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Calling and WEIRDness across cultures

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	1
1. THE CALLING CONSTRUCT	2
1.1 <i>From its origin to the present day</i>	2
1.2 <i>The Neoclassical and Modern views</i>	2
1.3 <i>A definition of Calling</i>	3
1.4 <i>Differentiating Calling from related concepts</i>	5
1.5 <i>The most important calling scales</i>	6
1.6 <i>The Positive and Negative effects of Calling</i>	7
1.6.1 Some data on the positive effects	7
1.6.2 A quick view on the dark side of Calling	8
1.7 <i>The Question of Generalizability</i>	9
2. A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF CALLING	9
2.1 <i>Theoretical background to cross-cultural variability</i>	9
2.2 <i>Work values and cultural influences</i>	10
2.3 <i>Work centrality and its connection with calling</i>	12
2.4 <i>Exploring cultural variation in the concept of calling</i>	15
2.4.1 Western countries	15
2.4.2 Asian countries	16
2.4.3 African countries.....	17
2.4.4 Israel and the Jewish culture	18
2.5 <i>Educational systems: shaping career path and calling</i>	19
2.5.1 The influence of Educational Philosophy.....	20
2.5.2 Role of Vocational training and Career guidance	20
2.6 <i>WEIRDness and its effects on Calling</i>	21
3. The GFS, Weirdness and Calling.	26
3.1 <i>The Global Flourishing Study</i>	26
3.2 <i>The GFS Registry</i>	27
3.3 <i>The GFS and WEIRDness</i>	28
3.4 <i>Analysing the GFS's data on Life Purpose</i>	29
3.4.1 Life purpose and Calling.....	29
3.4.2 Data Analysis.....	29
3.5 <i>What the results mean for Calling</i>	33
4 Conclusion	33
<i>Limitations and future directions</i>	35

Abstract

The exploration of calling and vocational aspirations extends well beyond individualistic and WEIRD perspectives. This paper delves into the concept of calling, its many definitions and effects, and what constructs influence it. A cross cultural analysis of calling is done to challenge the concept of generalizability and uncover explicit differences in an individual's calling experience and understanding. The concept of WEIRDness is addressed as it is tied to the research of the Global Flourishing Study, an ambitious longitudinal project, that aims to bring transparent and collaborative change to vocational psychology, e.g.,. Finally, the research delves into data analysis from the GFS and draws some initial conclusions on the WEIRDness-Calling correlation. This paper confirms Henrich et al. (2010), revealing WEIRDness as a negative predictor of Career Calling. The study's insights provide a greater understanding of the Calling construct and the economic, cultural, and religious factors influencing it, suggesting further, directed research.

Keywords: Career Calling; Cross-Cultural Analysis; WEIRDness; Global Flourishing Study.

1. THE CALLING CONSTRUCT

1.1 From its origin to the present day

Historically, the idea that the full range of occupations can be viewed as a calling dates at least to the 16th century. At that time arguably the most important Protestant reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin developed the idea that all “earthly” occupations can hold spiritual significance. Their perspective was affirmed and extended by the Puritans by recognizing that one’s gifts formed the basis for one’s calling. This long history contrasts with a much shorter period when it comes to research in social science on the functions and roles of calling in people's lives and work. From the 1990s till now, research on the topic has grown exponentially and offers a more broad but not yet complete view on the role of calling in people’s livelihood.

As Shoshana R. Dobrow et al. (2023) observed, more than 80% of empirical research on calling has been published since 2011.

1.2 The Neoclassical and Modern views

One of the biggest problems for researchers interested in the calling construct is that there is no clear and consensual definition in literature. So, before we can give a definition to Calling, we must identify the biggest differences between definitions. Thompson (2019) acknowledges this problem and starts by identifying two different fields that reflect different assumptions about the core elements of the calling experience

The Neoclassical view is more traditional and anchored to the religious origins of the concept of calling and aligns perfectly with the Protestant beliefs. There are many elements to spotlight, first of all the Neoclassical view presumes that every person has a specific domain to which they are called. Therefore, it implies that it is the duty of each individual to find their destined calling, both for themselves and their “human family”. Core concepts are such as destiny, duty, research and discovery.

