Humanism and Normativism facet scales and short scales

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Abstract

According to Polarity Theory, all ideologies are fundamentally polarized by a conflict between Humanism, which idealizes and glorifies humanity, and Normativism, which portrays human goodness and worth as contingent upon conformity and achievement. Humanism and Normativism have, however, turned out to be distinct worldviews rather than opposite ends of a single bipolar continuum. Introducing a hierarchical model of their structure and developing scales to measure each facet, I previously showed that they are negatively related across views of human nature, interpersonal attitudes, and attitudes to affect, but not across epistemologies and political values. This report presents the eight-item facet scales and fifteen-item short-measures of humanism and normativism, along with descriptive statistics for each item in US and Swedish samples.

Blending knowledge of psychology, philosophy, and anthropology, Silvan Tomkins (1963, 1965) proposed that the controversies raging between different worldviews and ideologies throughout human history can be traced to a root dilemma:

> "Is man the measure, an end in himself, an active, creative, thinking, desiring, loving force in nature? Or must man realize himself, attain his full stature only through struggle toward, participation in, conformity to a norm, a measure, an ideal essence basically prior to and independent of man?" (Tomkins, 1963, pp. 391-392).

Humanism answers the former question in the affirmative, glorifying the capabilities, virtues, and achievements of humanity, whereas *Normativism* answers the second question in the affirmative, propounding a gloomier, more Hobbesian vision of humanity. Among the derivative implications, humanistic worldviews urge unconditional love and warmth toward others, openness to affect, and satisfaction of desires, and they portray imagination, creativity, and excitement as crucial to the pursuit of knowledge, and promotion of human well-being and rights as the core purpose of society. Normativistic worldviews urge discipline, punishment, respect upon achieved value, control of affect, and restraint, and they portray observation, rigor, and minimization of error as crucial to the pursuit of knowledge and maintenance of law and order as the core purpose of society (Nilsson, 2014).

Applying this conception of worldviews to personality, Tomkins (1964, reprinted in Stone & Schaffner, 1988) constructed the *Polarity Scale*, which presented 59 pairs of humanistic and normativistic statements, asking participants to endorse one of the statements, both of them, or neither, within each pair. Stone and Schaffner (1988, 1997) revised this scale, with the advice of Tomkins, reducing it to 40 item pairs and rephrasing items that contained sexist language[1]. De St. Aubin (1996) transformed the 40-item scale into Likert format, splitting the 40 pairs into 80 separate items and rearranging their order.

A surprising early finding was that humanism and normativism correlated weakly, or not at all, with each other, despite their prima facie opposition (de St. Aubin, 1996; Stone & Schaffner, 1997). Seeking to make sense of this finding, and to elucidate the internal structure of humanistic and normativistic worldviews, I introduced a hierarchical model, dividing each construct into five facets – view of human nature, interpersonal attitude, attitude to affect,

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[1] They also constructed a 43-item pair version that kept three theoretically important item-pairs with low item-total correlations.

