Proactive Orientation and Individual Activism as Causes of Personal Achievement and Subjective Well-Being

Progress Report
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Research Questions

- *Primary research question:*
  - What are the *cause-and-effect connections* among **proactive orientation, individual activism**, **personal achievement** and **subjective well-being**?

- *Secondary research questions:*
  - Are there *cause-and-effect influences* among the constructs?
  - If the causal influence exists, what are the *directions of cause-and-effect influences* among the constructs?
  - What are the *degrees* of these influences?
  - Are there *differences in degrees of these causal influences* between countries of core, semiperiphery, and periphery?
  - What are the *degrees* of these differences?

Theoretical Framework: Sociology (1)

- Interplay between social structure and personality in the M. Kohn's theory (1999):
  - o **Occupational self-direction** – the use of initiative, thought, and independent judgment in work
  - o In general, individuals with higher social-stratification and class positions possess a greater occupational self-direction which leads to *lesser distress*

- Proactive work behavior from the perspective of S.K. Parker & C. G. Collins (2010):
  - o **Proactive behavior** includes active adjustment, using one's initiative, expressing voice, charge to bring about change, proactively solving problems and implementing ideas etc.
  - o Proactive individuals perform their core tasks better so they experience a considerable *career success*

Theoretical Framework: Sociology (2)

- In search of sources of happiness R. Inglehart, R. Foa, C. Peterson, and C. Welzel (2008) found out that:
  - Levels of economic development, religion, tolerance to out-groups, and democracy positively influence the level of *subjective well-being*
  - The key intermediate mechanism is the enabling people to have a wider **free choice**

- C. Welzel and R. Inglehart (2010) have proved that:
  - There is a positive link between **emancipatory values** and **agentic life strategies**, as well as between **agentic life strategies** and **life satisfaction**
  - And the notion that the very **self-actualization** leads to greater **subjective well-being** is even stronger statement compared to ours (that the results of individual activism in a form of personal achievement contributes to higher subjective well-being)

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 (2001) suggests 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 (1)

- It is described by J. W. Meyer, J. Boli, G. M. Thomas, and F. O. Ramirez as macrorealist one (1997):
  - The approach tends to view nation-state as a product of global systems of economic and political power
  - The benefit of such perspective lies in understanding of each structural part in the world-system and cultural consequences of that fact
- 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

Theoretical Framework: World-Systems (2)

- This implication conforms to the thesis of C. Welzel and R. Inglehart (2010):

  - Economically advanced societies impose *permissive existential conditions with multiple opportunities to thrive*, which require *emancipative values* and *agentic strategies*, which in turn lead to a feeling of *fulfillment* – a basis for a sense of well-being

- 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*

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis 1

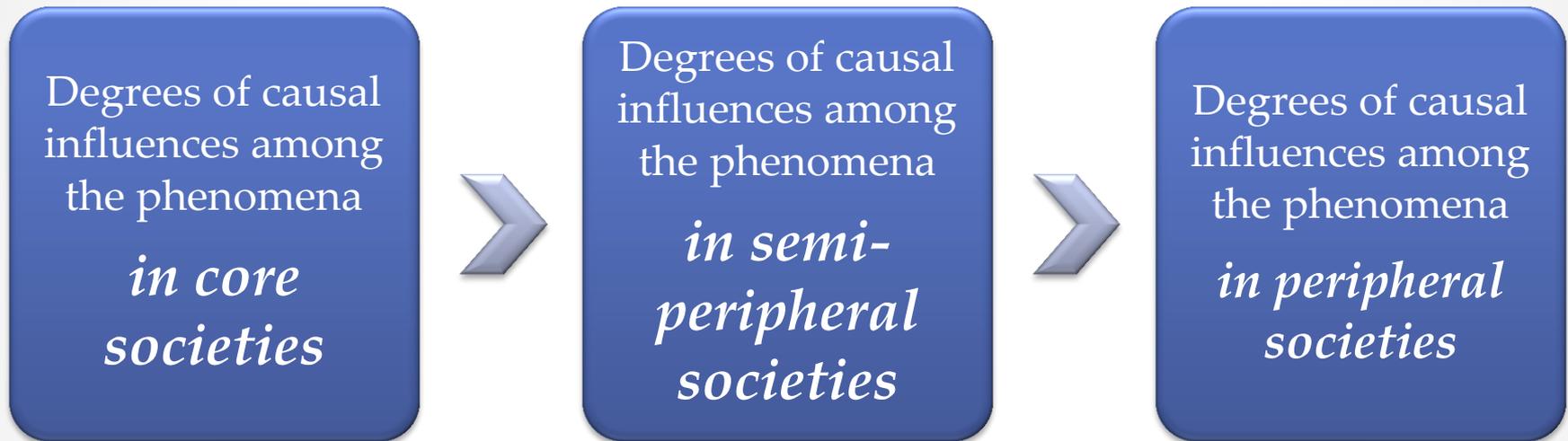| Proactive orientation | → | Individual activism | → | Personal achievement | → | Subjective well-being |
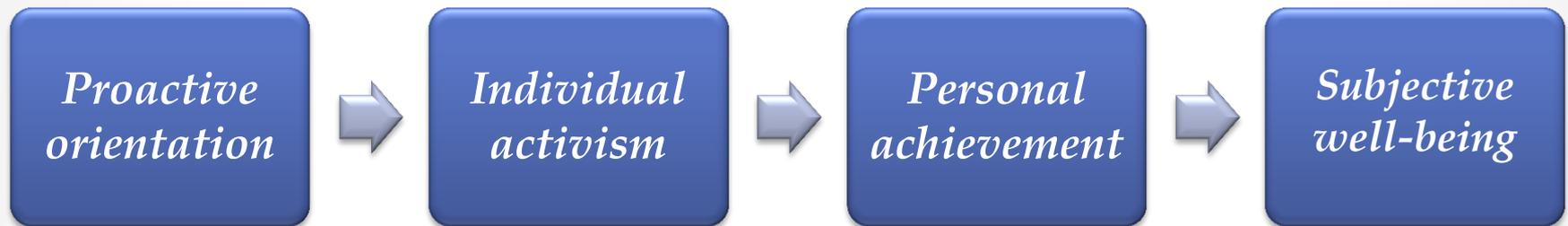
- H1: Person's high **proactive orientation** leads to intense **individual activism** which promotes high level of **personal achievement** and thus contributes to higher **subjective well-being**