The Modern view presumes that the concept of calling has moved on from its classic roots and is now more aligned with modern individual needs such as self-actualization, self-expression and self-fulfillment. A Calling is meaningful because it implies pursuing passions rather than a sense of social duty as the neo-classical approach implies. Wrzesniewski et al. (1997, p. 22) studied people's relation with their work and suggested that "a person with a calling works not for financial gain or career advancement, but instead for the fulfillment that doing the work brings to the individual."

Although there is a clear distinction between Neoclassical and Modern views as calling, it is important to recognize that most conceptualizations are neither purely neoclassical nor purely modern (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019). Every particular view could be placed on a continuum between Neoclassical and Modern types, some leaning more to classical ideologies and others to more modern ones. As Maslow theorized in his later works, yet way before the construct of calling became a subject of scientific scrutiny "the calling experience for self-actualized people, is not about either inner or outer requiredness independently, but about the matching of the one with the other". In Maslow's work, calling was equated with self-transcendence. And when that matching happens, an individual perceives a sense of harmony, inevitability, or destiny—the fit just feels right

1.3 A definition of Calling

As Duffy and Dik (2013) noticed, this debate over the "right" definition is arguably more of a linguistic question than a scientific one, particularly given evidence that research participants are also divided in terms of how they understand the term. Wrzesniewski (2012) also summarized, "it is a sign of the evolving and dynamic nature of research on callings that the definition of callings is the subject of ongoing debate".

The work by Bellah et al. (1985), is a great starting point to try and give a complete definition of calling. Their research identifies and distinguishes three relations people can have with their work: as Jobs, Careers and Callings. People who have jobs are mainly interested in the material benefits and don't seek or receive any type of reward from it.

People that have a careers orientation toward work have a deeper personal investment not only through monetary gain but also through advancement within the occupational

structure. Finally, people with Callings find that their work is inseparable from their life, they do not work for financial gain or career advancement but for the fulfillment that doing that job brings to them. Dik and Duffy (2009) identified three components that, when combined, were emblematic of a calling in the work domain. The first being a notion of an external summons, if an individual feels ‘called’ to a specific type of work, this necessarily implies a ‘caller’, which may come from a form of higher power, the needs of society, a family legacy, or the needs of one’s country. The second component is that a person’s approach to work aligns with her or his broader sense of purpose in life. The third component is that a person’s career is prosocially oriented, individuals with a calling use their job to directly or indirectly help others or advance the greater good.

Elangovan, Pinder, and McLean (2010) defined calling as “a course of action in pursuit of pro-social intentions embodying the convergence of an individual’s sense of what he or she would like to do, should do, and actually does.” With this definition they identify three fundamental features constant across most interpretations. First, all suggest an orientation toward action, the emphasis is on doing rather than simply being, a calling therefore refers to a course of action. Second, they feature a sense of clarity of purpose, direction, meaning and personal mission such that one who is called identifies fully with the course of action. Third, all imply pro-social intentions as perceived by the individual with the calling. Not only is there a sense of personal purpose but also, to varying degrees, an other-focused purpose.

Furthermore, Dik and Duffy suggested that individuals endorse a calling along a spectrum and described calling as an ongoing process rather than something to be discovered once and for all, and proposed that “callings often change over time”.

This conceptualization of calling has informed the most widely used instrument to assess calling in empirical research, the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ).

Finally, Bunderson and Thompson (2009) defined calling as “that place in the occupational division of labor in society that one feels destined to fulfill by virtue of particular gifts, talents, and/or idiosyncratic life opportunities.”

It is essential to consider the many factors influenced and influencing one’s calling, particularly when conducting research on it.