epistemology, and political values – and developing scales to measure each facet. This model is displayed in Figure 1. Humanism and normativism turned out to be negatively related across the first three facet domains and uncorrelated or positively correlated across the latter three. The null correlations between humanism and normativism could be explained as a methodological artefact, because the positive correlations between humanistic and normativistic epistemologies, which were overrepresented in the Polarity Scale, cancelled out negative correlations between other aspects of humanism and normativism (Nilsson, 2014).
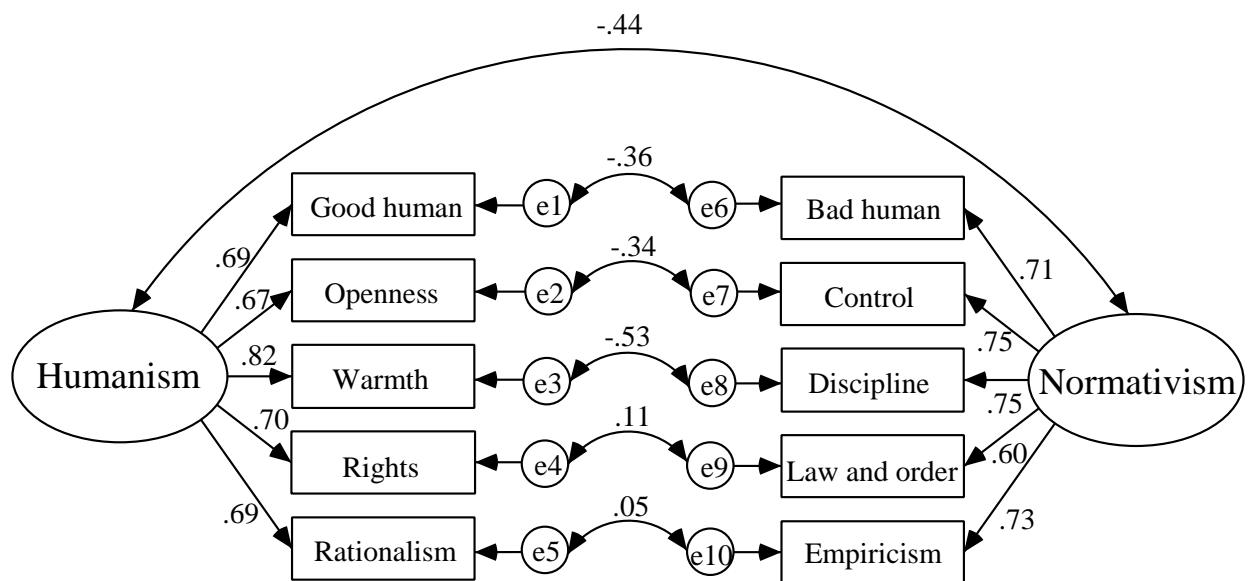

Figure 1. Hierarchical model of humanism and normativism with standardized estimates from Study 2 in the Nilsson (2014) paper. Facets from the top (1) Human nature: Basically good and valuable vs. basically bad and worthless, (2) Attitude to affect: Openness, trust, and maximization vs. control, intolerance, and minimization, (3) Interpersonal attitude: Unconditional love, respect, and positive regard vs. contingent respect, contempt, and punishment, (4) Political values: Promotion of rights, freedoms, and well-being vs. law, rules, and order, (5) Epistemology: Imagination, creativity, discovery, and excitement vs. rigor, observation, verification, and minimization of error.

The purpose of this report is to make the facet scales, and the short humanism and normativism scales which are based upon the facet scales, publicly available, and to present descriptive statistics for each item. The reported statistics are based upon the sample of Study 2 and a subset of the sample of Study 1 in the Nilsson (2014) paper, and one new Swedish sample of participants who completed the short scales.

Method

Participants

Participants

Sample 1. 233 Swedish adults (34.1% men, mean age = 31.1 years, *SD* = 11.7) completed written (*N* = 69) or online (*N* = 164) questionnaires. The online participants were recruited through a homepage for personality tests (www.pimahb.com); the others were students recruited at campus.

Sample 2. 491 New York University psychology students (26.8% men, mean age = 19.6, *SD* = 1.50) completed written (*N* = 203) or online (*N* = 288; www.psychsurveys.org) questionnaires for course credit.

Sample 3. 502 Swedish adults (41.4% men; mean age = 28.9 years, *SD* = 10.8) completed written questionnaires. They were recruited at campus and in other public spaces.

Materials

All participants were instructed to "Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the numbers on the scale next to it" and responded on a five-point (Sample 1) or seven-point (Samples 2 and 3) Likert response bar, anchored by "Strongly disagree" and "Strongly Agree", with "Neutral/No opinion" as the mid-point. Item order was randomized. Sample 1 responses were linearly transformed onto the seven-point scale.

Sample 1 participants completed de St Aubin's (1996) 80-item Likert version of the Polarity Scale, followed by 38 additional items included for the development of reliable facet scales. All item translations were adjusted through back-translation. Sample 2 participants completed a set of 122 items, dropping 19 items from the Sample 1 item set and adding 23 new items. I constructed eight-item scales for all ten facets of humanism and normativism, as well as fifteen-item short scales for humanism and normativism, through a procedure described in Nilsson (2014). Sample 3 participants completed these short scales in Swedish.

Results

Facet scales

The items comprising each facet scale are presented in Table 1 (Humanism) and Table 2 (Normativism), along with mean values, standard deviations, and corrected correlations, from Samples 1 and 2, between each item and the remaining items of the construct (i.e. humanism or normativism) and the facet of that construct that the item is a part of.

