

Individual Activism as a Way to Personal Achievement and Subjective Well-Being

New Research Project
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Global Context

- The whole world is experiencing a global crisis, and scholars wonder: who and how will create **welfare** and **well-being** in the future?
 - I assume that in the future neither states nor corporations will be the primary agents of development and social change
 - It is **individuals** who will become more active in promotion of social change and thus will create new social institutions through **grassroots activism**
 - Small business, participatory democracy, open borders, and free exchange of ideas are the emerging pillars of the globalising world, and they require purposeful individual action
 - Decentralisation, local initiatives, and personal engagement would be more adaptive mechanisms for people and for world economy as well
- Individual Activism as a Way to Personal Achievement and Subjective Well-Being

Global Challenges

- Yet there are at least two challenges:
 - Countries have different distribution of personal values
 - There is global inequality in terms of resources and possibilities
- So quite probably populations of **countries with less manifest values of personal achievement** are less inclined to practice individual activism and pursue goals of personal achievement
- Also, supposedly, people from **peripheral and semi-peripheral countries** have less possibilities and therefore have weaker ties between individual activism and sense of well-being, than people from core countries

Research Questions

- *Primary research question:*
 - Is there a *cause-and-effect connection* among **proactive orientation, individual activism, personal achievement** and **subjective well-being**?
- *Secondary research questions:*
 - Are there differences in proactive orientation between countries?
 - If the causal influence exists, what are the *directions of cause-and-effect influences* among the constructs?
 - What is the *degree* of these influences?
 - Are there *differences in degrees of these causal influences* between countries of core, semiperiphery, and periphery?
 - What are the *values* of these differences?

Theoretical Framework: Sociology

- Interplay between social structure and personality in the M. Kohn's theory (1999):
 - **Occupational self-direction** – the use of initiative, thought, and independent judgment in work
 - In general, individuals with higher social-stratification and class positions possess a greater occupational self-direction which leads to lesser distress
- Proactive work behaviour from the perspective of S.K. Parker & C. G. Collins (2010):
 - **Proactive behaviour** includes active adjustment, using one's initiative, expressing voice, change to bring about change, proactively solving problems and implementing ideas etc.
 - Proactive individuals perform their core tasks better so they experience a considerable career success

Theoretical Framework: Psychology

- Theory of learned optimism of M. Seligman (2006):
 - **Learned optimism** is about the skill of learning how to think more optimistically during failure; it is an explanatory style so it can be learned
 - Optimists tend to perceive defeat as temporary, local and defined by external circumstances; confronted by a bad situation, they perceive it as a challenge and try harder; thus they succeed more at school, work, and sports, in addition to a better health
- M. Argyle suggest a theory of happiness:
 - **Happiness** relates to positive emotions and life satisfaction measured as **subjective well-being**
 - Apart from physiological factors, communication with others, arts, relaxation, religions, application of skills, success and social approval bring joy – an apparent indicator of happiness
 - Simultaneously, family life, money, quality of life, social values and norms, social relations, living conditions, health, and work lead to satisfaction

