-narrate each other. The task will be to tell increasingly compelling stories that present rhetorically powerful descriptions of other ideological surrounds within the developing narrative structures of a particular community of interpretation. The ISM assumes that etic narrations of the psychology of religion in absence of emic insight or emic narrations in the absence of etic insight will fail to tell stories that are compelling outside of their home ideological surrounds.[1]

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[1]To this necessarily brief perspective on perspectives, at least four additional points deserve passing mention. First, emic thought could also be colonizing in its intent, and an emic combination of colonization and ghettoization would likely represent an especially threatening narrative when evaluated within the meta-perspectives of other ideological surrounds. But also note that emic critics might complain that etic perspectives sometimes combine ghettoization with colonization. They could point to classical Freudian psychoanalysis as only one of many possible examples. In addition, an etic perspective would surely want to actualize potentials inherent in its own rationality, and emic communities could seek to clarify etic frameworks. In short, both emic and etic perspectives will presumably display tendencies toward actualization, colonization, clarification, and ghettoization. Nor would this exhaust the possibilities. Goals to promote coexistence between ideological surrounds, for example, might range from begrudging detente to enthusiastic cooperation.

Second, the ISM focus on the importance of creating compelling narratives across ideological surrounds indicates that a perspective sometimes has the intent of evangelicalism rather than colonization. An emic community might attempt to combine etic clarification with emic actualization to construct a new, more compelling emic evangelical narrative. But the parallel possibility would exist for etic meta-perspectives as well. In other words, an etic community might attempt to combine emic clarification with etic actualization to construct a new, more compelling etic evangelical narrative.

Third, this differentiation between etic and emic perspectives roughly corresponds to frameworks taken from anthropology (e.g., Headland, Pike, and Harris 1990). In the introduction to this article and more typically, the etic perspective is scientific. However, the ISM defines the word "etic" more broadly as any "outside" perspective. Relative to one religion, an etic perspective might be another religious rather than a social scientific perspective. This other religious perspective might have "outside" insights that could usefully clarify a particular emic perspective. Social scientific methodologies might facilitate dialog between two religious perspectives, but hermeneutical and other methodologies might be useful as well. Indeed, hermeneutical and other methodologies might also be useful in encouraging dialog between religious and social scientific perspectives (see, e.g., Watson 2004).

Fourth and finally, the ISM assumes that all perspectives on the psychology of religion necessarily express the rationality of a somewhat nonempirical standard. This would be as true of the originating framework of the ISM itself as of any other approach. As noted previously, the ISM emerges out of Quaker ideology and attempts to manifest the "rationality" of Christian pacifism (Watson 2006). Numerous implications are associated with this ideological surround, but two might be mentioned briefly. First, understandings across ideological surrounds would presumably be necessary to promote the meaningful nonviolent achievement of peace, but they would not be sufficient. This is so because not all ideological surrounds will have standards that evaluate pacifism as "rational." The challenge of pacifist and nonpacifist ideological surrounds will be to out-narrate each other. Second, any presumption that the ISM can manifest itself only within a pacifist ideological surround would point toward a self-refuting nonpacifist tendency toward colonization. ISM-like approaches to the challenges of relativism are presumably essential and possible across diverse etic and emic perspectives. Indeed, this project is meant to demonstrate that the ISM is compatible with an Islamic ideological surround and that the meta-perspectival development of a formally Muslim psychology of religion is an important task of the future.

Comparative rationality analysis is one among several ISM methodologies for promoting dialog among social scientific and religious perspectives (Watson 2010). With this method, samples first respond to a psychological scale according to standard instructions. This measure can then be scored normally in terms of the etic ideological assumptions that informed construction of the instrument in the first place. Later, the sample responds to these very same items again. This time, however, participants do not react in terms of how strongly they agree or disagree that a statement applies to them personally. Instead, they express their perception of the degree to which each statement is compatible or incompatible with commitments to personal religious norms. This procedure makes it possible to evaluate the meaning of questionnaire items relative to the emic religious rationality of the sample. Such evaluations can then be analyzed in two ways.

Analysis can first occur at a more "macro" level by simply computing a total evaluation score for the entire measure. Such scores will indicate how religiously rational a full scale will seem to each participant. Correlations of these macro-rationality scores with other measures will then clarify the implications of a social scientific etic rationality within the religious emic ideological surround of the sample. Three types of correlations will be important. First, if emic interpretations of a scale as being rational affect responding to an etic instrument, then a positive correlation should appear between macro-rationality scores and the original measure. Such a relationship would merely confirm the ISM expectation that personal tendencies to evaluate a measure as religiously rational will increase responding on that measure. Such a correlation will not reveal the broader meanings of that evaluation, however. Second, therefore, macro-rationality correlations with measures of emic commitment will be necessary to define the religious implications of seeing these items as religiously rational. Third, correlations with psychological scales will be necessary to assess the mental health implications of these macro-rationality evaluations.

This macro-rational attempt to promote dialog could produce a wide range of outcomes that are defined by two most obvious extremes. Etic social scientific and emic religious rationalities could prove to be fully compatible if macro-rationality scores predicted higher responding on the original etic scale along with greater religious commitment and enhanced psychological adjustment. Conversely, macro-rationality evaluations could point toward full incompatibility if they displayed linkages with higher scores on the etic instrument, but also with lower religious commitment and with psychological maladjustment. More ambiguous patterns could occur between these extremes.

Again, emic evaluations of psychological scales can be analyzed in two ways. ISM procedures can also operate at the "micro" item level. Emic evaluations of questionnaire statements use a five-point Likert scale involving ratings of each item as "strongly incompatible" to "strongly compatible" with religious beliefs. A series of χ^2 analyses can, therefore, determine if a sample evaluates each item as incompatible or compatible with religious commitments. Assuming that a statement is a positively worded expression of an etic norm, an item would be "pro-emic" (i.e., in conformity with social scientific perspectives) if it proved to be significantly *not* inconsistent and/or significantly consistent with the religious beliefs of the sample. In other words, χ^2 analyses would reveal that the frequency of the "strongly incompatible" and "incompatible" responses was significantly *lower* than the other responses (i.e., *not* inconsistent) and/or that the frequency of the "strongly compatible" and "compatible" responses was significantly *higher* than the other responses (i.e., consistent). "Anti-emic" items (i.e., those in conflict with social scientific perspectives) would be obvious in the opposite pattern of significantly inconsistent and/or significantly *not* consistent evaluations. In other words, χ^2 analyses would reveal that the frequency of the "strongly incompatible" and "incompatible" responses was significantly *higher* than the other responses (i.e., inconsistent) and/or that the frequency of "strongly compatible" and "compatible" responses was significantly *lower* than the other responses (i.e., not consistent).

