



Being environmentally responsible: Cosmopolitan orientation predicts pro-environmental behaviors



Angela K.-Y. Leung^{a,*}, Kelly Koh^a, Kim-Pong Tam^b

^a School of Social Sciences, Level 4, 90 Stamford Road, Singapore Management University, Singapore 178903, Singapore

^b Division of Social Science, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Clear Water Bay, Hong Kong

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 October 2014

Received in revised form

17 May 2015

Accepted 27 May 2015

Available online 28 May 2015

Keywords:

Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitan orientation

Globalization

Environmental concerns

ABSTRACT

Much research has examined individuals' values and beliefs as antecedents or correlates of pro-environmental behaviors (PEB). We approach this question from the novel perspective of individuals' cosmopolitan orientation (CO). We define CO as made up of three essential qualities. First, cultural openness captures individuals' receptiveness to immerse in and learn from other cultures. Second, global prosociality denotes a sense of collective moral obligation to universally respect and promote basic human rights. Third, respect for cultural diversity concerns high tolerance of and appreciation for cultural differences. Across two studies, we validated the Cosmopolitan Orientation Scale (COS) with theoretically related criterion measures across Singaporean, Australian, and American samples. Analyses showed good fit with a three-factor model. Next, we demonstrated the theoretical utility of CO, in particular the global prosociality subscale, in predicting PEB above and beyond pro-environmental worldview, motivation, and belief. We discussed the implications of studying cosmopolitanism on environmental psychology.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Globalization has become a potent and inevitable force that enhances interconnectedness and integration among people, institutions, organizations, and governments in most parts of the world (Chiu, Gries, Torelli, & Cheng, 2011; Leung, Qiu, & Chiu, 2014). It has transformed individuals' relations to and their identifications with their nation, culture, ecology, work and family (Croucher, 2004; Fiss & Hirsch, 2005; Kellner, 2002; Robertson & White, 2007), impacting both individuals' everyday life and international relations across cultural, economic, political, and ecological realms at unprecedented levels.

Despite the upsurge of research interest in the concept of globalization in contemporary social science disciplines, until recently psychologists have largely remained impassive toward this concept (Bandura, 2001; Chiu et al., 2011). In the present research, we seek to contribute to the globalization scholarship by studying the link between individuals' cosmopolitan orientation (CO) and their environmental consciousness. Specifically, CO refers to the attitudinal and value orientations of individuals who immerse as

part of the globalized world. We believe that cosmopolitanism, though understudied, is an important concept in environmental psychology for at least two reasons. First, a cosmopolitan conception enhances one's awareness and knowledge of the global and transnational scope of environmental issues. Second, adherence to cosmopolitan ideals affords a globally rooted sense of citizenship and morality that strengthens one's perceived connections with people in other parts of the world. This in turn encourages people to place precedence on intensity of needs over proximity of needs (Contorno, 2012), thus motivating them to eradicate environmental problems for the well-being of not only those in their own nation-state but also the whole humanity. In this light, we set out to demonstrate the theoretical utility of individuals' endorsement of cosmopolitan qualities in predicting their pro-environmental behaviors (PEB) when extant concepts of environmental worldviews, motivations, and beliefs are taken into account. To achieve this research goal, we develop a psychometric scale (i.e., the Cosmopolitan Orientation Scale, or COS) to measure individuals' CO. Theoretically, this new scale can enrich our understanding of the value, attitudinal, and behavioral orientations of cosmopolitan individuals. Practically, the concept of CO bears important implications for encouraging environmentalism in the public and assessing the degree of environmental consciousness in different populations across the globe.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: angelaleung@smu.edu.sg (A.K.-Y. Leung).

2. The construct of cosmopolitan orientation

2.1. Globalization and cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is an old idea, but is given a new context. First coined by Diogenes of Sinope (c. 412 B. C.) in Ancient Greece, the Greek term “Kosmopolitēs” means “citizens of the world.” The notion of cosmopolitanism is highly intertwined with the process of globalization, yet they refer to things that occur at different levels. As Beck and Sznaider (2010) succinctly put it:

“globalization is something taking place ‘out there’, cosmopolitanization happens ‘from within’... The question, then, is: how would we operationalize this conception of the world as a collection of different cultures and divergent modernities? Cosmopolitanization should be chiefly conceived of as globalization from *within*, as *internalized* cosmopolitanism.” (p. 9)

Notably, although globalization and cosmopolitanism are closely linked concepts, globalization is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for cosmopolitanization (Woodward, Skrbis, & Bean, 2008). On the one hand, people may have encountered globalization, but do not necessarily assume a cosmopolitan outlook to appreciate cultural diversity and to welcome the infusion of new experiences. Rather, they might hold that the hegemonic dominance of the global culture would eventually lead to erosion of local cultures. Such perception could spur their contested reactions to withdraw contacts with diverse cultures and to recede back to their comfort zone (see Chiu & Cheng, 2007, 2010; Chiu & Hong, 2006). On the other hand, people do not have to be geographically mobile in order to come into contact with different cultures. For example, nowadays with the power of the social media, individuals can develop cosmopolitan qualities even without extensively traveling to foreign places.