From the many definitions we can conclude that Calling is influenced from both internal and external summons, that produce an action for both ourselves and others.

I personally see merit in all these definitions and would summarize Calling as a dynamic process of action, employed from visceral and volitional summons, to derive a sense of purpose and that holds other-oriented values as sources of motivation.

I doubt there will ever be a clear definition on Calling, which is both a blessing and a curse for research, allowing a never-ending amount of research but possibly limiting empirical results. That being said many definitions have grown in popularity and it is very interesting to compare the results of similar researches.

1.4 Differentiating Calling from related concepts

The combination of the three features outlined by Elangovan (2010) – action orientation, convergence of selves, and pro-social intention – differentiates callings from concepts such as work (energy expended for productive use), jobs (non-permanent financially driven work), occupations (ways of obtaining material rewards and providing financial support for oneself and others), and careers (the sequence and combination of work and non-work roles held by an individual over time).

Another distinction is made by Dik and Duffy (2009), emphasizing the distinction of Calling and Vocation. Both individuals with callings and vocations connect their work to a sense of purpose and meaningfulness toward other-oriented ends, but only individuals with a calling perceive the impetus to approach work in this manner as origination from a source external to the self. In the same study Dik and Duffy identify constructs such as work centrality (Dubin, 1956), work commitment (Loscocco, 1989), work and job involvement (Kanungo, 1982), and career salience (Greenhaus, 1971) and conclude that “the meaning-making and pro-social aspects of calling and vocation are not captured by these constructs”. Finally, Personal Engagement (Kahn, 1990) can be considered a related concept, as people with high levels of calling may display high personal engagement, but as Dik and Duffy (2007) stated “the episodic basis of engagement differs from the more stable calling and vocation orientations”. Yet, it has been found that a calling is highly unstable (Vianello et al., 2018)

1.5 The most important calling scales

In the past years, many different measurement scales have been created, some follow the more traditional definition while others a more modern one. Not all measures have demonstrated adequate reliability and validity, suggesting more work has to be done on developing measures. Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) built the Work Orientation Scale, comprising 18 self-report statements with items for job, career and calling with a binary response (yes/no). Their definition of calling is that of “work that is inseparable from one’s life and motivated by the fulfillment that doing the work brings to the individual”

Steger and Dik (2006), create The Brief Calling Scale which measures calling with only two items hence cannot capture the complexities of the construct. Also, the items reference “calling” but do not provide a clear definition. Bunderson & Thompson, (2009), built the Neoclassical Calling Questionnaire, which contains a 6-item context-specific subscale (for zookeepers; e.g., “I was meant to work with animals”) and a 6-item context-free subscale (for masters students; e.g., “I was meant to do the work I do”).

Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas’ (2011) Calling Scale measured calling with a 12-item scale, adapting items to each sample’s domain (wording items for musicians in terms of “music”, artists’ items in terms of “art” and so on). They identify Calling as a “consuming, meaningful passion people experience toward a domain”

Duffy, Allan, & Bott (2012) develop the Living One’s Calling Scale, a 6-item scale measuring whether the respondent is engaged in work resonant with a sense of calling (e.g., “I am living out my calling right now in my job”). Although these scales are some of the most used, some limitations for research are present, many existing measures in fact are unidimensional, whereas career calling is a multidimensional construct. Only two multidimensional scales were identified by Anna Praskova et al. (2015): the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (Dik et al., 2012) including six subscales and two composite scales and the Multidimensional Measure of Calling (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012) that taps three domains (identification with one’s work and person–environmental fit, sense and meaning and value-driven behavior, and transcendent guiding force; 3 items each)

1.6 The Positive and Negative effects of Calling

1.6.1 Some data on the positive effects

Duffy et al. (2022) observed that one of the more intriguing findings from the literature on work as a calling is the distinction between perceiving a calling and living one out.