Other interpretations of χ^2 results would, of course, be necessary if an item were a reverse-worded expression of an etic norm, if the original scale operationalized an etic social scientific "irrationality" rather than "rationality," or if a sample evaluated a statement as both significantly *not* consistent and significantly *not* inconsistent (i.e., neutral) relative to religious commitments. The more general point, however, is that micro-rationality analysis will make it possible to identify which etic items express "pro-emic" and which express "anti-emic" forms of rationality.

Once emic interpretations of all items are defined, these meanings can be used to rescore the original etic social scientific measure in terms of the religious ideological assumptions of the sample. This procedure first requires that "anti-emic" items from the original scale be rescored oppositely. An item that previously reflected a positive expression of the construct measured by the original scale would now be reverse scored, whereas a reverse-scored item would be rescored as a positive expression of the religious rationality. "Pro-emic" and rescored "anti-emic" items would then be combined to create a new emic religious articulation of a measure that previously was scored only in terms of the etic social scientific ideological assumptions of the original scale. Original etic and new emic scale interpretations of the very same items can then be used in a comparative analysis of social rationalities. An empirically superior rationality would presumably explain greater variance in religious and psychological adjustment and would perhaps yield insights that were unavailable within the ideological surround of the other rationality.

RELIGIOUS PROBLEM SOLVING IN IRAN

In previous research, comparative rationality analysis focused on largely Christian American samples (Watson 2010). This investigation sought to explore the potentials of this method within a non-Christian religious ideological surround. This goal was accomplished by having Muslims in the formally theocratic society of Iran respond to the Religious Problem-Solving Scales of Pargament et al. (1988).

The Religious Problem-Solving Scales assess three Styles of problem solving. With a Self-Directing style, individuals assume that it is their religious responsibility to solve problems on their own. A representative item says: "When faced with trouble, I deal with my feelings without God's help." Here, "God is viewed as giving people the freedom and resources to direct their own lives" (Pargament et al. 1988:91). A Deferring Style points in the exact opposite direction. The individual takes no active role in solving problems and defers all responsibility to God. Illustrating this style is the self-report: "When faced with a decision, I wait for God to make the best choice for me." A Collaborative Style essentially reflects a dialectical synthesis of the other two. The individual actively works within the framework of a sincere commitment to God to solve problems. This style is exemplified by the assertion: "When faced with a question, I work together with God to figure it out." Numerous investigations have documented the validity of these measures in the West (e.g., Kaiser 1991; Webb and Whitmer 2001).

Within an Islamic ideological surround, the normative style of solving problems can be described as effortful resiliency within a commitment to God. In other words, problem solving requires active human agency within a sincere submission to the guidance of God. This is so, in part, because God manifests himself within the powers of human reason to discover actions that are compatible with what God requires. A story by Rumi (1999) titled "The Lion and the Beasts" may be read as expressing this appreciative Muslim evaluation of the roles of reason and personal effort in solving problems religiously.

The overall suggestion, therefore, is that Islamic problem solving should be compatible with the Collaborative Style, which essentially points toward the religiously recommended combination of personal agency and sincere faith. On the other hand, Islamic problem solving should be incompatible with a Self-Directing Style, since each item of this instrument expresses an anti-Islamic independence from God. More complex possibilities seem possible for the

Deferring Style. Some Deferring Style items suggest a rejection of human reason and agency in the solving of problems (e.g., "I do not think about different solutions to my problems because God provides them for me"). Still other items appear to express a sincere commitment to God that is not incompatible with human agency (e.g., "I don't worry too much about learning from difficult situations, since God will make me grow in the right direction"). Hence, the expectation was that the Deferring Style would include a mix of items that were both rational and irrational within an Iranian Muslim ideological surround.

Additional scales made it possible evaluate the religious and psychological implications of these problem-solving measures in Iran. With regard to religious motivations, the Intrinsic Religious Orientation Scale records a sincere faith in which religion defines the final end or master motive in an individual's life (Gorsuch and McPherson 1989). The Extrinsic-Personal Scale assesses the use of religion as a means to achieve psychological well-being as the end. The extrinsic-social measure reflects the use of religion to achieve desired social outcomes as the end. Numerous investigations have established the intrinsic and especially the extrinsic-personal orientations as strong religious motivations that reliably predict psychological adjustment in Muslim society (Ghorbani, Watson, and Khan 2007). The extrinsic-social motivation instead appears to be weaker and to have ambiguous and often negative adjustment implications.

Integrative Self-Knowledge (Ghorbani, Watson, and Hargis 2008) and Depression and Anxiety (Costello and Comrey 1967) Scales evaluated psychological functioning. Integrative self-knowledge records tendencies to integrate past, present, and desired future self-experience into a meaningful whole. This scale is a clear index of adjustment in Iran and is clearly relevant to Muslim psychological ideals (Ghorbani, Watson, and Hargis 2008; Ghorbani et al. 2011). The Costello and Comrey (1967) measures assess dispositional depression and anxiety and validly measure maladjustment in Iran (e.g., Ghorbani et al. 2010).

Hypotheses

In summary, this study used comparative rationality analysis to assess the macro- and micro-rational implications of Religious Problem-Solving Style Scales within an Iranian Muslim ideological surround. These procedures made it possible to test five broad sets of hypotheses.

First, the Collaborative Style should predict religious and psychological adjustment in Iran. This scale, in other words, should correlate positively with the Intrinsic, Extrinsic-Personal, and Integrative Self-Knowledge Scales and negatively with depression and anxiety. Opposite patterns of relationships should appear for the Self-Directing Style, with more ambiguous outcomes apparent for the Deferring Style.

Second, with macro-rationality evaluations scored in terms of the average response per item, collaborative macro-rationality scores should be highest and self-directing scores the lowest, with the Deferring Style in between.

Third, each macro-rationality score should correlate positively with and display patterns of relationship similar to the corresponding original Religious Problem-Solving Scale. Such data would confirm that tendencies to see as scale as religiously rational within Iran would have religious and psychological implications that paralleled the original scale.