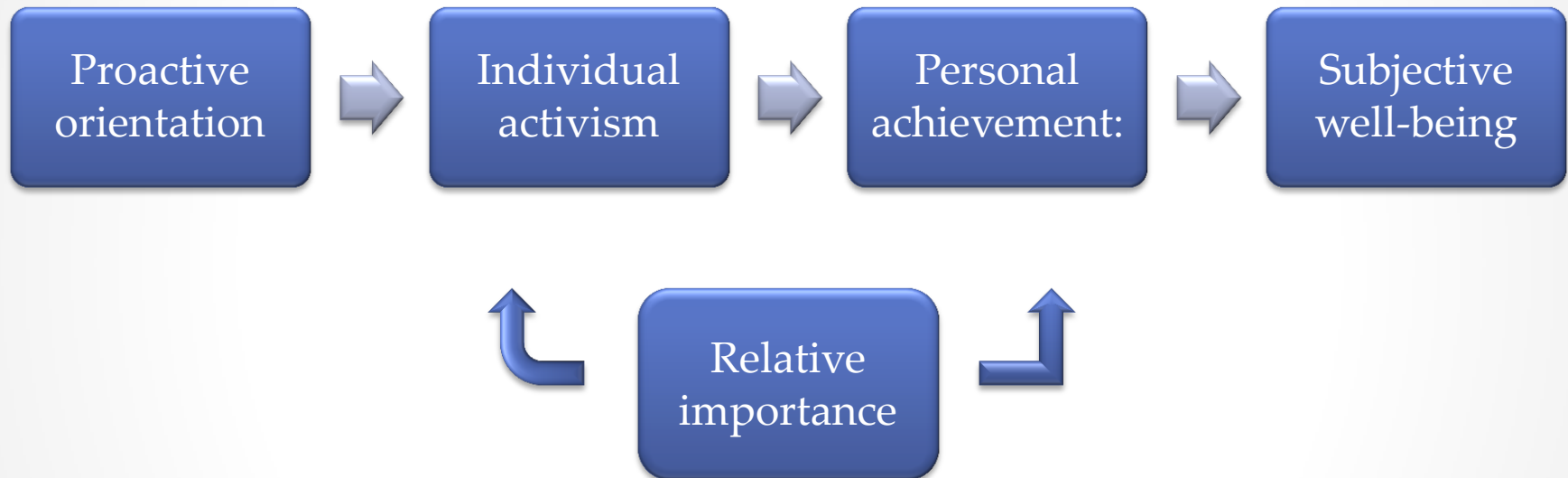
Theoretical Framework: World-Systems

- World-Systems Approach by I. Wallerstein (2004):
 - Economic agents in core regions create quasi-monopolies and oligopolies and effectively protect them with the support from strong core states; Therefore economic agents in semi-periphery and periphery have less opportunities for winning a substantial share of world markets
 - Citizens of core states enjoy a higher quality of life also have more opportunities for protection of rights and promotion of interests
- Global inequality findings of L. Beer & T. Boswell (2002):
 - An “expanding universe” model – correlation between international and intranational inequality: economic inequality is substantial and it has increased in the last quarter of the 20th century between individuals within nations, between nations and between individuals of the world

Reference List

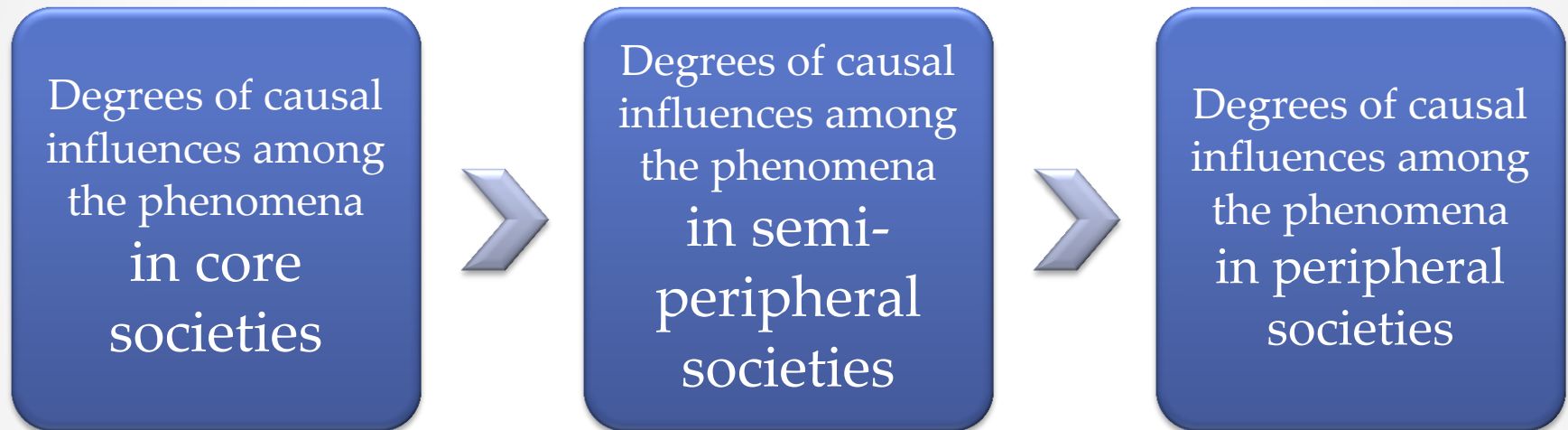
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Conceptual Model and Hypothesis 1



- H1: Person's high **proactive orientation** leads to intense **individual activism** which promotes high level of **personal achievement** and thus contributes to higher **subjective well-being**, corrected for **relative importance of spheres of life**

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis 2



- H2: Degrees of causal influences among proactive orientation, individual activism, personal achievement and subjective well-being are higher in **core societies** than in **semi-peripheral societies**, and in semi-peripheral societies higher than in **peripheral societies**

Epistemology and Methodology

- The applied *epistemology* is **postpositivism**
- The *research type* is **cause-and-effect study**
- General **quantitative methodology** will be used
- *Data collection methodology* is the use of secondary population **survey data**
- *Data collection methods* include standardised **face-to-face interviews** or standardised face-to-face **CAPI** interviews

Data and Sample

- The *data sets* of **World Values Survey** 5th wave (2005-2008) are to be used for analysis
- The *sample* will include up to **54 countries** with up to **77,000 respondents**
 - All national samples are representative for the adult populations of the respective countries
 - Each national sample is 1000 respondents or more
- In addition to total sample 3 aggregate *subsamples* will be analysed:
 - Countries of core, semiperiphery, and periphery

