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**Understanding of What Is Modernization Is Universal, but Understanding of
Modernization Pathways Is Culturally Diversified: A Nine Countries Study of Folk
Theories of Societal Development**

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TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

People across cultures differ in behaviours, thoughts and preferences. Cultural sensitivity – i.e., acknowledgment of these cultural differences – in development science is a postulate known since at least the 1960s, but has remained understudied. The goal of the current paper is to address this gap and to investigate folk theories of societal development, and in particular to identify both universal and culturally specific lay beliefs on what constitutes good societal development. In this study we collected data on preferences in social developmental from 2,684 participants across nine countries from five continents. We measured preferences towards twenty-eight different development aims, and separately for preferences towards three aims constituting Human Development Index. We used a comprehensive analysis approach, consisting of multidimensional scaling, analysis of variance, and pairwise comparisons to characterize universal and country specific preference patterns. Our results demonstrate that what people understand as modernization remains substantially universal across countries, but specific pathways of development and preferences towards these pathways tend to be different between countries. We also distinguished three facets of modernization: basics for modernization (e.g., trust, safety, economic development), welfare aims (e.g., poverty eradication, education), and inclusive aims (e.g., openness, gender equality, human rights). Importantly, in all studied countries, we found that each of the three types of modernization is much more preferred than conventional aims (e.g., military, demographic, religion). Cultural sensitivity may be reflected in how development is conceptualised and measured, and in this paper we propose a method of implementing our findings into development indexes.

Keywords: culture; societal development; post-materialistic development; economic development; modernization

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Understanding of What Is Modernization Is Universal, but Understanding of Modernization Pathways Is Culturally Diversified: Nine Countries Study of Folk Theories of Societal Development

All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

—United Nations, *General Assembly Resolution 1514*, 1960

Those attempting to guide the economy and our societies are like pilots trying to steer a course without a reliable compass. The decisions they (and we as individual citizens) make depend on what we measure, how good our measurements are and how well our measures are understood.

—Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, 2009

Amartya Sen proposed that the purpose of societal development is the “enhancement of living conditions” (Sen, 1988, p. 11). Yet, the question about specific pathways of societal development does not have a consensual answer. Economic prosperity has seemed to be a universal answer for the second half of XX century (Krys et al., 2019, cf. Madrueño & Tezanos, 2018; Park, 2017), but due to the growing body of research documenting drawbacks of economic paradigm (Arrow et al., 1995; Balestra, Boarini, & Ruiz, 2018; van den Bergh, 2009; Victor, 2013), a new paradigm of societal development is needed for XXI century (Krys, et al., 2019; Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009; van den Bergh, 2009). Actors of the contemporary public debate, however, are far from reaching a consensus on what direction

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

should be taken when developing societies (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Here, following the recent proposition of Krys et al. (2019) but also old postulates of the Social Indicators Movement (SIM; Bauer, 1966; for comments see: Land & Michalos, 2018, Shek & Wu, 2018), we propose a new culturally sensitive paradigm. In this paradigm we acknowledge that pathways of development may vary across cultures.

The purpose of this paper is to revitalise the idea that people wish to pursue different pathways of development across cultures. It does so by presenting findings from an empirical study carried out among 2,684 participants across nine countries from five different continents, and by documenting similar lay beliefs on modernization across cultures, but variability in lay beliefs on the specific pathways of modernization across cultures. In doing so, this paper extends the current discussion on the paradigm of societal development, and also highlights the need for more research on cultural diversity of preferred pathways of development. This paper is also a response to the resolution by the United Nations (UN) in 1960, which mandates that all peoples have the right to their own culturally-fit development pathway.

Towards Cultural Sensitivity in Societal Development Paradigms

Societal development is most commonly understood as, and sometimes exclusively measured with, economic growth (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Discussions regarding the limitations of this approach have intensified after the financial crisis in 2007-2009 (e.g., Gertner, 2010). Furthermore, several have advocated for the idea that societal development should be conceptualized (and measured) in a way that will let societies reflect their own indigenous vision of development (Krys et al., 2019; Shek & Wu, 2018).

The origins of this idea can be dated back at least to the 1960s. In particular Bauer (1966), laid the groundwork for much of what is currently known as the Social Indicators Movement (SIM; Land & Michalos, 2018). In this book, Bauer (1966) declared that social development indicators should enable societies to assess whether they are developing with

respect to their own values and goals. Similarly, Solomon and collaborators (1980) proposed that “The notion of quality of life itself should be defined in various ways from culture to culture” (p. 230), and among eleven guidelines for future research, they proposed to develop studies that “reflect upon their own value frameworks and cultural background; that recognize that other [research - *added by authors*] projects and other cultures may have different value systems; that learn from these differences and try to systematize this knowledge” (Solomon et al., 1980, pp. 231-232, after Land & Michalos, 2018, p. 845). These postulates, however, seemed to be largely ignored by social sciences by now. Shek and Wu (2018), in their recent summary of what SIM managed to achieve and what still needs to be done, concluded that Solomon and colleague’s:

“Reflection and recognition about cultural differences” is a neglected aspect in the movement. Social indicators researchers have commonly assumed that the indicators are universally valid, and can be used in different cultures. Even though some social indicators researchers recognize cultural differences, the related reflection is not substantial (p. 977).

The current study was designed to address this important gap. We do so, by using a cross-cultural psychology approach.