Although the experience of feeling a calling to a particular line of work is common (White et al., 2021), the ability of individuals to live out that calling is often dependent on vocational privilege – having the means and opportunity to choose jobs that fit with one's calling (Duffy et al., 2018).

The findings propose that it is only by living out one's calling that one can benefit from its positive effects and that solely perceiving a calling may potentially have negative effects on one's wellbeing. From this study they were able to conclude that living a calling, compared to perceiving a calling, was more strongly correlated with career commitment ($r = .68$ vs. $.33$), work meaning ($r = .62$ vs. $.34$), job satisfaction ($r = .52$ vs. $.23$) and with life satisfaction ($r = .48$ vs. $.17$).

Duffy, Allan, and Dik (2011) analyzed data from 370 university employees and found that those endorsing a calling on the BCS reported greater career commitment, organizational commitment, and lower withdrawal intentions, with career commitment serving as a mediator. Adults endorsing a calling were more committed to their organization and less likely to withdraw because they were more committed to their careers. From an analysis of various previous studies Duffy and Dik (2013) found that adults endorsing a calling were more committed to their organization and less likely to withdraw because they were more committed to their careers find meaning in their work. These results are consistent with findings from qualitative studies of academics, zookeepers, and psychologists (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Duffy, Allan, et al., 2012; Oates, Hall, & Anderson, 2005; Sellers, Thomas, Batt, & Ostman, 2005). Further studies from Duffy et al. (2013) with similar results, found that when someone both feels and is living out their calling, they tend to be highly satisfied at work and with life. Isaksen (2000) found that employees in highly repetitive jobs often derive meaning from work, with the effect of reduced stress symptoms.

1.6.2 A quick view on the dark side of Calling

Although the results of many studies paint a very positive picture of calling, many other studies directly or indirectly reveal a darker side of calling.

A great example comes from Duffy et al. (2016b), suggesting that people who perceive they have a calling but are unable to live it experience a sense of regret and lower satisfaction. The basic idea is that living out a calling requires a lot of investment and energy, which can lead to negative effects that may overthrow the positive ones.

RD Duffy et al. (2016b) discusses theories and researches which suggest that living a calling might be negatively correlated to satisfaction when specifically high levels of Burnout, Workaholism and Exploitation are present. Vinje and Mittelmark's (2007) qualitative study found that nurses with a calling often expressed feelings of burnout. The link between living a calling and burnout is noteworthy because burnout has negative relations with other work outcomes such as job performance, commitment and most of all work satisfaction. When it comes to Workaholism it is possible in fact that people with a strong sense of calling may sacrifice parts of their personal time for their work. Studies such as Duffy, Foley, et al. (2012) and Thompson's (2009) respectively found Psychologists and Zookeepers living a calling made many sacrifices in their non-work domain for their work. Exploitation may also be a problem in workers with a strong sense of calling. As Bunderson and Thompson (2009) noted, it would appear that the increased sense of meaning many individuals with a calling experience is often accompanied by profound sacrifices, particularly in the domain of organizational exploitation.

From these many studies it is possible to conclude that the dark side is present when a person with a calling is not in the correct conditions to positively live their calling out.

This can be due to many different variables but it is clear that many originate from bad leadership or exploiting a worker experiencing a calling. It is apparent that to avoid the dark sides of calling many internal and external factors have to be favorable to the individual and his calling experience. Thus, to summarize, living a calling can bring great change in an individual's career, from personal satisfaction to better productivity and a wider view of a greater working environment. At the same time, it can be seen as a double-edged sword, because of possible negative effects. This does not exclude interest in a topic so wide and intriguing, it is in fact researchers' duty to bring empirical conclusions on calling in order to help understand and expand this ideal.

1.7 The Question of Generalizability

An important question that has impacted research on work as a calling is that of generalizability. The idea is that of understanding if the calling construct and the results of research are of relevance to workers in any setting. The three big areas of interest are those of Culture, Occupation and Socioeconomic boundaries.