Empirical Indicators: Proactive Orientation

- Selected variables:
 - V46. Free choice and control over lives
 - V65. Seeking to be myself
 - V67. Deciding goals in life by oneself
 - Qualities encouraged in children:
 - V12. Independence
 - V13. Hard work
 - V14. Feeling of responsibility
 - V15. Imagination
 - V18. Determination, perseverance
 - V80. It is important to think up new ideas and be creative
 - V81. It is important to be rich
 - V83. It is important to have a good time
 - V84. It is important to help the people nearby
 - V85. Being very successful is important
 - V86. Adventure and taking risks are important

Empirical Indicators: Relative importance

- Selected variables:
 - Importance of difference spheres of life:
 - V4. Family
 - V5. Friends
 - V6. Leisure time
 - V7. Politics
 - V8. Work
 - V9. Religion
 - V48. Things most important while looking for a job (first choice)
 - V48. Things most important while looking for a job (second choice)
 - 1 A good income so that you do not have any worries about money
 - 2 A safe job with no risk of closing down or unemployment
 - 3 Working with people you like
 - 4 Doing an important job that gives you a feeling of accomplishment



Empirical Indicators: Individual activism

- Selected variables:
 - V246. Independence in pursuing daily activities
 - Membership in voluntary organizations:
 - V24. Church or religious organization
 - V25. Sport or recreational organization
 - V26. Art, music or educational organization
 - V27. Labor Union
 - V28. Political party
 - V29. Environmental organization
 - V30. Professional association
 - V31. Humanitarian or charitable organization
 - V32. Consumer organization
 - V33. Any other
 - Doing civil activities:
 - V100. Signing a petition
 - V101. Joining in boycotts
 - V102. Attending peaceful demonstrations
 - V103. Other
 - V186. Attendance of religious services



Empirical Indicators: Personal achievement

- Selected variables:
 - V68. Satisfaction with the financial situation of one's household
 - V253. Income group of one's household
 - V55. Marital status
 - V56. Number of children
 - V185. Religious denomination
 - V241. Employment

Empirical Indicators: Subjective Well-being

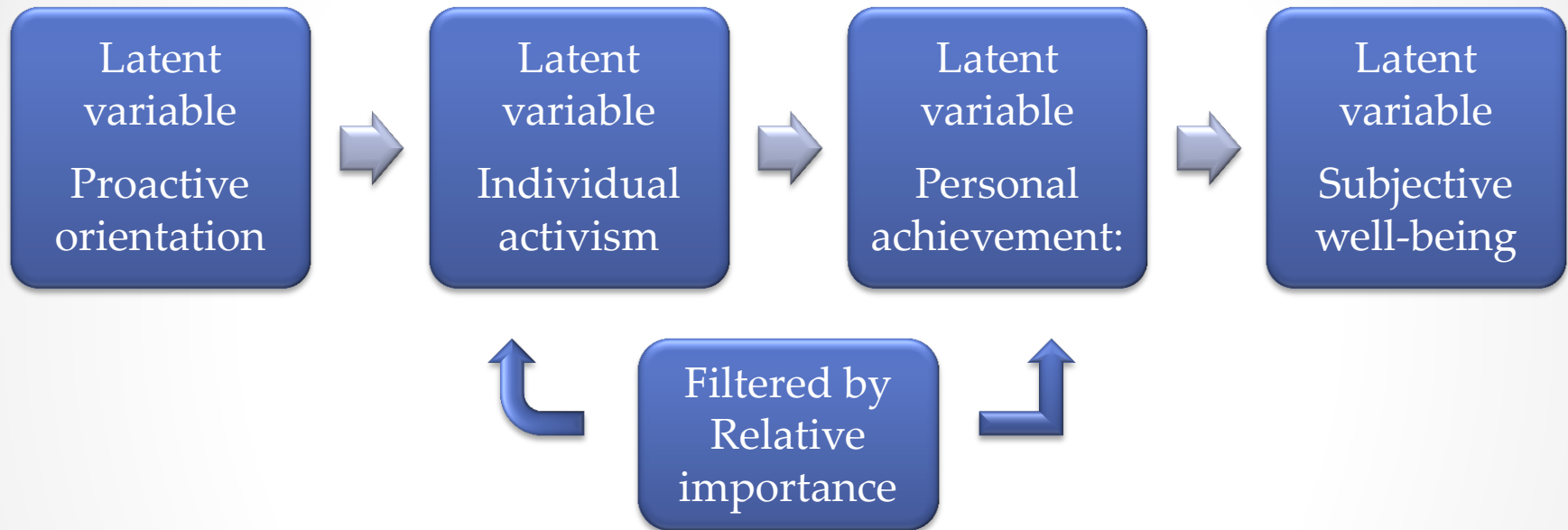
- Selected variables:
 - V10. Happiness level
 - V11. Health level
 - V22. Satisfaction with life as a whole
 - V60. Satisfaction with being a housewife