How Cross-Cultural Psychology Can Contribute to Development Studies?

Some aspects of human functioning seem to be universal. Across cultures, however, there exists many differences in how people think, feel, and act. The goal of cross-cultural psychology is to understand both universals and cultural specifics of human functioning to identify the ways in which culture impacts our thinking, feeling, and behaviour. Cross-cultural psychology research (and other sister-disciplines), has elucidated how contemporary societies differ not only in “hard” characteristics (e.g., *GDP* per capita, longevity, security, quality of governance), but also in values (Schwartz, 2009), social axioms (Bond et al., 2004),

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

shared attitudes (Krys, Uchida, Oishi, & Diener, 2018), beliefs (Shweder, 2003), or practices (House et al., 2004), for instance.

The Theory of Basic Human Values by Schwartz demonstrates the importance of investigating both universal and culturally specific characteristics. In 1990s and early 2000s, Schwartz (2006) collected data from over 75,000 respondents from seventy-six cultural groups (from seventy-three countries) on the importance of fifty-seven different values “as a guiding principle in my life.” As a result, he generated the map of universal values that tend to occur throughout all major cultures around the world (Theory of Basic Human Values, Schwartz, 1992). He also generated map that shows how seven cultural dimensions values differ across seventy-six national cultures (Theory of Cultural Value Orientations, Schwartz, 1999). This research demonstrated that certain qualities (e.g., friendship, intelligence, social order, or exciting life) are *universally valued as positive across cultures*, and that *the strength of endorsement for these values differs across cultures*. The extensive body of empirical literature on Schwartz’s circumplex of values documents that cultural differences in the endorsement of values have numerous and significant implications for human functioning (Schwartz et al., 2012; Torres, Schwartz, & Nascimento, 2016).

In spite of a large body of research on values, there currently exists scant empirical evidence demonstrating how people across cultures conceptualize societal development. In Folk Theory of Social Change, Bain and Kashima with collaborators (Bain et al., 2015; Bain et al., 2019; Kashima et al., 2009) described people’s beliefs where society has come from and where it is going, and studied public views of the Sustainable Development Goals (see also Shepherd, Kuskova, & Patzelt, 2009). Their studies revealed that development (not necessarily economic) is only one of five possible worldviews on societal change. The remaining four worldviews include balance, golden age (regress), endless cycle, and maintenance. In another line of cross-cultural research on societal development, Inglehart, Welzel and collaborators (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Abramson, 1999; Inglehart & Welzel,

2005; Welzel, 2013) studied post-materialistic concerns using the World Values Survey (WVS) data¹. Welzel and Inglehart operationalised post-materialism as the prioritization of giving people more to say in important political decisions and protecting freedom of speech over maintaining order in the nation and fighting rising prices. Inglehart and Welzel however conceptualized development as unidimensional construct and did not recognize that post-materialism may have various facets.

Motivation for Current Study

In the current study, we aimed to build on several postulates of Social Indicators Movement (Bauer, 1966; for comments see: Land & Michalos, 2018, Shek & Wu, 2018) that were recently refreshed by Kryszewski and collaborators (2019). In particular, we propose that post-materialistic pathways of development may differ across cultures. In this point in human history, the economic prosperity associated with several of the richest societies corresponds to a reduction in the priority on a single and “universal” aim of economic development. As a consequence several rich societies may now place an emphasis on harmonizing various societal goals, such as environment protection, equality, openness, harmony or subjective well-being. Crucially, each society may harmonise these goals in its own indigenously defined way. Norwegians, Swiss, and Australians (i.e., citizens of the top three countries in the 2018 Human Development Index [HDI] ranking) may have different ideas for their future. Similarly, Europe in general may have different ideas for its future (emphasis on social security) as compared to North America (emphasis on personal freedom) and Confucian Asia (emphasis on social cohesion). The culturally sensitive approach to societal development enables these differences to be investigated and understood.

¹ WVS is a large international assessment of values and attitudes that covers countries representing 80% of the world’s population, is based on nationally representative samples, and has been repeated over time.

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Adopting cultural sensitivity in conceptualising and measuring societal development is about respecting the right to self-determination of peoples, and is likely also a necessity (Krys et al., 2019). Without a culturally sensitive compasses on how to develop next, post-materialistic societies will likely continue to develop with the strongest emphasis on materialistic progress, which, if fostered in an unsustainable way, hold the potential to negatively impact future generations (e.g., by global warming or resource depletion; Barbier & Burgess, 2019; O'Neill, Fanning, Lamb, & Steinberger, 2018). Importantly, we also acknowledge that societies that are economically less prosperous may also aim to harmonize economic growth (as a tool of securing basic needs), with other important social issues.

In summary, each society may harmonize societal developmental aims in it's own indigenous way, and various aims may be prioritized in each culture to a different degree. The present study is an initial attempt to characterize a variety of societal development aims across several different cultures.

The Present Study

In this study we explored folk theories of societal development. We generated a list of twenty-eight different developmental aims proposed by philosophers, social scientists, and development researchers. Next we measured the amount that people across several cultural contexts prefer each developmental aim. Additionally, in order to provide a simple illustration of how differently people across cultures prioritize pathways of development, we investigated the priorities towards the three aims that constitute HDI: economic prosperity, education, and health and longevity. By now, HDI implicitly assumes that each culture prioritizes each of these three aims to the same extent. Following the culturally sensitive development paradigm (Krys et al., 2019), we collected data in nine different countries, to explore universal and culturally specific preferences towards societal development.