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis 2
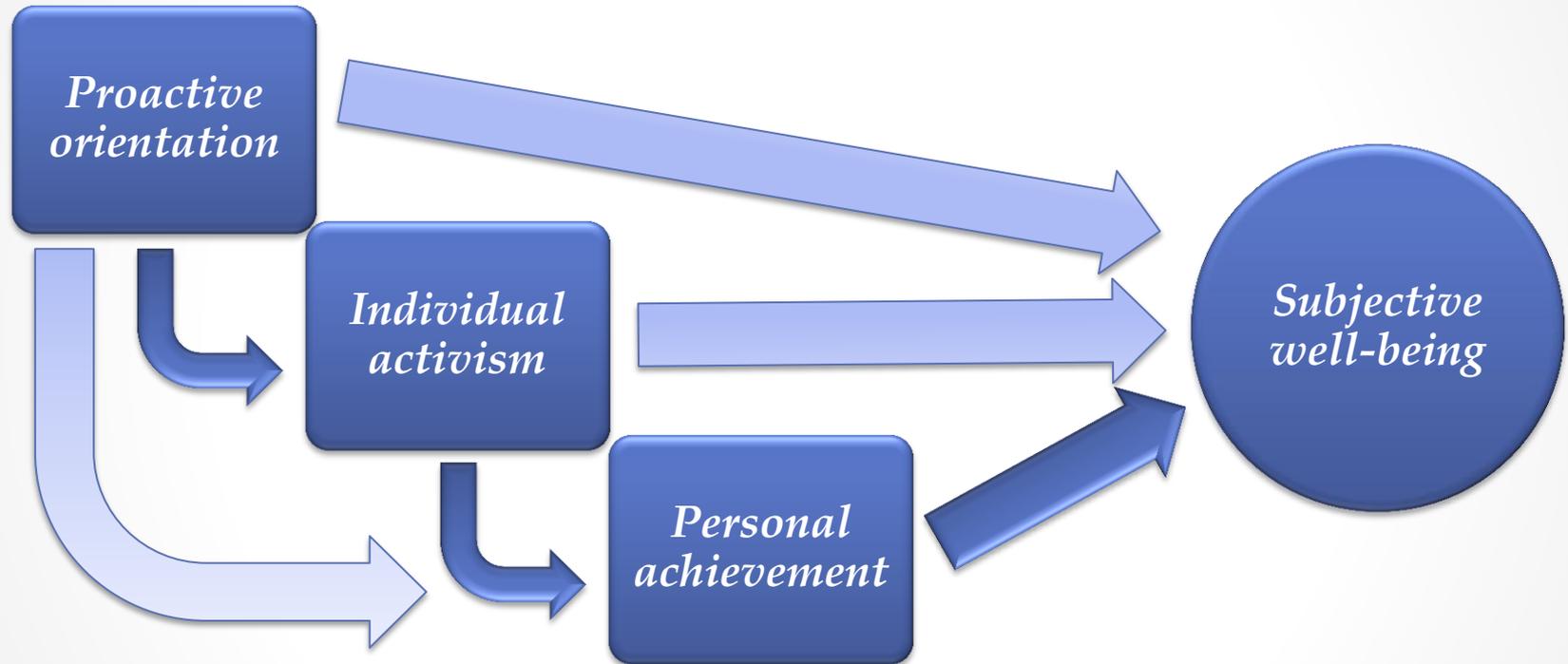
- H2: Person's **proactive orientation** has a direct influence on **personal achievement**; while **proactive orientation** and **individual activism** have a direct influence on **subjective well-being**