The first area will be the focus of the next chapters, as most of the research conducted on calling is conducted on western societies with heavily Christian populations. It is important to question if the construct will have the same meaning, relevance and effects in non-western countries and other religious settings.

The second area can be explained by Bellah et al. (1985) that indicate research on calling is frequently conducted in work setting called ‘economically marginal but symbolically significant’, such as zookeeping, animal shelters, firefighting and basically jobs where calling may be very present. It is complicated to understand if calling is applicable and present in every occupation. The third area considers that for much of the world’s population, work may not be about meaning and purpose but only about survival. Arguably the notion of work as a calling may be considered an elitist concept with limited relevance outside of privileged countries.

2. A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF CALLING

2.1 Theoretical background to cross-cultural variability

Cross-cultural differences in career calling refer to variations in individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to their sense of calling within different cultural contexts. As previously discussed, researchers have long acknowledged the history of the conceptualization of calling as rooted in Western Protestantism (Dik & Duffy, 2009); therefore, generalizability is one of the most important topics that modern calling research focuses on. This is necessary because it has become obvious that the construct cannot be treated equally in very diverse environments. The recognition of the importance of cultural context in shaping individuals' perceptions of calling has led researchers to investigate how this construct manifests differently across distinct circumstances. The theoretical foundations underpinning research on cross-cultural variability in career calling are multifaceted, drawing upon insights from various disciplines and theoretical

frameworks. Both vocational psychology and cultural psychology contribute greatly to research, respectively focusing on occupational decision-making, vocational behaviour, and the ways culture influences human behaviour, cognition, and emotion.

The aim of this section is to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations and conceptual frameworks that inform research on cross-cultural variability in career calling. Through a synthesis of theoretical insights and empirical evidence, we aim to explore how cultural values, beliefs, norms, and practices shape individuals' perceptions and experiences of career calling, as well as the implications of cross-cultural variability in career calling for career development, organisational behaviour, and overall life satisfaction. While current research might not offer empirical explanations for all cross-cultural differences, numerous studies contribute to our comprehension of essential factors that shape varying interpretations and encounters with the concept of calling. The current chapter explores what I believe are the six most important influences on perceiving, pursuing, and living a calling.

2.2 Work values and cultural influences

Work values are beliefs tightly connected to an individual's work and career. They shape individuals' attitudes, behaviours, and, over time, decisions related to their professional lives. What makes these values complicated is that they can vary greatly. In the past century, many scales have been developed to empirically understand these values. The Work Values Inventory (WVI) is a psychological assessment tool developed by Donald Super, a pioneer in the field of vocational psychology. The WVI is designed to assess individuals' values and priorities for work and career. Its aims are to identify the factors that individuals value the most in their work lives, and it consists of a series of items individuals must answer using a Likert scale. By completing the inventory, it is possible to gain insights into the person's values, priorities, aspirations, and career choices. The WVI measures many work dimensions that can impact a worker's experience, some of the most interesting being: "Supervisory Relationships" - measures work that is carried out under a supervisor; "Altruism" and "Associates" - measure work and its ability to contribute to the welfare of others and to be in contact with fellow workers; "Independence" - measures work that permits one to work his or her own way;

“Creativity” – work that permits one to invent, design, and develop new ideas; “Way of life” – work that permits one to live the kind of life he/she wants.