Fourth, micro-rationality assessments should identify collaborative items as largely consistent, and self-directing items as largely inconsistent, with the rationality of an Iranian Muslim ideological surround. Deferring items should instead display a mix of evaluations.

Fifth, problem-solving measures rescored in terms of micro-rationality assessments should offer a superior empirical definition of Iranian Muslim rationality in comparison to the original Problem-Solving Scales. In other words, the micro-rational rescored measures should explain greater variance in religious and psychological adjustment. They also should offer a more logically consistent empirical definition of what is rational for Iranian Muslims. Most obviously, perhaps,

anti-emic self-directing items rescored oppositely should offer a clearer analysis of what is rational in Iran by predicting religious and psychological adjusted instead of the maladjustment that was hypothesized for the original scale.

METHODS

Participants

Research participants included 93 men, 125 women, and 2 individuals who failed to indicate their sex. All were undergraduates at the University of Tehran. Average age was 21.6 ($SD =$ 2.58).

Measures

All psychological scales appeared in a single questionnaire booklet. Development of a Persian Integrative Self-Knowledge Scale occurred during initial development of this instrument (Ghorbani, Watson, and Hargis 2008). Translation of the Religious Problem-Solving Scales occurred in preparation for the present project with the translation of all other measures taking place prior to previous Iranian studies. In these procedures, one individual translated each scale into Persian, and then another translated it back into English. Differences between original and back-translated measures were minor and easily eliminated through revisions in the Persian translation. Scales appeared in the questionnaire booklet in the sequence presented below.

Religious Problem Solving

Each Religious Problem-Solving Scale is defined by 12 items (Pargament et al. 1988). Responding ranged across a strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) Likert scale. The Collaborative Style ($\alpha = .89$, M response per item $= 3.39$, $SD = .80$) appears in such statements as: "When it comes to deciding how to solve a problem, God and I work together as partners." An item expressing the Self-Directing Style ($\alpha = .89$, $M = 2.06$, $SD = .78$) asserts: "After I've gone through a rough time, I try to make sense of it without relying upon God." Illustrating the Deferring Style ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 2.54$, $SD = .70$) is the claim "I do not become upset or nervous because God solves my problem for me."

Integrative Self-Knowledge

The Integrative Self-Knowledge Scale ($\alpha = .83$, $M = 2.63$, $SD = .70$) includes 12 items that record efforts of the individual to synthesize past, present, and desired future self-experience into a meaningful whole (Ghorbani, Watson, and Hargis 2008). One item says, for example: "If I need to, I can reflect about myself and clearly understand the feelings and attitudes behind my past behaviors." Reactions to each item occurred along 1 (largely untrue) to 5 (largely true) response options.

Religious Orientation

The Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) Religious Orientations Scales, as adapted to Islamic society, assessed intrinsic (eight items, $\alpha = .77$, $M = 2.66$, $SD = .78$), extrinsic-personal (three items, $\alpha = .80$, $M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.02$), and extrinsic-social (three items, $\alpha = .74$, $M = 1.21$, $SD = .95$) reasons for being religious. A representative item from the Intrinsic Scale says: "My whole approach to life is based on my religion." An extrinsic-personal motivation appears in the self-report: "What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow." The extrinsic-social orientation is exemplified in the claim that "I go to activities associated with my religion because I enjoy seeing people I know there."

Anxiety and Depression

The Costello and Comrey (1967) scales assess depression (14 items, $\alpha = .91$, $M = 1.10$, $SD = .77$) and anxiety (nine items, $\alpha = .84$, $M = 1.70$, $SD = .82$) as traits rather than states. Responses to each item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Illustrating depression is the self-report, "I feel sad and depressed." Indicative of anxiety is the statement that "I'm a restless and tense person."

Religious Rationality of Religious Problem-Solving Styles

The final section of the questionnaire booklet presented the Religious Problem-Solving Scales once again, but with different instructions designed to have participants evaluate the religious rationality of each item. These instructions began: "You responded to some statements in the first part of this questionnaire that were constructed for other cultures and religions. Some of the items might be suitable for an Iranian Muslim, and some might not. . . . We would like you to show how much each statement is suitable to be used with an Iranian Muslim." Participants made this determination by using a five-point scale that ranged from "a good Iranian Muslim would strongly disagree with this statement" (1) to "a good Iranian Muslim would strongly agree with this statement" (5). Instructions then made it clear that "a good Iranian Muslim in these response options means 'a person who authentically tries to follow his or her religious ideals.'"

Procedure

Research procedures occurred in conformity with institutional ethical guidelines. Participants volunteered for the project, and all responding was completely anonymous. Groups of varying size received the questionnaire booklet in a classroom setting.

The scoring of all instruments involved computation of the average response per item. Data analyses began with an examination of correlations among all psychological and religious scales. Again, macro-rationality scores simply expressed the mean rationality of all items within each Religious Problem-Solving Scale. After examining mean differences in macro-rationality measures, statistical procedures assessed their relationships with other measures.

Micro-rationality analyses began with two series of χ^2 analyses. In the first, χ^2 tests compared the frequencies of the "strongly disagree" and "disagree" evaluations of what a "good Iranian Muslim" would believe with frequencies of the other three response options. The second set of analyses then compared the "strongly agree" and the "agree" evaluations with the other options. Items the sample found to be both significantly *not* inconsistent (i.e., the "disagree" options) and significantly *not* consistent (i.e., the "agree" options) with Muslim commitments were ideologically neutral and ignored in subsequent micro-rationality procedures.

As noted previously, items significantly *not* inconsistent and/or significantly consistent were ideologically compatible with Muslim commitments. The opposite pattern of significantly inconsistent and/or significantly *not* consistent evaluations defined ideologically incompatible items. Participant responses to the inconsistent items from the original Pargament et al. (1988) scales were then rescored in the opposite direction to make them consistent with Muslim ideology. Combining the consistent and rescored inconsistent items produced a new micro-rationality scale reflecting a Muslim reinterpretation of responding on the original Pargament measure.

Correlations of micro-rationality scores with other measures were computed first and followed by a final comparative rationality analysis. In these final multiple regression procedures, original scorings of the Religious Problem-Solving Scales and then separately the micro-rational rescoring of these very same responses predicted the religious and psychological functioning of the sample.