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis 3

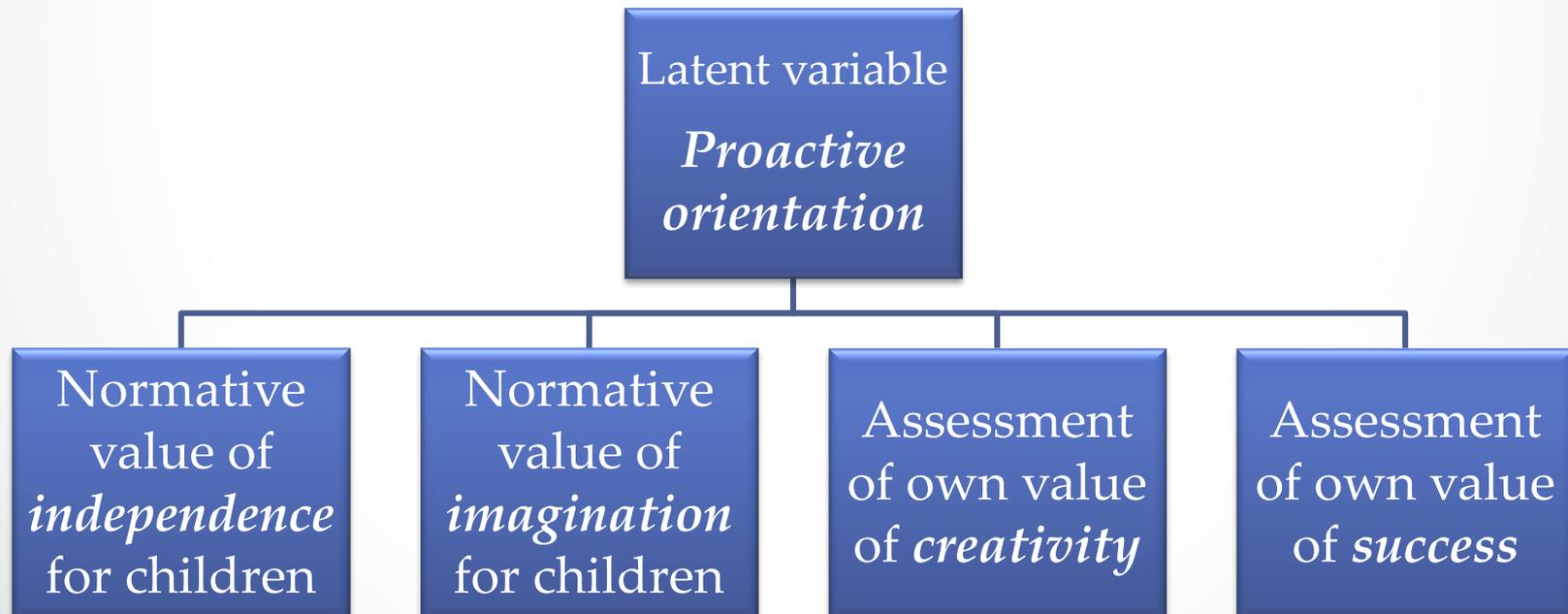| Degrees of causal influences among the phenomena *in core societies*	>	Degrees of causal influences among the phenomena *in semi-peripheral societies*	>	Degrees of causal influences among the phenomena *in peripheral societies*

- H3: 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 are higher than in **peripheral societies**

Methodology, Data, and Sample

- *Data collection methodology* is the use of secondary population **survey data**

- *Data collection methods* include standardized **face-to-face interviews** or standardized face-to-face **CAPI** interviews

- The *data sets* of **World Values Survey** 5th wave (2005-2009) were used for the inquiry

- The *sample* includes **49 countries** with up to **69,381 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* were analyzed:
 - Countries of core, semiperiphery, and periphery

Proactive Orientation Measurement

- The most relevant indicators for the **proactive orientation** construct include:
  - *Normative values of independence, hard work,* and *determination* suggested for children as indirect indicators of person's own values and the assessment of own *value of success*:

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   Latent variable   │
                    │                     │
                    │     Proactive       │
                    │    orientation      │
                    └─────────────────────┘
         ┌──────────────┬──────────┴──────────┬──────────────┐
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│  Normative   │ │  Normative   │ │  Assessment  │ │  Assessment  │
│  value of    │ │  value of    │ │ of own value │ │ of own value │
│ independence │ │ imagination  │ │ of creativity│ │  of success  │
│ for children │ │ for children │ │              │ │              │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
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Individual Activism Measurement

- The indicators selected to measure **individual activism** construct comprise:
  - Evaluation of own *free choice and control over life, assertiveness in being oneself, independence in stating goals,* and *independence in daily activities*