Method

Selection of Cultures and Participants

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to study folk theories of societal development in a culturally sensitive way, as a rule of thumb we aimed to collect at least one sample from each large macro-cultural region. Thus, we collected data in Confucian Asia (Japan, Hong-Kong), Eastern Europe (Poland), Middle East (Turkey), Latin America (Brazil), Western Europe (France), Sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria), Southern Asia (India²), and North America (USA, Canada). The majority of data was collected based on samples of post-secondary students, however six teams complemented their student sample with a general population sample as well. As a rule of thumb, in each sample we aimed at collection of data from around 200 participants. In two samples (Hong Kong and Nigeria), however, we managed to collect fewer, and on the other hand, in six other samples we collected more than targeted. After excluding low quality data³ our entire sample consisted of 2,684 participants - Table 1 contains demographic characteristics by country.

² Data collected in India had problematic quality (over 2/3 of entries were diagnosed as unreliable), so further in this paper we will not report findings from India. The inclusion of the India data to the overall analysis did not change the results in a substantial way.

³ As a low quality data we regarded answers from those participants who: 1. failed in the “attention check” question, 2. provided nonsense answers in the qualitative part of our questionnaire, 3. provided no-variance answers on variables of interest (i.e., those whose all answers were the same, e.g., 7), 4. provided “Christmas-tree” pattern of answers, and 5. failed to provide all answers on variables of our interest; 6. we also excluded duplicate cases.

Table 1

Samples' Characteristics

	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i> / % male	<i>N</i> / % female	% students*	age <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
USA	355	148 / 42%	205 / 58%	50%*	27 (11)
Canada	381	196 / 51%	180 / 47%	61%	28 (10)
France	193	68 / 35%	119 / 62%	63%	34 (13)
Poland	271	89 / 33%	181 / 67%	47%	37 (17)
Brazil	281	205 / 73%	75 / 27%	62%	32 (10)
Turkey	706	311 / 44%	359 / 51%	59%	30 (11)
Japan	289	173 / 60%	113 / 39%	34%	35 (11)
Hong Kong	80	36 / 45%	44 / 55%	100%	19 (1)
Nigeria	128	18 / 14%	105 / 82%	98%	20 (1)
Total	2,684	1,244 / 46%	1,381 / 52%	58%*	30 (11)

Note: *N* male and *N* female do not have to sum up to *N*, because participants could select “other” gender, and “I don’t want to answer this question” option; additionally, in 30 cases participants did not answer this sociodemographic question.

*In the USA, the question about a student status was not administered. In this country, two samples were collected: one purely student sample (at the author’s university), and the second general sample. The statistics presented in the column “% students” treat USA student sample participants as students, and USA general sample participants as non-students. But, because some general sample participants might identified themselves as students as well, “% students” for the USA, and in effect for Total, remain slightly underestimated.

Materials and Procedure

Participants rated twenty-eight developmental aims presented in Table 2. We identified these aims across variety of disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, development studies and political science (see column 2 in Table 2 for selected inspirations). In this list, along with economic and post-materialistic aims, we also included several aims that may be regarded as conventional (e.g., military, demographic, upholding traditions, religion and spirituality, being stronger than neighbouring countries) to provide a comprehensive map of potential societal development aims.

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Table 2

Twenty-eight Aims Presented to Participants (Column 1), Example Inspirations/Sources (Column 2), and Their Categorization According to Our Empirical Findings (Column 3)

(1)	(2)	(3)
Aim of development administered to participants	Example advocates, sources, or inspirations	Type of development (categorization according to our findings)
Allowing its citizens to reach their full potential	Maslow's need for self-actualisation.	welfare
Balanced life	Important value in many cultures.	basics for modernization
Being stronger than neighbouring countries	Traditional aim of policies before World War II.	conventional
Cherishing life of families	Research on social capital.	basics for modernization
Democracy	Ancient Greece; contemporary ideal in Euro-American cultures.	basics for modernization
Demographic growth (population increase)	Still important aim for several governments.	conventional
Economic prosperity	Adam Smith's <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> ; pursued by majority of contemporary governments and international governing bodies; according to the latest World Values Survey 60% people all over the world indicate it as number one among aims.	basics for modernization
Environment protection	Greenpeace; anti-global warming movements.	inclusive
Equality	Karl Marx; Thomas Piketty.	inclusive
Equality of men and women	Women emancipation movement.	inclusive
Facilitating communication between people	Research on social capital.	basics for modernization
Freedom of individuals	John Locke's <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> .	welfare
Good education	One of three sub-dimensions of HDI.	welfare
Happiness	Aristotle; Ed Diener's <i>National Accounts of Well-Being</i> ; traditionally valued among individualistic societies.	inclusive
Harmony	Confucius; traditionally valued among East Asian societies.	inclusive
Healthy and long life	One of three sub-dimensions of HDI.	basics for modernization
Human rights	United Nations: Universal Declaration of Human Rights.	inclusive
Justice	John Rawls' <i>A Theory of Justice</i> .	welfare
<i>Averageness</i> *: (Meeting good enough standards in each direction, although being the best is not necessary)	Important in Japan value of being humble, ordinary, and quiescent.	unspecified*
<i>Libertarianism</i> **: (Minimal governmental interference in social life and the economy)	Political libertarian philosophers (e.g., Ann Rand).	unspecified**