A model of national culture that presents some analogies with the WVI is that of Hofstede. His Cultural Dimension Index is a framework for understanding cultural differences across nations. The CDI was developed in the 1970s and is based on extensive research in more than 70 countries. It has been widely used in cross-cultural research and is a great way to understand cultural differences and their impact on different aspects of society. The theory currently proposes six cultural dimensions that capture key aspects of cultural variation. The first is “power distance”, and it reflects the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect an unequal distribution of power. High power distance corresponds to strict hierarchies and greater acceptance of authority, while low values correspond to cultures emphasising equality and egalitarianism. The second dimension is “Individualism”, which measures the individualism-collectivism continuum, with individualistic cultures valuing independence and personal achievement and collectivistic cultures emphasising cooperation, loyalty, and community. The third dimension is “Masculinity”, a slightly more complicated measure that evaluates the masculine or feminine traits of a culture, with some examples being competitiveness and assertiveness for “masculinity” and cooperation and quality of life for “femininity”. The fourth is “Uncertainty avoidance” and it reflects the extent to which individuals feel threatened by unpredictable situations. The fifth is “Long-term vs. short-term orientation” and distinguishes between cultures that prioritise long-term planning and short-term goals. Finally, Hofstede developed the most recent dimension, “Indulgence vs. Restraint”, which measures the extent to which a society allows for gratification and enjoying life versus controlling those desires through strict norms.

By comparing the WVI and the CDI, we can start to understand the many similarities and influences culture has on individuals’ work values. Both indexes have been of great use to vocational psychology and cultural studies. In 2012, Vas Taras et. al. aimed to build on Hofstede’s research by raising questions about its generalizability. They argued his CDI was not a proper representation because it didn’t fairly represent a generalised population. Many countries had less than a hundred respondents, and all participants were

a convenience sample of employees in a single organisation, IBM. Furthermore, the article sought to test if the data collected in the 70s were still relevant and how they had changed over time. Traditionally, it has been assumed that culture is effectively unchangeable, but Hofstede stressed that it is an extremely slow process that should be measured in generations and centuries, not decades. A portion of Hofstede's sample was in fact assessed twice during 4 years, and "from a comparison between the two survey rounds, it became clear that there had been a worldwide shift on some questions" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 53). Vas Taras (2012) collected data from a wide range of sources, that reported measurements of Hofstede's cultural dimensions across different countries and time points. By synthesising this data into a meta-analysis, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the temporal stability and variability of cultural dimensions. The results show "Hofstede's scores always have the strongest correlations with the meta-analytic scores of the 1980s and the weakest with the scores representing the 2000s" (Taras, 2012). For example, Masculinity scores decreased from 0.85 in the 80s to 0.56 in the 2000s. At that rate of decline, none of Hofstede's scores will be able to represent the world's culture by 2050. Overall, while Hofstede's national cultural scores have been widely used, it is important to recognise their limits. In terms of Work values and Cultural influences, we can conclude that longitudinal research is needed to properly assess the continued changes. Both constructs are fundamental when it comes to understanding the complex mechanisms behind different perceptions and experiences of calling.

2.3 Work centrality and its connection with calling

For most individuals, work plays an important role in life, taking up a lot of time and energy and determining their economic stability, life choices, and life outcomes. Work centrality refers to the extent to which work is central or important to an individual's life and identity. It reflects the significance that individuals attribute to their work in defining who they are and how they perceive themselves in relation to their careers. Like work values, work centrality can manifest in different ways and is influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cultural values. Some individuals may have a strong vocational identity, while others may prioritise career advancement and success. For this reason, in the past decades, many papers have studied the effects of Work centrality, finding

significant correlations with Job satisfaction, Work engagement, Well-being and most importantly Career calling. Nevertheless, until 2007, very little research had been done to study the possibility of cultural differences in Work centrality. Hatrup et al. (2007) “examined relationships at the individual level of analysis between work group collectivism, work centrality, pride in work, and the moderating effects of nations on these relationships”. The study gathers participants from Ecuador, Germany, India, Mexico, and the United States to examine if work centrality functions similarly across these samples and to find “the extent to which national culture moderates the relationships between collectivist values and work centrality and pride in work across five