Latent variable
Individual activism

Free choice and *control over life*

Assertiveness in *being oneself*

Independence in daily activities
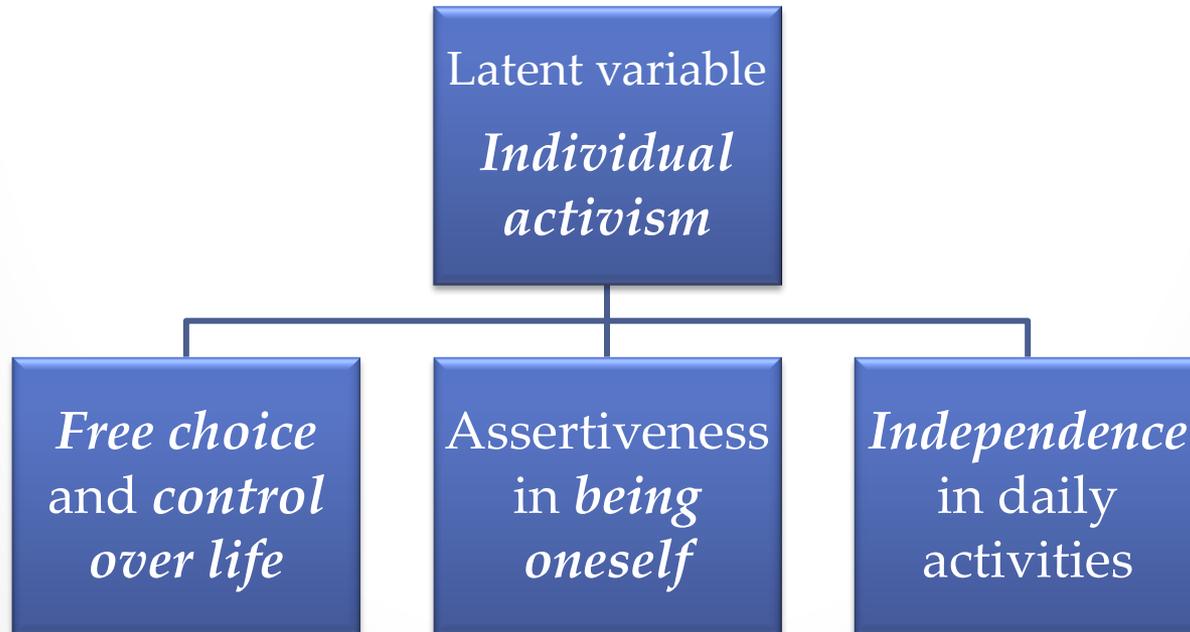
Personal Achievement Measurement

- In order to have a kind of all-embracing measurement, **personal achievement** construct includes:
  - Assessment of *financial situation*, *power at work*, and *educational level*

Latent variable

Personal achievement

Assessment of *financial situation*

Assessment of *power at work*

Educational level
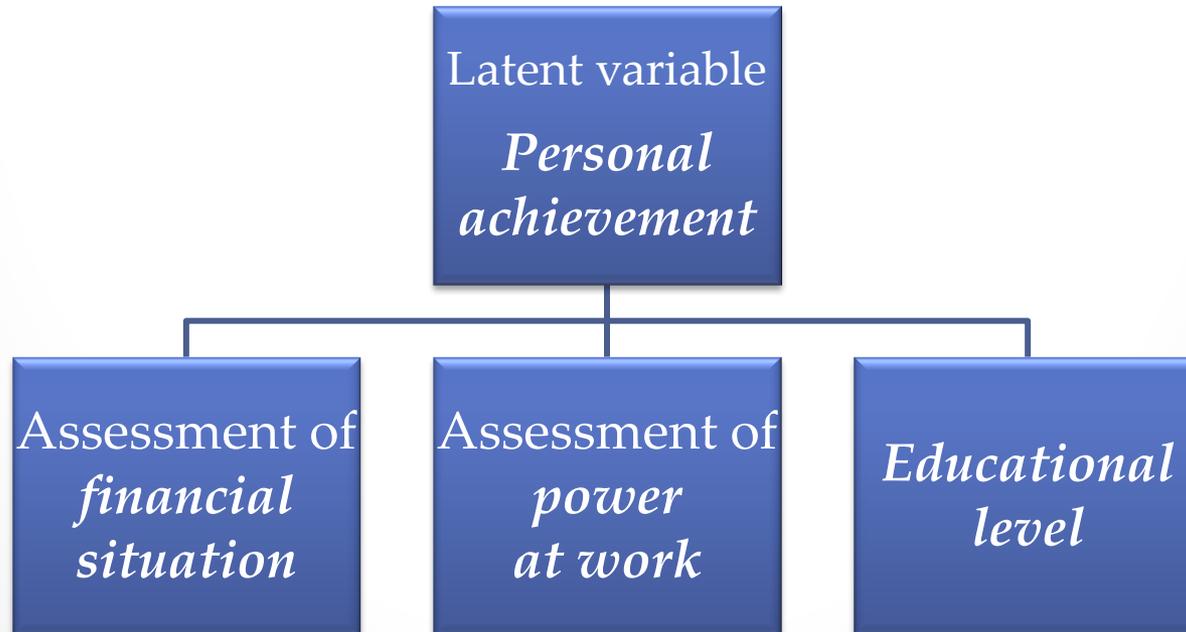
Subjective Well-being Measurement