2.2. Three qualities representing a cosmopolitan orientation

Cosmopolitanism is a rather elusive concept. It has been conceptualized as a perspective or a state of mind (Hannerz, 1996), a set of attitudes, values, behaviors, and practices (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002; Woodward et al., 2008), a learnable skill (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999), and a personality trait (Cannon & Yaprak, 2002). A major gap in the literature of cosmopolitanism attests to defining the core attributes of the construct, given that much theoretical writings but relatively scant empirical research dominate this literature. To the best of our knowledge, there is no empirically established theory to provide the field a commonly shared conceptualization of the cosmopolitanism construct. We have therefore comprehensively reviewed the literature in an attempt to summarize common understanding of what cosmopolitanism represents. Our review of the literature has convinced us to propose three essential qualities of being a cosmopolitan. We then followed up with systematic empirical tests in three countries to confirm the psychometric properties of this dimensional view of CO.

First, cosmopolitan individuals are found to be receptive and outwardly open towards people, places, and experiences that belong to other cultures (Merton, 1968; Skrbis, Kendall, & Woodward, 2004). For instance, Hannerz (1990) characterized cosmopolitans as having a high level of intellectual and aesthetic openness to engage with divergent cultural experiences. Konrad (1984) described cosmopolitans as intellectuals who travel regularly but can easily feel at home when abroad. With an open mindset, cosmopolitan individuals are highly receptive to other cultures and are eager to learn through connecting to people and

places beyond their local community. As suggested by the contemporary literature, this outward stance of cultural openness is often assumed to exemplify the core cosmopolitan characteristic (e.g., Hannerz, 1990; Kurasawa, 2004; Roudometof, 2005; Szerszynski & Urry, 2002), and therefore has become the dominant way of operationalizing the construct in existing measurements (e.g., Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009). Thus, we identify the first dimension of CO as *cultural openness*.

Second, it was theorized that cosmopolitan individuals embody a sense of global justice in that they recognize local and foreign people alike as being equally human and that they consider basic human rights as universally applicable to everyone in the world (Kant, 1991). Based upon the beliefs that all humans are born equal and that morality should be rooted globally (vs. locally), they tend to advocate a prosocial orientation to promote benevolence and generosity among human beings regardless of nationalities. As cosmopolitan individuals have often been characterized as aspiring towards universal affiliation with humankind (Bilsky, Janik, & Schwartz, 2011), they uphold a sense of collective moral obligation and endorse responsibilities to build a better world for all (Yeğenoğlu, 2005). Accordingly, cosmopolitans are also less likely to endorse ideologies of social dominance or inequality. We therefore identify the second dimension of CO as *global prosociality*.

Third, cosmopolitan individuals have been described as people who identify, respect, and protect cultural differences (Szerszynski & Urry, 2002, 2006) to the extent that they afford a “delight in difference” (Hannerz, 1990). Cosmopolitans’ world-openness (i.e., the first dimension) provides them an impetus to gain global awareness and recognition of divergent cultural experiences. It follows that they are at an advantage to acquire cultural competence for navigating between different cultures (Hall, 2002). Some globalization researchers contend that the impact of globalization, rather than dissolve national boundaries and accelerate the emergence of a homogenous global culture, as often assumed, actually facilitates the differentiation of national cultures and affords active promotion and preservation of cultural differences (Ger, 1999). With globalization sharpening cultural contrasts, it affords and supports cosmopolitan individuals’ tendency to search for cultural differences rather than uniformity (Hannerz, 1996). Presumably, cosmopolitan individuals presuppose positive attitude towards differences and they serve as “cultural brokers and gatekeepers” to interlink cultures and preserve different cultural practices (Hannerz, 1992, p. 258). We therefore identify the third dimension of CO as *respect for cultural diversity*.

It is worthwhile to point out the seemingly paradoxical meaning of cosmopolitanism in its Greek origin. The composition of the term “cosmopolis” is made up of two words: “cosmo” meaning the universal order of the nature and “polis” meaning the variable order of a society (Ribeiro, 2001). As a way to resolve this paradox that acknowledges both universality and variability, cosmopolitan individuals might adhere to a universalistic minimum by upholding the most basic and substantive norms at all costs (Beck & Sznaider, 2010). As long as they are certain that these minimal universalistic norms are protected, they appreciate diverse cultural forms and expressions and respect the difference of others. In this light, we presuppose that the qualities of global prosociality and respect for cultural diversity go hand in hand to epitomize a cosmopolitan ideal that seeks to reconcile and unite similarities and differences (Ribeiro, 2001).

In a recent research, Woodward et al. (2008) analyzed survey data from a representative sample of Australians to look into the attitudes and behaviors associated with cosmopolitan traits. Their findings largely coincide with the three dimensions of CO discussed above. Their data showed evidence of distinct domains for the expression of cosmopolitanism: increased flow of cultural goods,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7245760>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7245760>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)