Empirical Indicators: Control variables

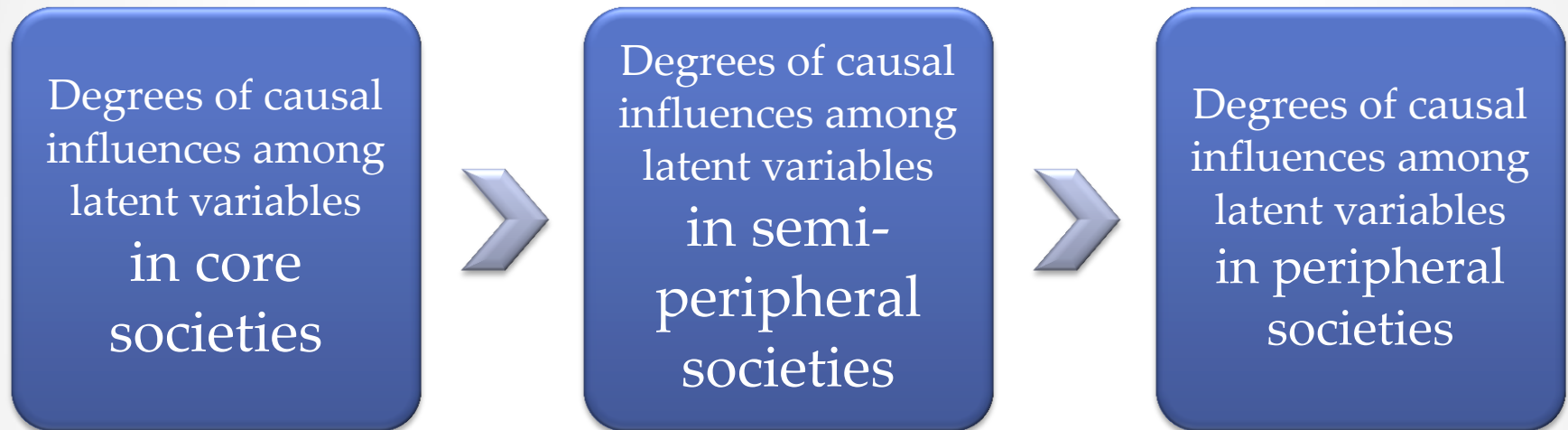
- Selected variables:
 - V235. Sex
 - V237. Age
 - V238. Educational level
 - V255. Town size

Operational Model and Hypothesis 1



- H1: Higher values of latent variable of **proactive orientation** have a positive causal relation with higher values of latent variable of **individual activism** which in turn have a positive causal relation with higher values of latent variable **personal achievement** which finally have a positive causal relation with higher values of latent variable of **subjective well-being**, corrected for **relative importance of spheres of life**

Operational Model and Hypothesis 2



- H2: Factor loadings among the latent variables of proactive orientation, individual activism, personal achievement and subjective well-being are higher in subsample of **core societies** than in subsample of **semi-peripheral societies**, and in subsample of semi-peripheral societies higher than in subsample of **peripheral societies**

Data Analysis Methodology

- With the aim to test the posed hypotheses **confirmatory factor analysis** will be applied
- In order to evaluate the model fit the following tests will be used:
 - **Chi-Squared test**
 - **Root mean square error of approximation**
 - **and Adjusted goodness of fit index**
- Finally, a **structural equation model** of causal influences among proactive orientation, individual activism, personal achievement and subjective well-being will be constructed

Further Steps

- In order to conduct the research there are some steps which need to be done:
 - Seek to find for all the **available research on the specific questions posed**
 - Clearly define the **key concepts**
 - Specify exact **theoretical implications** for the presumed **hypotheses**
 - Examine **alternative causal connections** between proactive orientation and subjective well-being
 - **Justify the indicators** selected for measurement
 - Check for variables used in all target societies and **exclude underrepresented** either variables or societies from analysis
 - Create theoretically sound **criteria for grouping societies** into subsamples of core, semiperiphery, and periphery
 - Run the **analysis** itself, test and elaborate the **model**
- Individual Activism as a Way to Personal Achievement and Subjective Well-Being

Prospects for Future Research

- Apart from the research questions posed, there is a number of other perspective focus of investigation:
 - It is curious to know what **social structures** influence the level of **proactive orientation**?
 - One might wonder what **social initiatives** – state policies, INGO programs, and NGO activities contribute to rise of **proactive orientation**?
 - It is also interesting to test whether there is a significant **connection** between levels of **proactive orientation, civil activism, and democracy**?



Thank you for your attention!