- The measurement of **subjective well-being** construct includes
  - perception of own *happiness, health* and *satisfaction with life*

Latent variable

Subjective Well-being

Perception of own *happiness*

Perception of own *health*

Perception of *satisfaction with life*
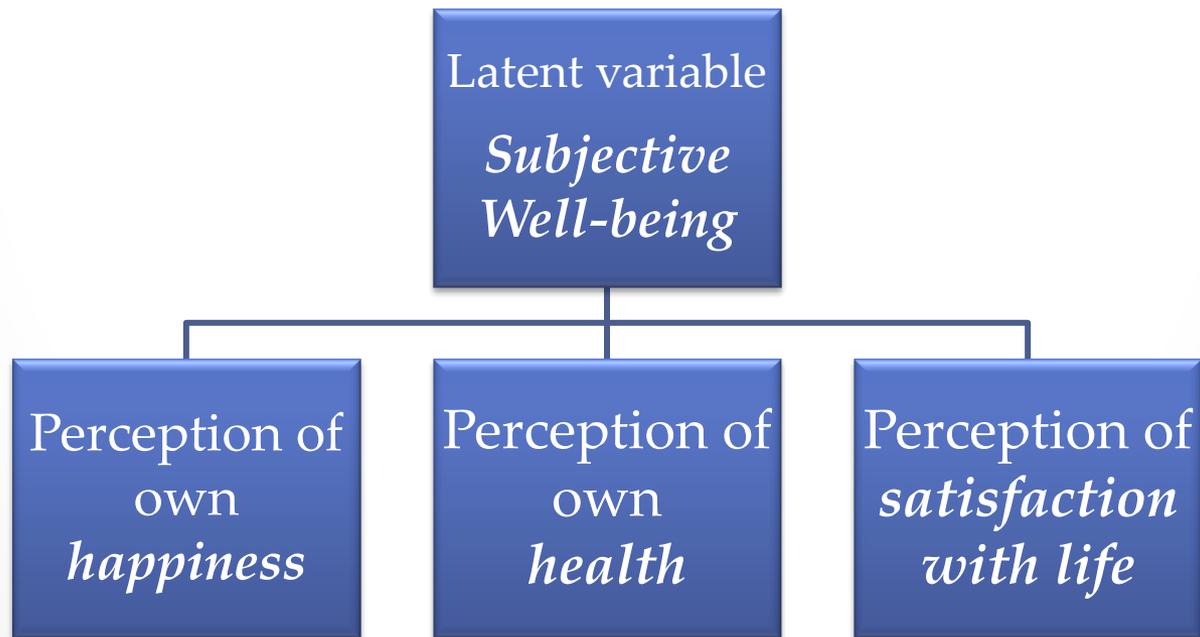
Societies of the Three World-System Zones

- Sorting of societies for the structural zones according to their PPP GNI per capita values (WB and IMF data):

| Core	Semiperiphery	Periphery
(over $29,500 PPP GNI pc)	(over $8,500 PPP GNI pc)	(lower $8,500 PPP GNI pc)
Andorra, Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States	Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Cyprus, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey	Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Mali, Moldova, Morocco, Peru, Rwanda, Thailand, Ukraine, Vietnam, Zambia

Data Analysis Methodology

- To estimate causal influences among proactive orientation, individual activism, personal achievement and subjective well-being, reflected in the first and in the second hypotheses, **a structural equation modeling in MPlus 6.12** with continuous and categorical indicators using WLSMV estimator was done
  - *STDXY standardized coefficients were used for analysis*
- To evaluate the model fit the following tests were used:
  - *Chi-Square model of fit test, RMSEA, WRMR, CFI, TLI, R^2*
- To examine the third hypothesis the **multiple group analysis in MPlus 6.12** with continuous and categorical indicators using WLSMV estimator was performed
- As it was discovered in the analysis, there is a non-linear statistical relationship between PPP GNI per capita and the degrees of causal influences between the constructs. Therefore, in contrast to the regular two-level analysis utilizing PPP GNI per capita as an independent variable, the multigroup analysis turned out to be a more accurate and fruitful method of analysis, slightly reducing statistical power, but gaining explanatory power

SEM for the Entire Sample: Results

- The SEM modeling results:
  - *There is a reasonably good model fit:*
    - Chi-Square model of fit test P-Value<.001, RMSEA = 0.06, WRMR = 10.53, Subjective well being R^2 = 0.76
  - **Hypothesis 1 has been fully confirmed**: 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
  - **Hypothesis 2 has been confirmed only partially**:
    - person's proactive orientation does have a direct influence on personal achievement
    - nevertheless, there was found *NO statistically significant direct influence* of proactive orientation and individual activism on subjective well-being

