

## **Wellbeing of a Family - Putting the 'We' in Wellbeing (Study Across over Forty Cultures) – Description for the general public**

Studies on wellbeing tend to focus on the happiness of the individual person and repeatedly document that individualism correlates with happiness. I argue that in some cultures the wellbeing of one's family may play as important role as the wellbeing of oneself. Thus, the current project, planned to be carried out across over forty cultures on six continents, is aimed at exploring the antecedents and levels of wellbeing of both individuals and families. Building off of recent cross-cultural research, I also differentiated between two types of wellbeing: the traditionally researched concept of independent wellbeing and the more Eastern concept of interdependent wellbeing. The results of the first preliminary study carried out across twelve cultures: (1) confirm that the independent happiness of individuals is positively related to individualism, and in contrast (2) document that the interdependent happiness of families is less culture dependent and more universalistic. The results of the second preliminary study, which was carried out in Japan and in Poland, document that collectivists may value happiness of a family more than the happiness of an individual, whereas for the relatively more individualistic societies the opposite may be true. Thus, studies on cultures' variation in wellbeing that focus solely on an individual seem to remain incomplete until they are complemented with parallel studies focusing on the wellbeing of a family.

In the proposed project I want to introduce and systematically study, in the cross-cultural scheme, the concept of the interdependent happiness of a family. The proposed project is designed to analyse the cultural diversity of subjective wellbeing of the basic social group – family, as well as individual and cultural differences in its valuation and antecedents. The project is aimed at the continuation of my current studies on the wellbeing of a family, with special attention paid to the empirical validation of the theoretical model differentiating wellbeing on the basis of: (1) a subject of measure (an individual person vs. a family), and (2) a type of measured wellbeing (pursued by independent self vs. pursued by interdependent self).

The proposed empirical studies will cover over forty countries. In order to meet this goal, I plan to extend the international consortium I have established for a previous large cross-cultural project, in which we collaborated with teams from over forty cultures. Like in most cross-cultural psychology studies, I will depend mostly on student samples, although I will try to supplement the student sample with a more general public sample in at least three cultures. All parts of my study will be carried out with special attention paid to the ethical approach towards all involved participants.

The project may have fundamental economic and societal impact – in the pursuit of measures of societal development alternative to GDP *per capita*, happiness seems to be one of the leading options. A better understanding of cultural nuances of happiness, and in particular cultural variety of valuation of different types of happiness, in the future may help international institutions like the World Bank or United Nations Development Programme modify and fine-tune their indices of societies' happiness and growth.