Table 1: Correlations among religious problem-solving, religious orientation, and psychological variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Religious Problem Solving									
1. Collaborative Style	–	−.53***	.45***	.48***	.56***	.18**	.13	−.25***	−.04
2. Self-Directing Style		–	−.27***	−.51***	−.49***	−.10	−.11	.27***	.04
3. Deferring Style			–	.24***	.34***	.32***	−.16*	.02	.08
Religious Orientation									
4. Intrinsic				–	.50***	.18***	.26***	−.35***	−.19**
5. Extrinsic-Personal					–	.20**	.01	−.31***	.06
6. Extrinsic-Social						–	−.23**	.10	.17*
Psychological Measures									
7. Integrative Self-Knowledge							–	−.51***	−.59***
8. Depression								–	.50***
9. Anxiety									–

$*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.$

RESULTS

Collaborative and Deferring Religious Problem-Solving Styles correlated positively with each other and negatively with the Self-Directing Style (see Table 1). Collaborative and Deferring Styles also predicted higher levels of all three religious orientations. Negative associations appeared between the Collaborative Style and depression and between the Deferring Style and integrative self-knowledge. The Self-Directing Style correlated negatively with the intrinsic and the extrinsic-personal religious orientations and positively with depression. The Intrinsic Scale predicted greater integrative self-knowledge and lower depression and anxiety. The extrinsic-personal motivation displayed an inverse linkage with depression. Extrinsic-social scores correlated negatively with integrative self-knowledge and positively with anxiety.

Macro-Rationality Analysis

As made clear previously, macro-rationality assessments involved an evaluation of all items within each Religious Problem-Solving Scale in terms of what "a good Iranian Muslim" would believe. Average ratings per item expressed the macro-rationality of a scale, with higher scores reflecting beliefs deemed to be relatively more compatible with Iranian norms. The macro-rationality of the Collaborative Style was highest ($\alpha = .90$, $M = 2.76$, $SD = .87$), the Self-Directing Style was lowest ($\alpha = .90$, $M = 1.02$, $SD = .80$), and the Deferring Style fell in between ($\alpha = .85$, $M = 1.84$, $SD = .77$). Differences among these macro-rationality measures were statistically significant, Greenhouse-Geisser $F [1.67, 358.18] = 239.20, p < .001$, with each mean significantly different from the other two ($p < .001$).

Table 2 reviews the relationships observed for the macro-rationality scores. Collaborative macro-rationality correlated positively with the deferring and negatively with the self-directing macro-rationalities. These latter two macro-rationality measures displayed no significant linkage. Collaborative macro-rationality predicted higher scores on the Collaborative Style, the Intrinsic Scale, and the extrinsic-personal orientation along with lower scores on depression. Self-directing macro-rationality correlated positively with the Self-Directing Style while also exhibiting negative linkages with the intrinsic, extrinsic-personal, and integrative self-knowledge measures and direct associations with the extrinsic-social orientation and depression. Finally, deferring macro-rationality correlated positively with the Deferring Style and with the extrinsic-personal motivation.

Table 2: Correlations of macro-rationality assessments with each other and with religious problem-solving styles, religious motivations, and psychological measures

	Macro-Rationality Assessment		
	Collaborative Style	Self-Directing Style	Deferring Style
Macro-Level Rationality Assessment			
Collaborative Style	–	−.40***	.30***
Self-Directing Style		–	.01
Deferring Style			–
Religious Problem-Solving Style			
Collaborative Style	.31***	−.11	.12
Self-Directing Style	−.08	.33***	.04
Deferring Style	.05	.04	.46***
Religious Orientation			
Intrinsic	.19**	−.26***	−.05
Extrinsic-Personal	.25***	−.19**	.14*
Extrinsic-Social	−.05	.14*	.03
Psychological Variables			
Integrative Self-Knowledge	.09	−.22**	−.08
Depression	−.15*	.24***	.07
Anxiety	.04	.05	−.02

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Micro-Rationality Analysis

Again, micro-rationality analyses involved the use of two χ^2 tests to analyze the rationality of each item within a scale. In these procedures, the strongly disagree and disagree (i.e., the normatively incompatible) response frequencies for each statement were compared to frequencies of the other three response options. Then, frequencies of the strongly agree and agree (i.e., the normatively compatible) responses were compared to frequencies of the other three options. Statements consistent with Iranian Muslim norms would display a pattern of responses that were significantly *not* incompatible and/or significantly compatible with what a "good Iranian Muslim" would believe. This pattern appeared with the Collaborative Style. All 12 Collaborative Style statements displayed significantly lower frequencies of the inconsistency ratings, $\chi^2 (1) \geq 43.47$, $p < .001$, and 10 of the 12 items also exhibited significantly more frequent consistency ratings, $\chi^2 (1) \geq 5.81$, $p < .05$. These data, therefore, pointed toward identical scorings for the original and the micro-rational interpretations of the Collaborative Style.

Conversely, statements inconsistent with Iranian Muslim norms would display a pattern of responses that were significantly incompatible and/or significantly *not* compatible with what a "good Iranian Muslim" would believe. This pattern appeared with the Self-Directing Style. All 12 of these items displayed significantly higher frequencies of the inconsistency ratings, $\chi^2 (1) \geq 7.89$, $p < .01$, and all 12 also proved to be significantly *not* consistent with Iranian Muslim norms, $\chi^2 (1) \geq 80.57$, $p < .001$. The micro-rational rescoring of the Self-Directing Style, therefore, was exactly opposite that of the original scale and could be described instead as self-direction rejection (SDR). Hence, correlations for SDR were the same as for the original scale, except in the opposite direction. In other words, SDR correlated positively with the intrinsic (.51) and the extrinsic-personal religious orientations (.49) and negatively with depression (−.27, $p < .001$).