Model Graph for SEM for the Entire Sample

- The SEM modeling results:
  - Entries are standardized regression coefficients
  - Significance levels: * p<.10; ** p<.01; *** p<.001
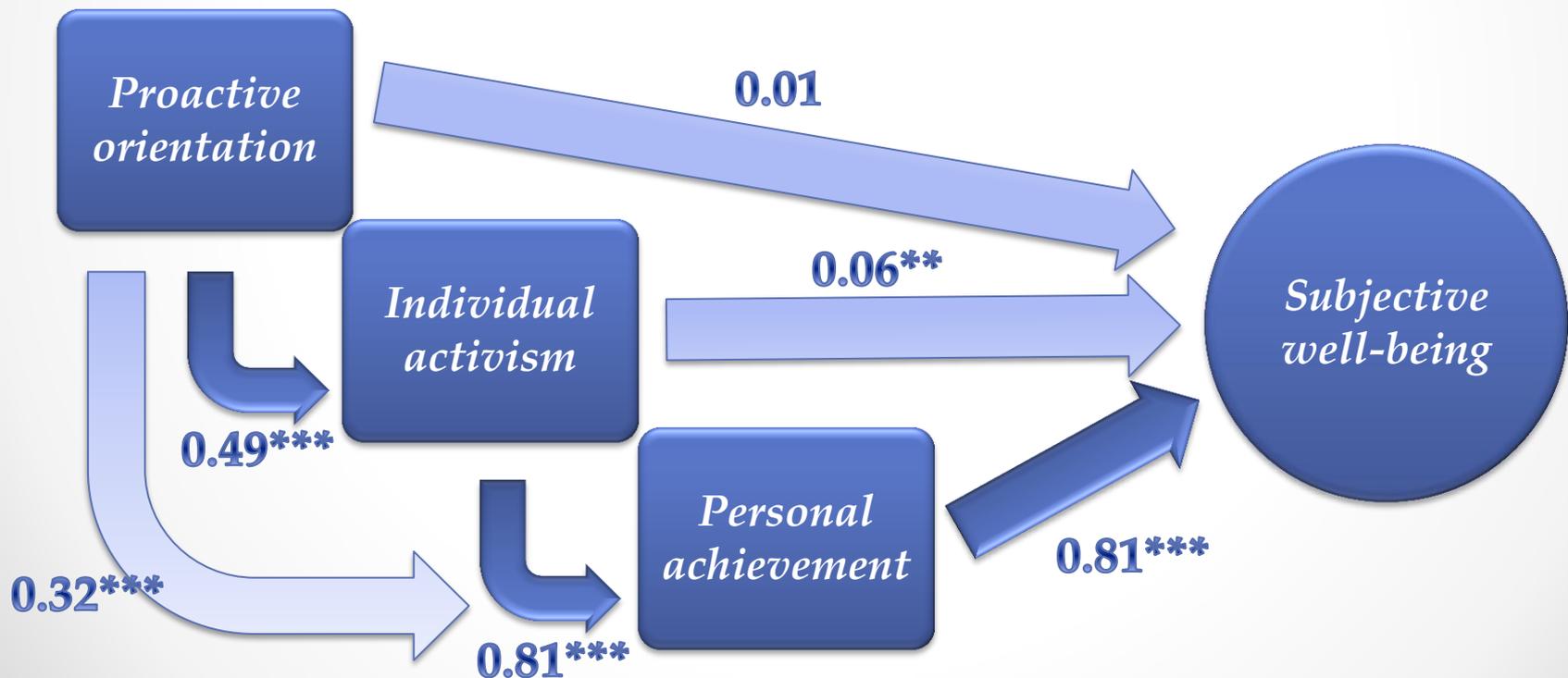
SEM for the Entire Sample: Alternatives