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Table 1. *Humanism facet scales*

	Mean (*SD*)		Item-facet correlation		Item-total correlation	
	US	Swe	US	Swe	US	Swe
View of human nature: Good						
All persons are in themselves valuable	5.89	5.84	.40	.58	.55	.59
	(1.13)	(1.58)				
Human beings are basically good	4.84	5.11	.68	.64	.49	.54
	(1.39)	(1.67)				
People are basically kind and helpful *	4.55	4.74	.58	.72	.45	.58
	(1.26)	(1.53)				
All human beings have an inner potential that they	5.60	5.11	.37	.46	.48	.45
strive to realize	(1.13)	(1.44)				
Human beings are from the start good, even though	5.02	5.45	.43	.59	.39	.52
bad circumstances can make them do bad things	(1.41)	(1.53)				
Although there is good and bad in people, humanity	4.77	-	.63	-	.45	-
as a whole is basically good	(1.37)					
Human nature is basically good *	4.79	4.93	.71	.80	.52	.64
	(1.41)	(1.58)				
When people do good deeds it is almost always out	3.95	3.63	.27	.48	.21	.49
of genuine compassion and care for others	(1.33)	(1.74)				
Interpersonal attitude: Warmth						
Human beings should be loved at all times, because	5.36	5.44	.57	.55	.54	.49
they want and need to be loved	(1.27)	(1.53)				
Human beings should be treated with respect at all	5.30	5.75	.57	.56	.49	.44
times	(1.45)	(1.64)				
When people are in trouble, they need help and	5.61	5.73	.48	.48	.50	.48
should be helped	(1.14)	(1.32)				
Children must be loved so that they can grow up to	5.99	5.84	.46	.34	.56	.33
be fine adults	(1.11)	(1.42)				
To assume that most people are well-meaning brings	5.05	5.22	.42	.24	.47	.41
out the best in others	(1.36)	(1.44)				
Those who err should be forgiven	5.08	5.13	.35	.42	.32	.34
	(1.17)	(1.37)				
No one has the right to humiliate another person	5.14	5.19	.32	.26	.31	.33

	(1.55)	(1.73)				
All persons deserve to be loved	5.84	-	.66	-	.55	-
	(1.30)					

Attitude to affect: Openness

Feelings are the most important aspect of being human, because they give our lives meaning	5.30	5.15	.47	.52	.41	.42
	(1.30)	(1.40)				
You need to be open to your feelings so that you can learn from them and understand who you are	5.74	6.12	.52	.54	.55	.41
	(1.12)	(.95)				
You must always leave yourself open to your own feelings – alien as they may sometimes seem	5.33	5.47	.60	.47	.50	.36
	(1.20)	(1.43)				
There is a unique avenue to reality through the feelings, even when they seem alien	5.05	4.91	.47	.50	.42	.47
	(1.15)	(1.38)				
The changeableness of human feelings makes life more interesting	5.32	5.57	.35	.44	.37	.40
	(1.16)	(1.18)				
People should try to look inward to understand and accept their feelings as they are	5.40	5.70	.52	.56	.43	.50
	(1.11)	(1.02)				
Feelings provide the most important guidance to a person's decisions	4.35	4.48	.37	.49	.29	.35
	(1.22)	(1.52)				
You should go with you feelings so that you do not have to look back in regret for holding back from what you really wanted	4.98	-	.50	-	.42	-
	(1.32)					

Epistemology: Romantic rationalism

The main purpose of education should be to enable the young to discover and create novelty	5.10	5.43	.44	.40	.37	.30
	(1.25)	(1.31)				
Creativity and curiosity are the most important tools in the search for knowledge	5.52	6.01	.50	.35	.47	.41
	(1.17)	(1.18)				
The important thing in science is to strike out into the unknown – right or wrong	4.81	4.82	.23	.47	.17	.28
	(1.41)	(1.62)				
Personal imagination and understanding is crucial to the pursuit of knowledge	5.74	-	.48	-	.50	-
	(1.03)					
A scientist must rely on creativity and intuition	5.19	5.58	.36	.45	.29	.38
	(1.14)	(1.20)				
Learning must always start from your personal interests and experiences	4.96	-	.33	-	.34	-
	(1.46)					
Great achievements require first of all great imagination	5.26	4.46	.47	.47	.47	.30
	(1.35)	(1.65)				