More complex outcomes appeared with the Deferring Style (see Table 3). Four statements were both significantly *not* inconsistent and significantly *not* consistent with Iranian Muslim norms, and thus were neutral relative to Iranian religious rationality. Three other items proved

Table 3: Inconsistent (I), consistent (C), and neutral (N) deferring style items based upon frequencies of inconsistency compared to other (I/O) and consistency compared to other (C/O) ratings

	I/O	χ^2	C/O	χ^2	Type of Item
1. Rather than trying to come up with the right solution to a problem myself, I let God decide how to deal with it.	88/126	6.75**	71/143	22.22***	N
2. In carrying out solutions to my problems, I wait for God to take control and know somehow He'll work it out.	82/132	11.68**	75/139	19.14***	N
3. I do not think about different solutions to my problems because God provides them for me.	122/90	4.83*	50/162	59.17***	I
4. When a troublesome issue arises, I leave it up to God to decide what it means for me.	86/127	7.89**	90/123	5.11*	N
5. When a situation makes me anxious, I wait for God to take those feelings away.	87/121	5.56*	68/140	24.92***	N
6. When faced with a decision, I wait for God to make the best choice for me.	135/77	15.87***	43/169	74.89***	I
7. I don't spend much time thinking about troubles I've had; God makes sense of them for me.	142/70	24.45***	24/188	126.87***	I
8. When I have a problem I try not to think about it and wait for God to tell me what it means.	133/81	12.64***	42/172	78.97***	I
9. I do not become upset or nervous because God solves my problems for me.	66/144	28.97***	102/108	0.17	C
10. When I run into trouble, I simply trust in God knowing that He will show me the possible solutions.	102/110	0.32	63/149	34.89***	I
11. I don't worry too much about learning from difficult situations, since God will make me grow in the right direction.	70/138	22.23***	92/116	2.77	C
12. God solves problems for me without my doing anything.	22/190	133.13***	154/58	43.47***	C

Note: The total frequency of evaluations varies across statements because participants sometimes failed to respond to an item. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 4: Comparative rationality analysis of original and micro-rational rescorings of religious problem-solving styles

	Original Multiple R	β of Original Scorings			Micro-Rational Multiple R	β for Micro-Rational Rescorings			
		CS	SDS	DS		CS	SDR	RTRC	FGSP
Religious Measures									
Intrinsic	.55***	.25**	−.37***	.03	.56***	.27**	.35***	.09	.14
Extrinsic-Personal	.61***	.38***	−.26***	.10	.61***	.40***	.27***	−.06	.01
Extrinsic-Social	.32***	.05	.01	.30***	.31***	.10	.01	.25***	.03
Psychological Measures									
Integrative Self-Knowledge	.28***	.22**	−.07	−.28***	.45***	.16	.01	.45***	.28***
Depression	.33***	−.23**	.19*	.18*	.41***	−.14	−.14	−.32***	−.25**
Anxiety	.12	−.09	.03	.13	.34***	.02	.03	−.34***	−.35***

Note: Original scorings include the Collaborative Style (CS), Self-Directing Style (SDS), and Deferring Style (DS), and micro-rational rescorings include the Collaborative Style (CS), self-direction rejection (SDR), rejection of thoughtless religious coping (RTRC), and faith in God solving problems (FGSP). *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

to be significantly *not* inconsistent and/or significantly consistent, and hence proved to be compatible with what a "good Iranian Muslim" would believe. The remaining five items were significantly inconsistent and/or significantly *not* consistent, and thus incompatible with Iranian norms.

A micro-rational rescoring of the original responses to the Deferring Style first involved an elimination of the four neutral statements. Then, "inconsistent" items were rescored in the opposite direction so that higher values expressed a rejection rather than an embrace of these beliefs as more reflective of the Iranian Muslim rationality of this sample. Combination of the five rescored and original three consistent items into a single new measure produced the micro-rational reinterpretation of this style. This new scale failed to display an acceptable internal reliability ($\alpha = .08$), an outcome that served as warrant for factor analyzing these eight items. A principal components analysis with a varimax rotation uncovered two factors. The five rescored items defined a first factor that was associated with an eigenvalue of 3.06 and explained 38.3 percent of the variance. Loadings of the rescored statements on this factor were .48 for item 3, .71 for item 6, .71 for item 7, .61 for item 8, and .55 for item 10. This rejection of thoughtless religious coping (RTRC) factor had an internal reliability of .71. The second factor described 13.3 percent of the variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.06. The three "consistent" Deferring Style statements described this factor and displayed loadings of .48 for item 9, .65 for item 11, and .89 for item 12. This faith in God solving problems (FGSP) factor had an internal reliability of .57.

Correlation between these two factors was −.50 ($p < .001$). In addition, RTRC correlated positively with integrative self-knowledge (.29) and negatively with the Deferring Style (−.89), the Collaborative Style (−.24), the extrinsic-personal (−.19) and social (−.29) orientations, depression (−.14), and anxiety (−.17, $p < .05$). RTRC did not correlate with the intrinsic orientation (−.07, $p = .31$) or with the Self-Directing Style (.10, $p = .13$). In contrast, FGSP correlated positively with the Deferring (.75) and Collaborative (.47) Styles and with the intrinsic (.32), extrinsic-personal (.31), and extrinsic-social (.21) religious orientations. This factor also correlated negatively with the Self-Directing Style (-.33), depression (−.20), and anxiety (−.16, $p < .05$).

Table 4 compares the original and the micro-rational rescorings of the Religious Problem-Solving Styles. Again, multiple regression procedures used these alternative interpretations of initial responses to the Pargament et al. (1988) scales to predict the other religious and psychological measures. Multiple *R* values make it clear that the two scoring procedures were roughly comparable in predicting religious variables. As an expression of Iranian Muslim rationality,