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Openness to new people and new ideas	Karl Popper's <i>The Open Society and Its Enemies</i> .	inclusive
Poverty eradication	Aim of many international governing bodies.	welfare
Religiosity/Spirituality	Saint Augustin; Quran; Bible; most religious organisations.	conventional
Safety	John Locke; Maslow's basic need of safety.	basics for modernization
Societal trust	Research on social capital.	basics for modernization
Strengthening social bonds	Research on social capital.	basics for modernization
Strong defence/military forces	Donald Trump; Kim Jong-Un; military movements.	conventional
Upholding traditions	Edmund Burke; important value for many people.	conventional

*Note: *Averageness* - we use the term "averageness" in this table and further figures to make the underlying idea more comprehensive for readers, but in the questionnaire, we administered the longer descriptive term "meeting good enough standards in each direction, although being the best is not necessary"; averageness is the concept popular in the Japanese culture - teams in other countries signalled however that this concept raised problems to participants, and also in our mapping (see Figure 2a) averageness was located in-between conventional and modernizing aims. Therefore, we label it here as unspecified, and will not analyze it further in this manuscript. ** *Libertarianism* - we use the term "libertarianism" in this table and further figures to make the underlying idea more comprehensive for readers, but in the questionnaire, we administered the longer descriptive term "minimal governmental interference in social life and the economy". Libertarianism is the aim that we found in our mapping in-between conventional and modernizing aims. Thus, we also exclude it from our further analysis.

The instructions provided information about statements that someone might use to describe a good society (e.g., *A good society should develop openness to new people and to new ideas*), and participants were asked to indicate how well, according to their own judgement, they think each of these statements describes a good society. Similar to Vignoles et al.'s (2016) approach, participants rated statements on a nine-point Likert-type scale with five labelled points: 1 (*doesn't describe a good society at all*), 3 (*describes a good society a little*), 5 (*describes a good society moderately*), 7 (*describes a good society very well*), 9 (*describes a good society exactly*).

Additionally, we explored preferences towards three aims constituting HDI: economic prosperity, health and longevity and good education. We did so by asking ...*if your society had only three directions of development to select from: 1. economic prosperity, 2. health and*

*longevity, and 3. education - how would you rank them? Please indicate, according to your own preferences, which one of these three directions is the most important...*⁴

Analysis

To explore folk theories of societal development from 28 developmental aims administered to participants, we used Multidimensional Scaling procedure (MDS; Borg & Groenen, 2005; Torgerson, 1952). MDS is a method that diagnoses (dis)similarity among pairs of objects as distances among points of a multidimensional space. Torgerson (1952) proposed the first MDS method and coined the term, however MDS has become a widely used, and high quality, general data analysis technique. MDS is typically used to understand respondents' judgments of similarity and dissimilarities among the targeted objects/concepts.

In our study, MDS represents the development aims as points in multidimensional space such that the distances between the points reflect the empirical relations among them by the correlations between their importance (i.e. preference) ratings. The greater the conceptual similarity between the pair of development aims, the more they should be empirically related and the closer their locations should be in the multidimensional map. In other words, MDS shows a configuration of development aims in which the distance between them match as close as possible the proximities between the development aims in participants' declarations. The outcome configuration – 2-, 3-, 4-, n-dimensional mapping – yields insight on to the underlying structure of relations between development aims by providing a geometrical representation of these relations (Busing, 1997).

⁴ At the beginning of the questionnaire, we also asked open-ended questions on what should be the aim of societal development (to learn for future studies how to improve the list of aims), and at the end of the questionnaire we also administered several other scales. These additional scales reach beyond the focus of the current paper, thus will not be mentioned here further (for the description of other administered scales please see supplementary material).

The PROXSCAL program in SPSS version 25 was used to perform the MDS analyzes. Ordinal transformations of proximity were used, and the Euclidean distance was the measure of dissimilarity used (by monotonic transformation). The transformation of data was in Z-scores (Bilsky, Janik, & Schwartz, 2011; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). MDS procedure allows for 2, 3... $n-1$ (n – number of analyzed phenomena) dimensions (2D, 3D, 4D) solutions. Usually, each additional dimension improves goodness-of-fit indices (see supplementary materials for stress parameters for 2D, 3D, and 4D solutions for each country). However, having few dimensions in a solution facilitates interpretability of results. Some researchers (e.g., Borg & Groenen, 2005) suggest that 3D solutions are difficult to comprehend and that 4D or more dimensions solutions render MDS difficult to interpret and make complex data less accessible to the human mind. Thus, 2D solutions are preferable for comprehension of analyzed phenomenon provided they offer fair goodness-of-fit.