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	US	Swe				
Personal experiences can provide insights about reality that science cannot explain *	5.52 (1.34)	5.58 (1.38)	.27	.17	.39	.42
Political values: Well-being and rights						
The most important purpose of society is to protect people's rights, freedoms, and dignity	5.50 (1.21)	5.98 (0.99)	.52	.58	.51	.41
The most important goal for a society is to make sure that all its members have a chance to lead a good life	5.42 (1.25)	-	.55	-	.56	-
It is necessary to break the laws and rules of society when these lead to unfair treatment of some people	5.23 (1.32)	-	.49	-	.40	-
The most important function of the government is to make sure people are treated in a just and dignified way	5.22 (1.18)	-	.50	-	.50	-
Promotion of the welfare of the people is the most important function of a government	5.18 (1.33)	5.27 (1.49)	.47	.41	.48	.39
We have to question the rules of the society when the well-being of individuals is threatened	5.61 (1.11)	6.10 (1.12)	.47	.60	.38	.37
Society should encourage people to express themselves and follow their own desires	5.37 (1.20)	4.48 (1.50)	.40	.46	.43	.21
Societies that violate human freedoms and rights must be vigorously questioned	5.62 (1.39)	-	.48	-	.41	-

Note: US: Sample 2. Swe: Sample 1. * based on *N* = 84 in Sample 2.

Table 2. *Normativism facet scales*

	Mean (*SD*)		Item-facet correlation		Item-total correlation	
	US	Swe	US	Swe	US	Swe
View of human nature: Bad						
When people do good deeds, it is almost always out of an expectation to receive something in return	3.80 (1.50)	3.43 (1.62)	.37	.49	.34	.47
The bad people in the world outnumber the good people	2.98 (1.42)	-	.50	-	.47	-
People don't really care what happens to the next person *	3.40 (1.48)	2.54 (1.29)	.51	.50	.47	.39
People are naturally unfriendly and unkind *	2.50 (1.24)	1.95 (1.14)	.61	.64	.49	.52
Human beings are from the start primitive and egoistic animals that must be disciplined by society	3.59 (1.46)	3.00 (1.66)	.41	.45	.45	.46
Human beings are basically evil	2.25 (1.37)	2.08 (1.48)	.60	.57	.46	.43
Juvenile delinquency is simply a reflection of the basic evil in human beings – it has always existed in the past and it always will	3.01 (1.47)	2.66 (1.69)	.46	.56	.44	.45
A person can only realize her-/himself by attaining external ideals	3.72 (1.42)	2.20 (1.36)	.32	.35	.38	.44
Interpersonal attitude: Discipline						
Human beings should be treated with respect only when they deserve respect	3.80 (1.68)	2.87 (1.90)	.52	.51	.47	.38
When people are in trouble, they should help themselves and not depend on others	3.75 (1.49)	2.31 (1.42)	.43	.45	.44	.22
Human beings should be loved only when they have acted so that they deserve to be loved	3.04 (1.53)	2.30 (1.49)	.47	.58	.44	.54
Some people respond only to punishment or the threat of punishment	4.55 (1.56)	3.30 (1.88)	.41	.59	.42	.53
It is necessary to be hard and cold hearted toward other people when they deserve it	3.72 (1.62)	-	.52	-	.44	-
Some people can only be changed by humiliating them	3.14 (1.73)	2.79 (1.77)	.48	.61	.51	.49

Item						
When a person feels sorry for himself he should really feel ashamed of himself	3.14 (1.40)	2.26 (1.33)	.34	.37	.42	.32
To assume that most people are well-meaning is asking for trouble	3.56 (1.55)	3.32 (1.70)	.42	.40	.50	.53

Attitude to affect: Control

Item						
Human beings would be lost without reason, because feelings cannot be trusted	3.80 (1.50)	-	.53	-	.43	-
Feelings must be controlled by reason, because they can make you do stupid things	4.14 (1.57)	4.15 (1.75)	.49	.54	.45	.25
Feelings are often an obstacle to seeing how things really are	4.04 (1.63)	-	.51	-	.43	-
You need to be wary of feelings, because they can hurt you and make you feel miserable	3.91 (1.64)	3.17 (1.77)	.50	.59	.49	.21
If sanity is to be preserved, you must guard yourself against the intrusion of feelings which are alien to your nature	3.27 (1.38)	2.47 (1.25)	.50	.58	.51	.44
The changeableness of human feelings is a weakness in human beings	2.96 (1.48)	2.64 (1.58)	.46	.50	.43	.34
Going with your feelings often makes you unhappy in the long run	2.94 (1.34)	-	.43	-	.37	-
There is no surer road to insanity than surrender to the feelings, particularly those which are alien to the self	3.28 (1.45)	3.09 (1.62)	.45	.55	.44	.25