however, the micro-rational rescoring of the Self-Directing Style items was more ideologically valid because the SDR displayed a positive rather than a negative association with the intrinsic and the extrinsic-personal orientations. These analyses also suggested that the previously observed linkage of the Deferring Style with the extrinsic-social orientation was explained by the embedded influence of the RTRC items, which exhibited an inverse connection with this religious orientation.
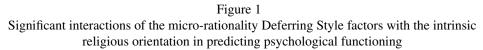
Micro-rational measures proved to be stronger and more consistent predictors of psychological adjustment. This was obvious in the higher multiple R values obtained for the rescored measures and also in a significant finding for anxiety that failed to appear with the original scales. Although RTRC and FGSP had displayed a fairly robust negative relationship with each other of $-.50$ ($p < .001$), each nevertheless served as an independent predictor of relative psychological adjustment. This was evident in associations with greater integrative self-knowledge and with lower depression and anxiety. The previously observed positive linkage of the original Collaborative Style with integrative self-knowledge seemed largely explicable in terms of the FGSP factor, and the initial Deferring Style connection with lower integrative self-knowledge apparently reflected the influence of the now oppositely rescored RTRC items. The original Collaborative Style relationship with lower depression seemed largely attributable to FGSP, and RTRC items apparently explained the initial linkage of the Deferring Style with depression. The now oppositely scored RTRC items also appeared to underlie the significant initial connection of the Self-Directing Style with depression. Overall, these data most importantly pointed toward the superior validity of the micro-rationality measures in interpreting Iranian understandings of religious problem solving.
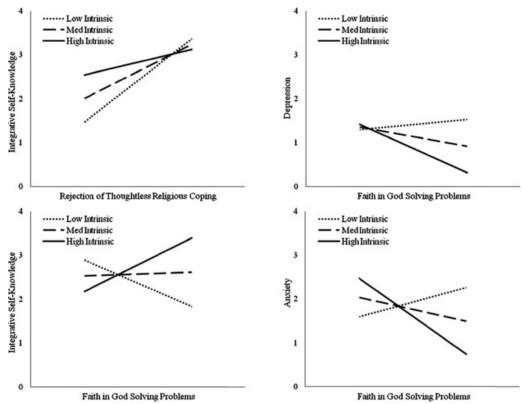
Clarifying Analyses

Most surprising in these micro-rationality data were the contrasting religious implications of the two Deferring Style factors. FGSP correlated positively with all three religious orientations, but RTRC correlated negatively with the extrinsic and nonsignificantly with the intrinsic religious orientations. The unexpected suggestion, therefore, was that RTRC might reflect a more anti-religious form of rationality. But was this outcome only apparent because negative linkages with the two Extrinsic Scales obscured an otherwise positive relationship of RTRC with the intrinsic religious orientation? This proved not to be the case. Partial correlation controlling for the two extrinsic religious motivations revealed that RTRC still did not correlate significantly with the Intrinsic Scale (.03, $p = .68$).

As another attempt to clarify these unexpected findings, multiple regression procedures examined whether the intrinsic orientation might moderate relationships of the two Deferring Style factors with other variables (Baron and Kenny 1986). In conformity with the recommendations of Aiken and West (1991), the predictor variables of RTRC, FGSP, and the Intrinsic Scale were standardized prior to these procedures. In a first set of analyses, RTRS and the Intrinsic Scale served as predictors on the first step of the multiple regressions with their interaction then entered in on the second step. In a second set of analyses, FGSP and the Intrinsic Scale were entered on the first step and then their interaction in on the second step. Examination of multiple regression results focused on unstandardized coefficients given that all predictors were standardized prior to their entry in the regression equation.

Neither RTRC nor FGSP interacted with the Intrinsic Scale to predict the extrinsic-personal or social religious orientations. With regard to psychological variables, the RTRC and intrinsic measures interacted to predict integrative self-knowledge ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .01$). Significant FGSP interactions with the Intrinsic Scale also appeared with regression equations for integrative self-knowledge ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), depression ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$), and anxiety ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .001$). As Figure 1 makes clear, RTRC was a much more robust predictor of integrative self-knowledge when the intrinsic religious motivation was low. In contrast, FGSP was associated

Figure 1
Significant interactions of the micro-rationality Deferring Style factors with the intrinsic
religious orientation in predicting psychological functioning

Note: The three lines on each graph represent the Intrinsic Scale moderator variable at low (1 *SD* below its mean), medium (mean), and high (1 *SD* above its mean) levels.

with superior mental health (i.e., greater integrative self-knowledge and lower depression and anxiety) when the intrinsic motivation was high, but with poorer psychological adjustment when this religious motivation was low.

DISCUSSION

Central to the ISM of the psychology of religion is the assumption that religions and scientific psychology operate as incommensurable rationalities. As a consequence, relativism invariably challenges the use of reason to achieve insight across religious and social scientific ideological surrounds. But if a relativism of perspectives is an unavoidable empirical reality, then a truly objective social science of religion (and religious understanding of the social sciences) must include at least some analysis of the impact of perspectives on the conclusions of reason. Comparative rationality analysis is one among a number of ISM methodologies designed for that purpose. Previous studies utilizing this procedure focused on American Christian samples (e.g., Watson 2011). The present project extended comparative rationality analysis to a completely new cultural context by examining Religious Problem-Solving Scales (Pargament et al. 1988) in Iran.

Original Scales

Results using the original Religious Problem-Solving Scales confirmed the validity of social scientific rationality in clarifying the psychology of Muslim religion. As expected, the Collaborative Problem-Solving Style was compatible and the Self-Directing Style was incompatible with the religious and psychological adjustment of Iranian Muslims. This conclusion received support in positive correlations of the Collaborative Style with the intrinsic and extrinsic-personal religious orientations and in its negative linkage with depression. The Self-Directing Style displayed an opposite pattern of associations.

Evidence also confirmed the hypothesis that the Deferring Style would have ambiguous implications in Iran. This original scale did correlate positively with all three religious orientations, suggesting a broad compatibility with Islamic religious commitments. At the same time, however, this measure also exhibited a negative linkage with integrative self-knowledge. This outcome was especially noteworthy in questioning the normative acceptability of the Deferring Style within a Muslim ideological surround because traditional (Ghorbani et al. 2003) and more recent (Ghorbani et al. 2011) Islamic thought both emphasize self-knowledge as a psychological ideal.

Macro-Rationality Analyses

Comparative rationality analysis made it clear that the rationality of the sample usefully supplemented the social scientific rationality of the original scales in promoting an even more insightful psychology of Muslim religion. Mean macro-rationality scores conformed to expectations. Specifically, the Collaborative Style proved to be most rational relative to Iranian Muslim norms. The Self-Directing Style was least rational, and the Deferring Style was in between.

Significant correlations of each macro-rationality score with the corresponding Religious Problem-Solving Scale confirmed the ISM suggestion that tendencies to evaluate a measure as ideologically rational would predict stronger responding on that measure. Such results in Iran, as in the United States (e.g., Watson, Morris, and Hood 1988), support the ISM argument that ideological norms have an impact on participant responding to psychological scales.