In our data, we found that 2D solutions had fair goodness-of-fit. The Normalized Raw Stress indexes were ranging from .027 to .071. We adopted the rule of thumb suggested by Kruskal and Wish (1997) regarding the Stress cut-off point: .20 = poor, .1 = fair, .05 = good, 0.025 excellent and 0 = perfect. The 2D solution also provided a dispersion accounted for (DAF) ranging from .93 to .97, and Tucker's congruence coefficient (TCC) ranging from .96 to .96.⁵ Furthermore, when we compared 2D solutions with 3D and 4D solutions, we found that 3D and 4D solutions did reveal new dimensions and possessed better goodness-of-fit

⁵ Because the MDS is an absolute metric model, i.e., the Euclidean distances obtained from the calculated space of representation correspond as closely as possible to the distances observed in the original dissimilarity matrix, there is no p -value associated with the tests (Shye, Elizur, & Hoffman, 1994). These results indicate that the maps projection represent well the co-variance matrix underlying it. That is, they confirm that the resulting ordering represents well the folk theories of societal development.

indices (for 3D solutions: $.014 < \text{Normalized Raw Stress} < .031$; $.97 < \text{DAFs} < .99$; $.98 < \text{TCCs} < .99$; for 4D solutions: $.001 < \text{Normalized Raw Stress} < .015$; $.98 < \text{DAFs} < .99$; $.99 < \text{TCCs} < 1.00$; see supplementary material for parameters for each model). However, the 3D and 4D solutions did not substantially alter the results derived from the first two dimensions: For each country, r_s for primary dimensions between 2D, 3D, and 4D solutions are $> .87$, and r_s for secondary dimensions between 2D, 3D, 4D solutions are $> .85$ (with exception for Brazil and Japan where $r_s > .68$ and $r_s > .28$ respectively; see supplementary materials for details on all countries). So, irrespective of the number of dimensions used in MDS procedure (2D, 3D, or 4D), each approach resulted in the same pattern within the first dimension, and (with the exception of Japan) also the same within the second dimension. We therefore focused our analysis and results on interpretations of 2D solutions, and labelled its dimensions as primary and secondary.

Lastly, in analysis of preferences towards three subdimensions of HDI, we aggregated preferences for each country separately.

Results

Figure 1 displays the between-countries and for the general model (i.e., model that treats all participants as one sample) correlation coefficients for primary (above diagonal) and secondary (below diagonal) dimensions that emerged in the MDS procedure. The color of each cell indicates the strength of correlation; with darker red colors indicating higher correlations, and darker green colors indicating lower correlations. The diagonal (all zeros), illustrates that correlations between primary and secondary dimensions are zero within each analyzed country (and in general model too). We found that the average between-countries correlation for primary dimensions is $r = .77$, and for secondary dimensions is $r = .23$. Paired samples t-test revealed that these two averages were significantly different, $t(35) = 11.82$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.77$. This finding indicates that the primary dimension of arranging societal development aims is relatively universal (e.g., universally recognized across cultures), and

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

that the secondary dimension is relatively culturally variant (e.g. inconsistently recognized across cultures).

	GENERAL	USA	CANADA	FRANCE	POLAND	BRAZIL	TURKEY	JAPAN	HONG KONG	NIGERIA
PRIMARY DIMENSION: CONVENTIONAL VS MODERNIZING AIMS (UPPER RIGHT HALF OF TABLE - ABOVE DIAGONAL)										
GENERAL	0,00	0,96	0,95	0,90	0,90	0,89	0,90	0,81	0,77	0,76
USA	0,68	0,00	0,97	0,86	0,87	0,92	0,83	0,79	0,67	0,80
CANADA	0,79	0,82	0,00	0,85	0,82	0,91	0,81	0,74	0,67	0,82
FRANCE	0,03	0,37	0,21	0,00	0,83	0,87	0,70	0,77	0,62	0,68
POLAND	0,03	0,26	0,22	-0,09	0,00	0,86	0,87	0,82	0,72	0,58
BRAZIL	0,06	0,60	0,35	0,64	0,23	0,00	0,78	0,87	0,61	0,74
TURKEY	0,65	0,28	0,50	0,19	-0,09	0,04	0,00	0,74	0,81	0,64
JAPAN	0,30	0,25	0,40	0,02	0,59	-0,10	0,12	0,00	0,58	0,68
HONG KONG	0,45	0,28	0,30	-0,29	-0,18	-0,08	0,36	-0,25	0,00	0,50
NIGERIA	0,51	0,41	0,54	-0,06	0,56	-0,02	0,27	0,59	0,20	0,00
SECONDARY DIMENSION: PATHWAYS OF DEVELOPMENT (LOWER LEFT HALF OF TABLE - BELOW DIAGONAL)										

Figure 1. Between-countries correlations for primary (above diagonal) and secondary (below diagonal) dimensions (“general” is a model for all participants treated as one sample). Zeros on diagonal illustrate that correlations between primary and secondary dimensions (within each sample and for general model) are zero. Colors mark the strength of correlation: red for high correlations, green for low correlations. Average between-countries correlation were significantly different ($p < .001$) between primary ($r = .77$), and secondary ($r = .23$) dimensions.

Primary MDS dimension: universal recognition of what is modernization. In order to facilitate further interpretation of what constitutes primary dimension, we mapped each dimension for the general sample. In Figure 2a presents the map of all twenty-eight aims, with the vertical axis representing primary dimension (i.e. recognized universally across cultures), and with the horizontal axis representing secondary dimension (i.e., that is not universal across cultures, thus, the horizontal distributions of aims is for illustration purposes only, and should not be interpreted). The lower part of Figure 2a displays the aims that we proposed to label *conventional* aims: upholding traditions, being stronger than neighbouring

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

countries, strong military/defence forces, demographic growth and religiousness/spirituality.

Conversely, the upper part of the Figure 2a displays the aims that we propose to label *modernizing*.