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
<u>Ecuador</u>					
1. Work group collectivism	5.39	.77	(.68)		
2. Work centrality	3.75	1.38	.29**	(.83)	
3. Pride in work	6.08	.82	.42**	.20**	(.64)
<u>Germany</u>					
1. Work group collectivism	4.76	.85	(.81)		
2. Work centrality	3.09	1.03	.16*	(.79)	
3. Pride in work	5.41	.81	.34**	.29**	(.71)
<u>India</u>					
1. Work group collectivism	5.33	.87	(.68)		
2. Work centrality	5.37	1.07	.28**	(.72)	
3. Pride in work	5.95	.91	.27**	.26**	(.59)
<u>Mexico</u>					
1. Work group collectivism	5.40	.86	(.69)		
2. Work centrality	3.98	1.40	.25**	(.80)	
3. Pride in work	6.27	.81	.39**	.22*	(.67)
<u>United States</u>					
1. Work group collectivism	4.85	.83	(.76)		
2. Work centrality	3.36	1.17	.28**	(.78)	
3. Pride in work	6.03	.80	.28**	.12**	(.77)

countries”. The study hypothesises that individual-level work group collectivism will relate positively to individual work centrality. To test this hypothesis, Hatrup et al. proposed a long questionnaire including items relating to work values, work beliefs, and personality dimensions. To measure work centrality, they “adapted five of the six work involvement (i.e., work centrality) items developed by Kanungo (1982a), and presented the items with 7-point Likert-type response scales, with anchors -strongly disagree-to-strongly agree”. Higher scores on this measure indicated higher levels of work centrality. As can be seen below, work group collectivism was significantly correlated with work centrality and pride in work in each sample. All coefficients were positive and statistically

significant, indicating that higher levels of work centrality were associated with higher levels of work group collectivism and pride in work.

Follow-up tests indicated a higher mean of work centrality in India than the other nations and a significantly lower mean in Germany than the other countries. The results of the current study are consistent with the view that “those who identify more with groups at work also develop internalised standards that place work as a central life interest”. “Individuals who identify with others at work and, by implication, are willing to subordinate individual interests to the interests of the group also see work as a central life interest “. These results support the idea that work centrality would be higher among collectivists. In fact, the pattern of differences between countries in work-group collectivism in the study is almost exactly the same as the ranking of these same countries in Hofstede’s (1980) research. As many authors have noted, work centrality is one of the most important constructs relevant to commitment to work. Workers with low levels of work centrality may be the most likely to withdraw from the organisation, showing low levels of job satisfaction and possibly obstructing individuals from living out their calling. Other studies found a positive correlation between work centrality and calling. Duffy and Dik (2013) observed that individuals who viewed work as central to their identity were more likely to report a strong sense of calling in their chosen career paths.

Work centrality can shape how individuals perceive their calling. When work is a significant part of an individual’s identity, they may be more likely to interpret their career as a calling, viewing it as a central aspect of who they are and deriving a sense of purpose and meaning from their work. Work centrality may also drive individuals to pursue opportunities for growth and advancement. The pursuit of these goals can contribute to developing a calling. When we give importance to our work, we seek fulfilment of our calling.

2.4 Exploring cultural variation in the concept of calling

The notion of a "calling" transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, yet its interpretation and expression vary significantly across different societies and belief systems. In this chapter, I want to explore some of the most interesting differences that shape very different ideas of calling.

2.4.1 Western countries

The idea of calling has strong roots in Protestant Christianity, which valued hard work, diligence, and vocational calling. Across westernised countries, there is a common desire for personal fulfilment and satisfaction at work. That being said, there are still some differences when it comes to interpretations of calling. In English-speaking countries, the term "calling" is commonly used to refer to a strong inner urge or conviction to pursue a particular life path that aligns with one's values and talents. It often conveys a sense of divine or spiritual guidance. In French, the concept may be translated as "appell" or "vocation"; the first can convey a strong inner calling towards a particular path or purpose in life, while the second may be associated with a divine calling to a specific profession or religious life. In German, it may be translated as "Berufung"; it emphasises the notion of a vocational calling or mission in one's career, often with philosophical undertones. In Italian, it can be translated to "vocazione" or "chiamata", with the second conveying the notion of being called or summoned to a specific role or purpose in life. In Dutch-speaking countries, the term "roeping" is used to convey the idea of calling; it carries stronger connotations of duty and an obligation to fulfil one's role in society. The Swedish translation "kallelse" and the Norwegian "kall" emphasise the idea of divine calling, reflecting a belief in fate and divine guidance. Although the global idea of calling is pretty similar across westernised countries, there are still some differences in religion, philosophy, fate, duty, and the fulfilment of life. All these differences are the result of historical, cultural, and religious roots.