In addition, macro-rationality scores for the Collaborative Style paralleled the original instrument in correlating positively with the intrinsic and extrinsic-personal orientations and negatively with depression. Although the original Collaborative Scale had displayed a direct connection with the extrinsic-social orientation, this relationship was not significant for the macro-rationality scores. Previous research in Muslim societies has identified the extrinsic-social orientation as unclear and sometimes negative in its adjustment implications (Ghorbani, Watson, and Khan 2007). Indeed, in the present project, negative features of the extrinsic-social orientation seemed apparent in its inverse relationship with integrative self-knowledge and in its positive tie with anxiety. Macro-rationality scores, therefore, seemed superior to the original scale in pointing toward the questionable Muslim meaning of this religious orientation.

Macro-rationality scores also seemed superior to the original scale in spotlighting the ideologically problematic features of the Self-Directing Style. Like the initial scale, self-directing macro-rationality scores correlated negatively with the intrinsic and extrinsic-personal motivations and positively with depression. In addition, however, these scores identified the additional ideological liabilities of a stronger extrinsic-social orientation and lower levels of integrative self-knowledge.

Finally, the ambiguity of the Deferring Style was even more apparent in the macro-rationality data. The original scale had correlated positively with all three religious orientations, but Deferring Style macro-rationality scores displayed a direct relationship with only the extrinsic-personal orientation. In other words, the prediction that the Deferring Style would be at least somewhat obscure in terms of its Iranian Muslim meanings seemed apparent in the reduced number of significant relationships observed for these macro-rationality scores.

Micro-Rationality Analysis

Micro-rationality data were particularly important in documenting the potentials of comparative rationality analysis. Micro-rationality assessments confirmed that all Collaborative Style items were consistent and all self-directing Style items were inconsistent with an Iranian Muslim ideological surround. Reversals in the scoring of the self-directing items then produced a Self-Direction Rejection Scale that operated as a more valid normative expression of Iranian Muslim rationality.

Even more revealing and unexpected outcomes came with micro-rationality assessments of the Deferring Scale. The hypothesis was this style would be ambiguous in Iran, and indeed micro-rationality evaluations uncovered four neutral, three consistent, and five inconsistent items. The three consistent items defined the FGSP measure that clearly recorded religious and psychological adjustment in Iran. However, the five inconsistent items pointed toward the unexpected discovery that two Iranian rationalities rather than one seemed to operate within this sample. The reversed scoring of these five inconsistent items defined a rejection of thoughtless religious coping (RTRC) that correlated negatively with the FGSP, extrinsic-personal, and extrinsic-social religious variables while also predicting the psychological well-being of greater integrative self-knowledge and lower depression and anxiety. In other words, RTRC emerged as a nonreligious, more secular form of rationality that also predicted adjustment.

How could a secular rationality emerge within a formally theocratic society? Moderation analyses supplied clues about how this question might be answered. For those higher in an intrinsic religious orientation, at least some harmony seemed apparent between FGSP and RTRC. This was so because both factors yielded at least some evidence of promoting generally better psychological adjustment in these participants. In contrast, for those lower in their intrinsic orientation, FGSP instead predicted psychological maladjustment while RTRC displayed an especially strong linkage with greater integrative self-knowledge. The suggestion, therefore, was that Iranians unable to have as strong intrinsic religious commitments may find it necessary to turn away from faith in God to an even greater reliance on the self in order to achieve psychological well-being.

For theorists committed to a social scientific meta-perspective, such data perhaps point toward an "internal contradiction" within Muslim rationality. Micro-rationality assessments identified the FGSP and the rescored RTRC items as consistent with a Muslim ideological surround. Yet these two measures correlated negatively with each other. In other words, beliefs "internal" to Muslim commitments "contradicted" each other. Within at least some segments of the Iranian population, Islamic beliefs, therefore, seemed to promote division rather than unity in Muslim rationality. This "internal contradiction" would mean that cultural efforts to enhance Islamic commitments would presumably strengthen the ideologically acceptable beliefs of RTRC, which in turn would weaken Islamic commitments to, for example, FGSP and other correlated elements of faith. Hence, this "internal contradiction" would mean that a strengthening of Islamic commitments would simultaneously weaken them and challenge the stability of the Iranian Muslim ideological surround. Operating within a secular Hegelian social scientific ideological surround, Fukuyama (2006) offers precisely this kind of analysis of Iranian and other similar societies. Such societies, he argues, encourage traditional commitments at the expense of innate needs of the self. The internal contradiction between tradition (as thesis) and the self (as antithesis) theoretically necessitates an eventual dialectical synthesis that will produce a more stable cultural form.

For theorists committed to an Islamic meta-perspective, such data will point toward the need to answer numerous potentially important questions. Why would two beliefs apparently consistent with an Islamic ideological surround correlate negatively? What psychological and cultural factors explain the adjustment implications of FGSP that are positive in some and negative in others? How can lower levels of an intrinsic religious orientation be understood within a formally theocratic

society? What cultural resources are available for healing this apparent division in Muslim rationality? What cultural responses would make that division worse?

These are only examples of the kinds of questions that could and presumably should be asked. At the most general level, the ISM argues that any ultimately valid understanding of social life requires an objectivity that observes issues from multiple perspectives. The further assumption is that greater meta-perspectival understanding is essential for the positive development of any ideological surround. This would be as true of a religious as of a social scientific ideological surround. At the broadest level, therefore, the present data suggest that a formally Islamic social science needs to develop an increasingly sophisticated meta-perspective that obtains etic, emic, and dialogic perspectival evidence from "below" and then tries to interpret the FCSP and RTRC findings in terms of Islamic standards from "above."

Broader Implications

Foundations of the ISM rest, in part, upon philosophical arguments about the nature and consequences of incommensurable rationalities (MacIntyre 1988). The present data clarify those arguments in at least three ways. First, this study demonstrated how social scientific methodologies may be used to document the existence of incommensurability. If a single "commensurable" system of understanding organized all social life, then beliefs across all communities could be evaluated as either rational or irrational relative to a universal standard. This did not happen. Some etic religious problem-solving beliefs proved to be "neutral" within an Iranian Muslim ideological surround. Moreover, the Deferring Style Scale displayed a strong internal reliability of .86; yet micro-rationality analyses revealed that below this psychometric homogeneity lay hidden an ideological heterogeneity. And most obviously, perhaps, social scientific rationality and Iranian Muslim micro-rationality both predicted religious and psychological adjustment, but in sometimes strikingly different ways. Only the Iranian Muslim rationality, for instance, predicted individual differences in anxiety.