Figure 2b displays the modernizing aims only (i.e., the upper part of Figure 2a). We propose to distinguish three layers of modernizing aims. The first one, the lowest, contains *basics for modernization*, i.e., aims fostering social capital (e.g., communication between people, trust, cherishing life of families, social bonds) and agentic capital (e.g., economic aim, democracy, healthy and long life). Second layer we propose to label as *welfare aims* (e.g., poverty eradication, education, citizens reach their full potential, freedom). Finally, we propose to label the third and the highest layer of modernization as *inclusive aims* (e.g., gender equality, human rights, openness to new ideas and people, equality). For full information on how we propose to group aims please see column (3) in Table 2.

Figure 2. (A) Mappings of all twenty-eight aims altogether. (B) Modernizing aims in focus (i.e., upper part of Figure 2a) with propositions of labels.

Primary MDS dimension: analysis of preferences. Next, we calculated preferences towards each type of development separately – inclusive, welfare, basics for modernization, conventional – by computing means of aims within each type of development (reliabilities for general sample: $\alpha_{\text{inclusive}} = .88$; $\alpha_{\text{welfare}} = .80$; $\alpha_{\text{basics for modernization}} = .88$; $\alpha_{\text{conventional}} = .78$; within-countries $.70 < \alpha_s < .91$ apart from $\alpha_{\text{welfare Turkey}} = .64$ and $\alpha_{\text{welfare France}} = .69$; for detailed reliabilities please see supplementary online material). To formally test whether preferences towards these four types of development differ across countries, we conducted a mixed-design ANOVA: country served as between-subjects factor, and type of development as within-subjects factors.

This analysis revealed a significant effect of type of development, $F(3, 2675) = 2398.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .473$. We therefore compared preference towards each type of development separately for the whole sample. This analysis indicated that the highest preference was for welfare aims ($M_{\text{welfare}} = 7.72$, $SD_{\text{welfare}} = 1.25$), followed by inclusive aims ($M_{\text{inclusive}} = 7.63$, $SD_{\text{inclusive}} = 1.31$), basics for modernization ($M_{\text{basics for modernization}} = 7.46$, $SD_{\text{basics for modernization}} = 1.24$), and far behind were conventional aims ($M_{\text{conventional}} = 5.19$, $SD_{\text{conventional}} = 1.78$). Pairwise comparisons showed that all differences between all types of development were significantly different (with $ts > 6.30$, and $ps < .001$). We also found that the conventional aims were over 1.50 standard deviations behind any of modernizing aims – this gap is recognized in social sciences as very large (Cohen, 1992).

Next, we tested for the main effect of country, and found a significant main effect of country on preferences $F(8, 2675) = 139.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .295$. This effect can be interpreted in several ways. For example people across countries may have different preference towards development in general (e.g., as compared to balance or maintenance; see Kashima et al., 2009), or people across countries may have different response styles (He &

van de Vijver, 2015). The unpacking of these interpretations reaches beyond our interest in the current paper, so we will not further discuss this main effect.

Importantly, we also found a significant interaction effect between type of development and country, $F(24, 2675) = 31.76, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .087$. This interaction effect indicates that preferences towards types of development differ across countries. In order to unpack this finding, we calculated preferences towards each type of development for each country separately. Pairwise comparisons within each country separately demonstrated that, similar to the main effect of type of development, each modernizing type of development was preferred over conventional development in each analyzed country (all t s $> 9.96, p$ s $< .001$). However, among countries we found a variety of preferences towards modernizing aims. In order to illustrate this finding, we computed the relative preference towards each modernizing aim over conventional aim (this allowed us to control for between-countries differences in response tendencies; He & van de Vijver, 2015) and present them in Figure 3 (in supplementary online material, we provide raw and relative scores for each preference for each country separately).

Figure 3. Relative preference for modernizing aims over conventional aims (zero on vertical scale is the preference for conventional aims). “I” stands for inclusive aims, “W” for welfare aims, and “B” for basics for modernization.

Apart from general differences in preferences towards modernization above conventional aims (which are illustrated by average height of bars in Figure 3), in several cases, we found a pattern of preferences different to the one found for general sample. In particular, in France and Turkey, inclusive aims were preferred over welfare aims ($t_s > 2.92$, $p_s < .004$), in Canada and Hong Kong this difference did not reach statistical significance ($t_s < 1.15$, $p_s > .25$), and in the USA this difference reached only level of statistical tendency ($t = 1.76$, $p = .080$). Similar, unlike in the general sample, we found higher preference towards

basics for modernization over inclusive aims in both Poland and Brazil ($ts > 2.86$, $ps < .005$), and no difference in Japan and Nigeria ($ts < 1.03$, $ps > .30$). Together, this finding indicates that the pattern of preferences towards specific modernization aims was somewhat diversified across countries.

Secondary MDS dimension: cultural diversity of development pathways. Unlike the primary dimension that was relatively similar across cultures, we found minor between-countries similarities in how the secondary dimensions were construed (see Figure 1; average correlation for secondary dimension was $r = .23$). With the exception of the high correlation for Canada and USA ($r = .82$) – i.e., the two countries of very similar historical background and culture (at least relative to other cultures) – other similarities remained small to medium. In order to unpack this finding, each country would have to be analyzed separately, but this task reaches beyond the scope of the current paper (configuration of aims in each country can become a subject of a separate detailed analysis – we provided raw scores for mappings for each country as supplementary online materials, and encourage readers to search for their own country-specific explanations [and maybe prepare a paper on this topic]). Figure 2 shows that the dimensions that are on horizontal axis of Figure 2 tend to be different according to country. We interpret this finding as, across cultures, people conceptualize pathways of societal development in a substantially different way.