Epistemology: Rigorous empiricism

Item						
The most important task for a scientist is to collect facts about reality through objective observation	5.06 (1.33)	4.89 (1.43)	.35	.37	.23	-.03
Reason has to be continually disciplined and corrected by reality and hard facts	4.27 (1.29)	3.70 (1.58)	.45	.45	.48	.43
To observe objectively and describe in a neutral language is crucial to the pursuit of knowledge	4.45 (1.38)	-	.41	-	.36	-
The trouble with theorizing is that it leads people away from the facts and substitutes opinions for truth	3.37 (1.34)	3.31 (1.46)	.39	.34	.39	.31
Observing the world accurately enables human beings to separate reality from imagination	4.61 (1.36)	4.41 (1.61)	.38	.44	.33	.27
Discipline and rigour are the most important tools in the search for knowledge	3.99 (1.44)	3.26 (1.55)	.35	.44	.36	.24

	US	Swe				
Imagination leads people into self-deception and delusions	2.89 (1.46)	2.20 (1.36)	.33	.42	.50	.47
Education should focus on facts rather than theories	3.37 (1.40)	2.90 (1.41)	.34	.32	.34	.56

Political values: Law and order

The maintenance of law and order is the most important duty of any government	4.59 (1.26)	4.51 (1.58)	.46	.48	.43	.24
People who commit crimes must be punished severely so that they are deterred from repeating the crime	4.98 (1.31)	4.28 (1.70)	.40	.52	.27	.55
A society must enforce its laws and rules strictly in order not to deteriorate	4.54 (1.33)	-	.49	-	.34	-
In order for society to work, there must be clear and fixed rules, and punishment for transgressions	4.55 (1.35)	4.42 (1.57)	.48	.69	.44	.58
The most important function of society is to keep people's destructive impulses under control with laws and rules	4.05 (1.46)	3.00 (1.64)	.49	.39	.41	.30
Anger should be directed at those revolutionaries who undermine law and order	3.07 (1.34)	2.79 (1.55)	.38	.52	.44	.43
Society should not encourage deviant and unwholesome activities	4.78 (1.46)	4.12 (1.78)	.36	.36	.26	.14
It is often necessary to punish people severely in order to get them to conform to the social order	3.40 (1.56)	-	.37	-	.49	-

Note: US: Sample 2. Swe: Sample 1. * based on *N* = 84 in Sample 2.

Short scales

The short humanism and normativism scales contain three items per facet, making them a total of fifteen items each. The items comprising these scales are displayed in Table 3 (Humanism) and Table 4 (Normativism), along with corrected correlations, from Samples 1, 2, and 3, between each item and the remaining items of the respective scale. I have, however, in order to improve the short scales developed earlier (Nilsson, 2014), replaced one of the epistemology items with low item-total correlations in each of the scales.

I substituted the humanism item "The important thing in science is to strike out into the unknown – right or wrong", which had corrected item-total correlations of .19 (Sample 1), .24 (Sample 2), and .20 (Sample 3), for "A scientist must rely on creativity and intuition" (Table 3). This raised Cronbach's alpha from .82 to .83 in Sample 1 and from .74 to .76 in Sample 2. I substituted the normativism item "The most important task for a scientist is to collect facts about reality through objective observation", which had corrected item-total correlations of .25 (Sample 1), .14 (Sample 2), and .21 (Sample 3), for "Imagination leads people into self-deception and delusions" (Table 4). This raised Cronbach's alpha from .78 to .79 in Sample 1 and from .70 to .75 in Sample 2. The correlations between the original short scales and the revised short scales were close to perfect both for humanism, $r = .986$ (Sample 1), $r = .982$ (Sample 2), and for normativism, $r = .986$ (Sample 1), $r = .975$ (Sample 2). This indicates that the revisions did not noticeably affect the content of the scales.