Second, the frameworks and findings of this project illustrate the possibility of remaining open to postmodern insights without embracing relativism as a norm. Indeed, MacIntyre (1988, 1990) analyzes the issue of incommensurability in a way that exemplifies the "post-postmodern" ISM commitment to the development of meta-perspectives. MacIntyre (1990), for instance, essentially defends a Thomist meta-perspective by explaining how Aquinas was able to construct a narrative that resolved medieval confusions over the incommensurable rationalities of Augustine and Aristotle. And about the postmodernism of Nietzsche, "the Thomist can elaborate out of the material supplied by the *Summa* an account of the will to power as an intellectual fiction disguising the corruption of the will" (MacIntyre 1990:147). In other words, a Thomist can and should use a Catholic meta-perspective to construct less inconsistent, more comprehensive, and more resourceful narratives than would be available within purely Augustinian, Aristotelian, or Nietzschean ideological surrounds (see MacIntyre 1990:127–48, especially 146). Similarly, Iranian confusions over RTRS and FGSP do not dictate a normative commitment to relativism. For a Hegelian like Fukuyama (2006), such confusions will merely confirm a compelling liberal narrative about how only Western democracies can meet innate human demands for self-recognition. For an Iranian Muslim, such confusions will instead reveal the need to actualize unrealized potentials within the narrative and broader sociological advancement of Islamic traditions.

Finally, these broader implications spotlight the potential importance of social scientific contributions in the construction of narratives. What makes a narrative compelling will be enormously complex. Stories will be told and heard within a vast array of ideological surrounds within the social sciences and social imaginaries within the wider culture. As Taylor (2007) makes clear, social imaginaries evolve slowly as conditions of experience change. Conditions of experience involve the perceived empirical realities of individuals who dwell within particular forms of

social life. Any social scientific meta-perspective and associated social imaginary that ignores such realities will presumably be less and less able to tell compelling stories about things-as-they-are, things-as-they-should-be, and how to move circumstances from the former to the latter state (MacIntyre 1981).

Without valid insights into empirical realities, the narratives of a social scientific community of interpretation and of the broader cultural institutions that support it will necessarily fall into a defensive ghettoization of thought. Such thought will find itself increasingly unable to tell stories about the conditions of experience that are sufficiently compelling to command the self-perceived "voluntary" commitment of subsequent generations. Efforts of a community to maintain itself through self-perceived "nonvoluntary" forms of commitment will presumably make the situation even worse by moving things-as-they-are further away from things-as-they-should-be. Social scientific data generated within other ideological surrounds can (and presumably should) unmask the "falsehoods" of ghettoized narratives under both "voluntary" and "nonvoluntary" cultural arrangements.

But all of this can be described from an opposite direction as well. A community of interpretation can have faith in its unactualized potentials and can use social scientific (and other hermeneutical) methods to analyze things-as-they-are within current conditions of experience and to clarify contemporary understandings of things-as they-should-be. Then those methods can explore opportunities for moving things-as-they-are toward things-as-they-should-be in ways that are compatible with communal ideological commitments. Such a community would presumably construct increasingly compelling narratives that are better able to engage the dedicated involvement of subsequent generations in "writing" future chapters of this ideological surround and its associated social imaginary. Again, the ISM assumes that religious as well as modern secular communities will have this opportunity. Within Islam, for example, *Mu'tazilite* communities of interpretation assume that "reason must inform and influence belief" (Kaltner 2011:15). Further development of a *Mu'tazilite* meta-narrative in light of possible confusions over RTRS and FGSP might rest upon first steps that use social scientific (and Islamic interpretative) methods to clarify things-as-they-are. Conversely, *Ash'arite* communities of interpretation identify revelation "as the starting point and reason must cohere to it" (Kaltner 2011:15). The first step in "writing" the next chapters of *Ash'arite* meta-narratives might focus instead on empirically and hermeneutically clarifying contemporary interpretations of things-as-they-should-be.

Overall, these arguments suggest that criteria for determining whether a narrative is compelling will *not* most importantly rest upon the ability of a story to change minds. A Hegelian liberal will very rarely, if ever, tell a story that converts an *Ash'arite* Muslim and vice versa. The more critical issue for Western liberal and *Ash'arite* Muslim communities of interpretation will be their ability to articulate narratives that successfully nurture the social construction of enthusiastic liberal and *Ash'arite* children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Compelling narratives, in other words, will support a reciprocal causality that must exist among rationalities, social imaginaries, and conditions of experience if an ideological surround is to have a long-term future. In short, compelling narratives will ultimately be more about creating than changing minds.

Limitations and Final Conclusions

Final conclusions about the present results must, of course, be conditioned by awareness of the numerous limitations of this project. One limitation may deserve special emphasis. This study used a sample of university students who will not be representative of the Iranian population as a whole. FGSP and RTRC might not correlate negatively in other, perhaps more religious elements of Iranian society. Data already make it clear, for instance, that university students pursuing more secular careers can display significant religious and psychological differences from Islamic seminary students who are studying to become mullahs (Ghorbani et al. 2012). Seminary students

presumably would display little or no evidence of secularization in their rationality. In other words, FCSP and RTRC might correlate positively in such a sample. If this proved to be the case, then the complexity of rationality within a theocratic society would be documented even more clearly.

In conclusion, this project most importantly supported the ISM claim that the psychology of religion requires empirical attention to incommensurable rationalities. Comparative rationality analysis demonstrated that social scientific and religious rationalities can and should be brought into dialog. Such a procedure makes it possible to determine whether one rationality is superior to another in describing a psychology of religion. Again, a superior rationality should explain greater variance in religious and psychological adjustment and perhaps yield insights that are unavailable within the ideological surround of another rationality. So in this study, which rationality was superior? Before answering that question, it is important to emphasize that to claim that one rationality is superior cannot mean that another rationality is unimportant. The development of diverse meta-perspectives in the psychology of religion will require the ongoing analysis of as many social rationalities as possible. Nevertheless, the obvious conclusion of the present project is that the Iranian Muslim micro-rationality was unquestionably superior to the social scientific rationality of the original Problem-Solving Scales. In multiple regression analysis, this Iranian rationality explained greater variance in religious and psychological adjustment. It also yielded unexpected insights into a possible secularization of Iranian forms of reason. Most generally, therefore, this investigation documented the potentials of ISM methodologies to promote "future objectivity" in the psychology of religion.

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