Analysis of preferences towards HDI aims: Additional argument for cultural diversity of development pathways. Analysis of preferences towards three aims constituting HDI revealed that although in general these three aims were prioritized to a similar extent (economic aim by 30%, education by 32%, and longevity by 37% of all participants), the level of their endorsement varied significantly across countries: priority towards economic prosperity varied from 9% in France to 60% in Nigeria, priority towards good education varied from 11% in Turkey to 73% in Brazil, and priority towards health and longevity varied from 13% in Brazil to 56% in Turkey. Figure 4 provides an illustration of these findings for

each aim across samples. This finding provides additional and strong support to our reasoning that preferences towards specific pathways of development differ across cultures.

Figure 4. Prioritization towards three aims constituting HDI: economic prosperity, good education, and health and longevity.

Discussion

Contemporary societies are shaped by different histories, different institutions, different norms and different values. Up to now, conceptualizations of societal development were, however, mostly based on culturally universal paradigms (Krys et al., 2019; Shek & Wu, 2018). In the current paper, we made a small step into exploration of cultural diversity of societal development pathways, by asking people in nine countries about their preferences towards twenty-eight different development aims, and by mapping these preferences with the multidimensional scaling procedure, and by simply asking about preferences towards three aims constituting HDI. As a result we demonstrate that what people recognize as modernization remains quite similar across countries, but at the same time that the specific pathways of development tend to differ across cultural contexts.

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

In particular, we found that across nine countries, people organised aims of development along an axis of conventional vs modernizing aims in a very similar way. We also found that distinguishing between conventional vs modernizing aims is the primary characteristic of societal development in each of the nine analyzed countries. These two findings suggest that what people recognize as modernization is the key category in folk theories of societal development, and remains substantially universal across various cultures.

When analyzing modernizing aims, we proposed to recognize their three layers. Basics for modernization (e.g., trust, safety, economic development) are closest to conventional aims (e.g., military, demographic, upholding traditions). The second layer of modernizing aims are welfare aims (e.g., poverty eradication, education), and the highest layer – the furthest from conventional aims – is inclusive aims (e.g., openness to new people and ideas, gender equality, human rights). When analyzing people's preferences towards each of these four types of aims (three modernizing types plus conventional), we found that in general people prioritized welfare aims over inclusive aims, and inclusive aims over basics for modernization. Conventional aims were preferred much less (over 1.5 standard deviation) than any of the modernizing aims.

Importantly, we also found some variation of preferences towards modernizing aims across countries. This latter finding lends initial support to our hypothesis that pathways of development may differ across cultures. However, much stronger support to our hypothesis on cultural variety of developmental pathways came from the analysis of secondary dimension that emerged in the MDS procedure. In it, we found that on average there was little evidence for between-country similarity for the secondary dimensions. Specifically, in some cases we found for secondary dimensions no similarity at all (e.g., Brazil and Nigeria, Japan and France), and on the other hand we found high similarity for Canada and the USA. The latter finding may lend another support to our reasoning that folk theories of societal development are inherently “cultural.” Canada and the USA – however different – remain

historically and culturally very similar to each other, and therefore, our finding that their mapping of developmental aims overlaps on both dimensions suggests “cultural” nature of folk theories of societal development.

In the current paper, however, we did not attempt to unpack the between-countries diversity of secondary dimensions. Such a comprehensive comment into how differently people in nine countries conceptualize pathways of societal development reaches beyond the scope of a single paper. Drawing a general picture would require larger number of countries than nine. However, one can consider drawing a detailed picture for each country - we provided scores for each country as the supplementary material, and encourage readers to propose their own interpretations⁶. In the current paper, we limited our conclusion to the statement that pathways of societal development substantially differ across countries.

Finally, in order to provide a picture with a simpler method than MDS, we also compared between-countries preferences towards development by asking participants to indicate their priority from among three aims constituting HDI: economic prosperity, education, and longevity. This simplified comparison demonstrated substantial between-country variability in the prioritization of development aims (see Figure 4).

Limitations and Future Directions

It is important to acknowledge our study’s shortcomings. First of all, we studied folk theories of societal development, and not actual processes of development. What lay people may understand and recognize as societal development does not necessarily “translate” into real processes. On the other hand, lay people are clearly important actors in the development processes – development is about enhancement of *their* living conditions, and by better

⁶ We believe that detailed analysis of each country’s mapping may require deeper insight into social processes undergoing in a given country, and may be a subject of further papers focused on each country separately.

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

understanding of how lay people conceptualize development, policy makers and scientists may steer our societies in a more tailored and efficient way.

Second, we based our mappings on a set of twenty-eight aims selected in a way that one may call subjective. We acknowledge that the analyzed list is probably not comprehensive, and in future studies should be improved. Furthermore, the aims we analyzed were rather of general social categories. If future studies ask about more detailed aims (e.g., increase of wages instead of general economic development, lower cost of studies instead of general education), or about “harder” aims (e.g., development of road infrastructure, availability of housing, agriculture productivity), they may bring different mappings. Such studies are needed, and the current one is only the first step into the topic (also into preparing the methodology for such studies).