The correlations between the revised short scales and the sum of the facet scales were, $r = .958$ (Sample 1), $r = .939$ (Sample 2) for humanism, and $r = .925$ (Sample 1), $r = .920$ (Sample 2), for normativism, suggesting that the short scales account for between 85% and 92% of the variance of the full scales.

Table 3. *Humanism short scale*

	Item-total correlation		
	US	Swe 1	Swe 2
	α = .83	α = .76	α = .83
All persons are in themselves valuable	.53	.50	.56
Feelings are the most important aspect of being human, because they give our lives meaning	.40	.35	.48
The most important purpose of society is to protect people's rights, freedoms, and dignity	.50	.39	.33
People are basically kind and helpful *	.40	.51	.41
Human beings should be loved at all times, because they want and need to be loved	.51	.44	.53
It is necessary to break the laws and rules of society when these lead to unfair treatment of some people	.36	-	.40
The main purpose of education should be to enable the young to discover and create novelty	.34	.25	.25
You must always leave yourself open to your own feelings – alien as they may sometimes seem	.47	.35	.51
Human beings should be treated with respect at all times	.47	.42	.39
You need to be open to your feelings to learn from them and understand who you are	.52	.40	.47
Creativity and curiosity are the most important tools in the search for knowledge	.43	.39	.58
Human beings are basically good	.45	.45	.25
The most important goal for a society is to make sure that its members have a chance to lead a good life	.55	-	.68
When people are in trouble, they need help and should be helped	.48	.46	.66
A scientist must rely on creativity and intuition	.29	.31	**-**

Note: US: Sample 2. Swe 1: Sample 1. Swe 2: Sample 3. * based on *N* = 84 in Sample 1.

Table 4. *Normativism short scale*

	Item-total correlation		
	US	Swe 1	Swe 2
	α = .79	α = .75	α = .78
Reason has to be continually disciplined and corrected by reality and hard facts	.45	.38	.38
People don't really care what happens to the next person *	.43	.35	.38
Human beings would be lost without reason, because feelings cannot be trusted	.42	-	.48
Human beings should be treated with respect only when they deserve respect	.44	.48	.49
People who commit crimes must be punished severely so that they are deterred from repeating the crime	.23	.41	.46
Feelings must be controlled by reason, because they can make you do stupid things	.44	.37	.42
When people do good deeds, it is almost always out of an expectation to receive something in return	.33	.48	.33
When people are in trouble, they should help themselves and not depend on others	.38	.33	.38
The bad people in the world outnumber the good people	.42	-	.35
The maintenance of law and order is the most important duty of any government	.41	.29	.47
To observe objectively and describe in a neutral language is crucial to the pursuit of knowledge	.42	-	.27
A society must enforce its laws and rules strictly in order not to deteriorate	.32	-	.38
Feelings are often an obstacle to seeing how things really are	.43	-	.40
Human beings should be loved only when they have acted so that they deserve to be loved	.40	.51	.48
Imagination leads people into self-deception and delusions	.43	.46	**-**

Note: US: Sample 2. Swe 1: Sample 1. Swe 2: Sample 3. * based on $N = 84$ in Sample 1.

Discussion

This report has presented facet scales and short scales for humanism and normativism, which were originally developed and evaluated in an earlier paper (Nilsson, 2014), along with item-level statistics. Although the item-total correlations are, in general, adequate, a few limitations can be noted. First, some of the means of the humanism items are very high and some of the means of the normativism items are very low, suggesting that the humanistic statements are more socially desirable than the normativistic ones. We cannot know, from the present findings, whether social desirability also affects factorial structure and decreases predictive validity, and, if so, whether the evaluative component could be reduced. Second, the scales presented here have, hitherto, mostly been used in Western, individualistic countries. Coordinating item selection in, for example, the domain of epistemology, between Sweden and the US, has already been challenging. It is possible that the adaptation of the scales to other cultural settings will require further revision. Third, the replacement of the original polar response format (Tomkins, 1964) with a Likert format makes the scales practically useful and allows them to conform to modern psychometric standards. But we can, as suggested by Stone and Schaffner (1997), not rule out that something has been lost in the process. The utility of the polar response format, which pits different worldviews against each other, is worth exploring in its own right in future research.

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