- Some alternative models:
  - **Statistical control** *of independent socio-demographic variables on subjective well-being:*
    - Standardized regression coefficient for biological sex b1=-0.03, and for age b2=-0.15, so there is some influence, but such model has smaller CFI (0.74 vs. 0.84) and TLI (0.68 vs. 0.88)) than the principal one
  - **Comparison** of *country-specific models:*
    - In search for more detailed differences we planned to compare country-specific models, but the convergence levels were low
  - **Two-level SEMs** *with 5-6 links:*
    - Probably due to small direct influence of proactive orientation and individual activism on subjective well-being models including them on both levels demonstrate low convergence levels
  - **Two-level SEMs** *including the PPP GNI variable:*
    - Hypothetically due to nonlinear influence of PPP GNI the model with this independent variable generated low convergence
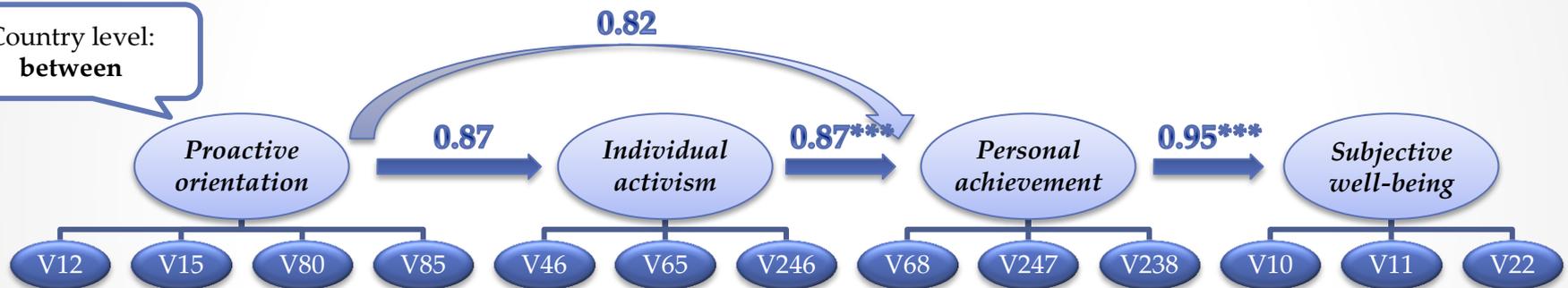
Two-level SEM with 4 Links: Results

- The two-level SEM modeling results:
  - *There is a reasonably good model fit:*
    - Chi-Square model of fit test P-Value<.001, RMSEA = 0.03, WRMR = 7.35, Subjective well being R^2 within = 0.79, R^2 between = 0.89, SRMR within = 0.05, *but SRMR between = 0.16*
  - *The models produce somewhat **contradictory results**:*
    - At first glance, it looks like the influences are better explained at *individual level*: country-specific models show no convergence and in two-level model the SRMR between countries shows a bad fit
    - However, according to some tests the *two-level model* is better than one-level model: RMSEA is lower (0.03 vs. 0.06), CFI is higher (0.92 vs. 0.88) and TLI is higher (0.89 vs. 0.84), Subjective well being R^2 is higher – 0.79 within vs. 0.76 in one-level and even 0.89 between vs. 0.76 in one-level
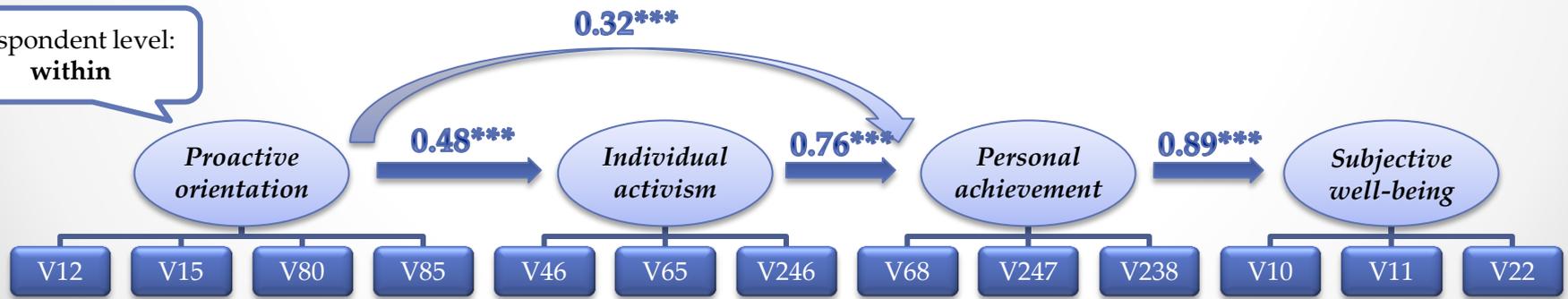
Two-level SEM with 4 Links