Another problem is that the aims we studied were categories that may be regarded as both means and aims of development. For example, economic development may foster better education and increase longevity. It may be difficult however to propose the list of perfectly exclusive aims that will not partly overlap with each other and that will not confound means and aims of development – economic prosperity, and education and longevity are all three treated as the aim in HDI for instance.

Next, we adopted an explorative approach. Studies on cultural sensitivity in societal developmental are rare, and it was difficult to formulate beforehand predictions. We decided that it is better to make the first step into the topic in an explorative way, and this way build fundamentals for further studies, than to abandon the topic that we find important. Also labels of types of modernization are the effect of *post-hoc* reasoning, and other propositions on how to label and group modernization aims are possible. We encourage readers to do so.

Next, we adopted the 2D solution in the MDS analyzes, although other solutions (i.e., 3D and 4D) might also give some insightful results. Yet, as discussed previously, a solution that would be larger than 2D would provide findings that would be significantly more difficult

to interpret. MDS maps should provide a visual representation of a complex set of relationships that can be scanned at a glance (Borg & Groenen, 2005), which would not be the case with 3D or 4D solutions what translates technically in finding an optimal configuration of points in 2D space. Although a 2D configuration might be a distorted representation of data, this would be reflected in a high stress value (Kruskal & Wish, 1987), which is not the case of our findings. Ultimately, the 2D solution analyzed in this paper overlapped with two primary dimensions in 3D and 4D solutions (see correlation coefficients presented in supplementary material), therefore conclusions we propose would remain substantially the same no matter how many dimensional solution we would focus on.

Next, the current paper describes preferences towards various types of development, but does not indicate sources of, or motivations towards, these preferences. Future studies are needed to identify what shapes preferences towards given configuration of aims. Finally, our findings need to be treated with caution, because we sampled limited number of countries - future studies can further expand the samples by including more countries in order to increase generalisability of the findings. Ideally, future studies should cover large number of countries, and collect data from possibly representative samples, e.g., aims of societal development could be incorporated into WVS or Gallup research.

Implications for Societal Development Studies

Peoples differ. Cultural diversity may need to be reflected in how development of societies is conceptualized and studied. By now, probably all measures of societal development assume cultural universality of development pathways. For example, Human Development Index (HDI) is calculated as a geometric mean of three sub-indexes: economic prosperity, longevity and education, and carries the (implicit) assumption that each society values each of these three aims to an equal extent. Our findings indicate that this assumption is not necessarily true. Societies may prioritize each of these three qualities to a different extent, (see Figure 4).

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Our study provides initial insight into cultural differences in preferences towards different types of development. Future comprehensive studies on this topic are required and may provide an opportunity to calculate indexes of development in a more culturally sensitive way. For example, it is possible that the three proposed types of modernization – basics for modernization, welfare aims, and inclusive aims – could help establish the Culturally Sensitive Modernization Index (CSMI). CSMI could be calculated in the following way:

$$CSMI = (I_{basics}^{W_{basics}} \times I_{welfare}^{W_{welfare}} \times I_{inclusive}^{W_{inclusive}})^{1/(W_{basics} + W_{welfare} + W_{inclusive})}$$

where $I_{subscript}$ stands for the sub-index for a given type of modernization (i.e., some objective measure of development on a given set of aims), and $W_{subscript}$ stands for the weight of a given dimension that could be drawn from studies like the here described. As a result, the CSMI would be calculated on the set of objective measures for each type of modernization, and at the same time weighing three subindexes according to peoples' preferences would place relatively more significance to a dimension that a given society aspires to attain (for a proposition on how to make HDI culturally sensitive, please see Kryś et al., 2019).

By now, societal development actions were designed with the top-down approach, i.e., solutions were elaborated by experts in the societal development field. Our study employed the bottom-up approach (i.e., we studied lay people's understanding of what the societal development is), and this may be a novel and complementary to the top-down approach to understanding societal development processes.

Our findings carry important implications for the public debate on the future of the world development. Instead of searching for one universal pathway of development that will be effective for all countries, international bodies may start to explicitly affirm that preferred development pathways need to differ between countries. This conclusion is particularly

TOWARDS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

important for the richest societies that thanks to economic prosperity already managed to secure basic needs of their citizens, and now seem to search for compass for further development (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Instead of following example of other countries, each society may discuss and formulate it's own pathway of development (Krys et al., 2019). This idea may help poorer societies formulate their own indigenous pathway of development – although in their case the emphasis on economic development may still be high (see Nigeria on Figure 4), other aims may be harmonized with economic way in an indigenously defined way.

Ultimately, further research investigating how cultures differ in term of preferences towards development may facilitate the design of metrics that would be complementary to economic measures of societal development. This research may guide societies beyond economic prosperity, in a more culturally sensitive way.

Concluding Remarks

New pathways of development are discussed by scientists and politicians, but also by lay people. In the current study, we assumed that lay people are one of key actors of the new development paradigm formulation, and thus studied folk theories of societal development. We document that what links folk theories of societal development across nine very different countries is general agreement towards what is modernization. At the same time, we document cultural variability of developmental pathways. We hope that this study will encourage further research on development that are carried out less with the one-size-fits-all approach, and more with sensitivity to cultural diversity. This way, development scientists may help to fulfil the United Nations 'decolonisation' resolution from 1960 that states, "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development".

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