- The two-level SEM modeling results:
  - Entries are standardized regression coefficients and factor loadings
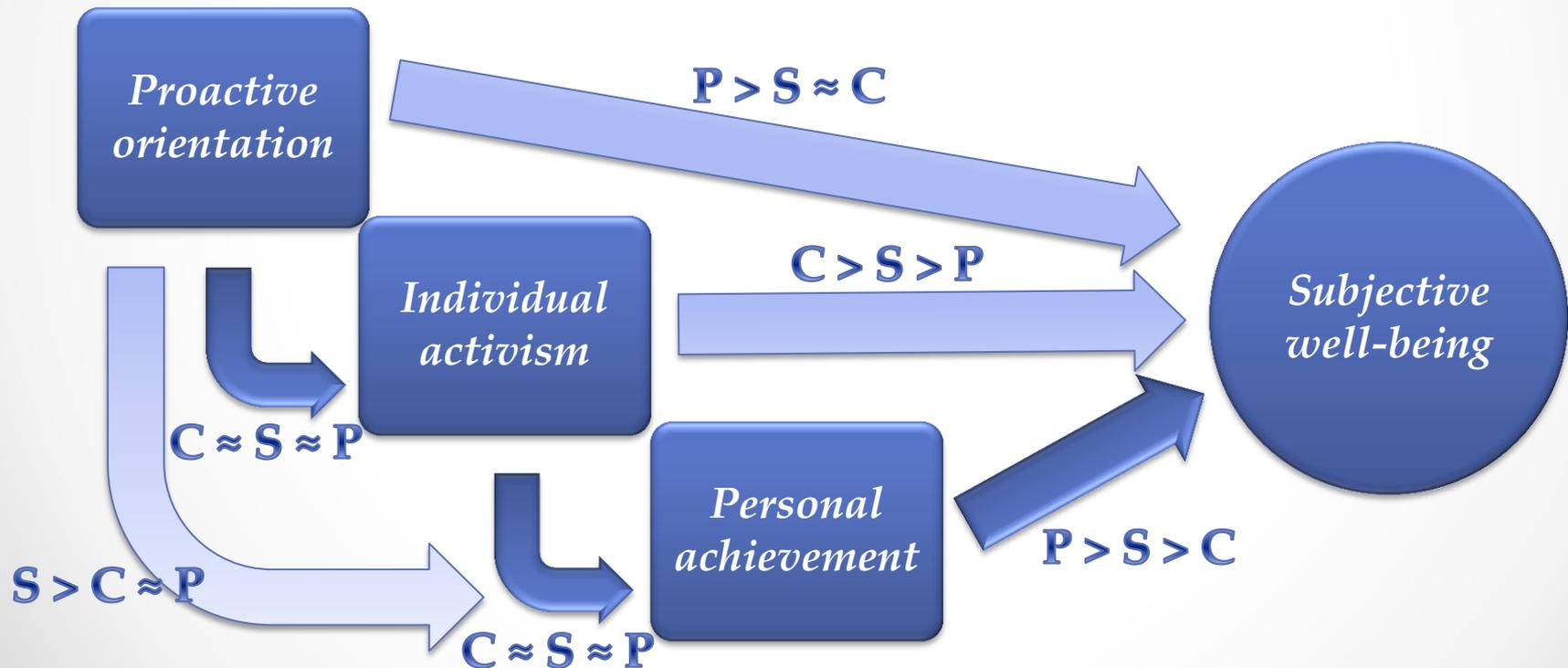 - Significance levels: * p<.10; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

SEM for the Three World-System Zones

- The SEM modeling results:
  - *There is a reasonably good model fit:*
    - Chi-Square model of fit test P-Value<.001, RMSEA = 0.06, WRMR = 13.15, Subjective well-being R^2 periphery = 0.88, R^2 semiperiphery = 0.73, R^2 core = 0.67
  - **Hypothesis 3 has been confirmed partially too**:
    - Positive influence of person's *individual activism* on *subjective well-being* is the strongest in the core, is weaker in the semiperiphery, and is even negative in the periphery
    - However, there are *relatively small differences* between degrees of influences of proactive orientation on individual activism and of individual activism on personal achievement in the 3 world-system zones
    - Moreover, the degrees of influence of all other constructs are surprisingly *reverse*: they are stronger either in the semiperiphery or in the periphery and the weakest in the core

Model Graph of SEM for the 3 Zones

- The SEM modeling results:
  - C – Core, S – Semiperiphery, P - Periphery

SEM for the Three World-System Zones

- Comparison of regression coefficients for the 3 world-system zones
  - Entries are standardized regression coefficients
  - Significance levels: * p<.10; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Causal Influence	Core		Semiperiphery		Periphery
Proactive orientation on *individual activism*	0.48***	≈	0.57***	≈	0.49***
Individual activism on *personal achievement*	0.79***	≈	0.78***	≈	0.80***
Personal achievement on *subjective well-being*	0.55***	<	0.75***	<	1.14***
Proactive orientation on *personal achievement*	0.22***	<	0.52***	>	0.31***
Proactive orientation on *subjective well-being*	-0.09***	≈	-0.06**	<	0.12***
Individual activism on *subjective well-being*	0.33***	>	0.16***	>	-0.32***

Discussion of the Gained Results

- The obtained results raise new questions, for which we would like to suggest some hypothetical explanations:
  - Influence of proactive orientation on subjective well-being is comparatively small, because the three zones have *the opposite manifestations of two parts of the construct* – for children and persons
  - Influence of individual activism on subjective well-being seems to operate in accordance with the theories of emancipative values and agentic strategies (Welzel and Inglehart, 2010)
  - Degrees of influence of proactive orientation on individual activism and of individual activism on personal achievement are strikingly similar across all zones, so probably this is a kind of *psychological and structural universal*
  - Higher degree of influence of proactive orientation on personal achievement in semiperiphery compared to other zones might signify that person's proactive orientation does matter more there
  - Higher degrees of influence of personal achievement on subjective well-being might mean *the higher importance of socially accepted external attributes connected with status* in the periphery and semiperiphery, compared to *self-expression values* in the core

Thank you for your attention!