The next sections will move on from the protestant understanding of the construct and will highlight bigger differences rather than just nuances.

2.4.2 Asian countries

When it comes to calling in Asia, the choice of countries is very wide, so for the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen a few that I find the most interesting for future research.

The first country is India, which, due to its 22 separate official languages, dozens of ethnic groups, and population of almost 1.5 billion, is probably one of the most culturally varied nation in the world. No concept translates directly to calling, but many represent certain facets separately. "Dharma", for example, is a concept central to Hindu philosophy and is considered the foundation of individual and societal harmony, guiding individuals in their roles and responsibilities within the cosmic order. It can be considered a form of calling as it encompasses one's duty and fulfillment. "Karma" is a concept we are familiar with as it refers to the laws of cause and effect. Karma emphasises personal responsibility and accountability for one's deeds. In the context of calling, individuals may perceive their vocational path as influenced by their past karma and as an opportunity to fulfil their spiritual evolution. "Svabhava" is a concept rooted in Hindu philosophy and refers to one's intrinsic nature. It literally means "own-being" and encompasses each person's combination of qualities, tendencies and inclinations. Strictly connected is the concept of "Svadharmā" deriving from the Sanskrit words "sva" (self) and "dharma" (duty) and referring to one's inherent duty or calling based on their individual talents and inclinations. It encourages individuals to align their actions with their inner calling and to contribute to society in ways that reflect their innate strengths and values. Overall, the concept of calling in Indian culture is deeply rooted in spiritual, moral, and societal values that emphasise duty, destiny, and fulfillment. Through adherence to dharma, karma, and svadharmā, individuals seek to fulfill their vocational purpose and contribute to the greater welfare of all beings in accordance with the principles of Sanātana Dharma (eternal righteousness). In China, like in other countries, the concept of calling is influenced by a combination of cultural, religious, and societal factors that shape individuals' ideas of purpose and duty. Confucianism has a significant influence on Chinese culture with its emphasis on social harmony and moral values. In the context of calling, individuals may perceive their vocation as part of their broader duty to family, society, and the greater good. In contemporary China, calling is often linked to the pursuit of success, social expectations, and family pressure. With China's rapid economic growth and modernization, individuals aspire to find their calling in professions that offer

opportunities for personal growth, financial stability, and social recognition. Like India, China also has no direct translation of the western notion of calling, but the concept can be translated in various ways, each with its own nuances and connotations. The term “职业召唤” (zhíyè zhàohuàn) is often used to convey the idea of vocation; “职业” (zhíyè) means occupation or profession, while “召唤” (zhàohuàn) means calling or summons. This translation emphasises the sense of duty associated with one’s career path and aligns the most with the western view. In Chinese philosophical traditions such as Confucianism or Daoism, the concept of “道” (dào) may be used to convey the idea of a calling. Similarly, Confucian beliefs, which emphasise education and the practice of courtesy over physical labour, still influence the thoughts of many working Koreans today. Since the Korean War, which brought with it a flood of Western influences, negative beliefs about hard work have shifted. Hard work has come to be perceived as a foundation for the future, which has sparked a nationwide motivation to become educated and succeed through one’s work (Jang et al., 2006). , As Kim et al. (2017) explain, “ Koreans’ understanding of the concept of career calling, although largely influenced by the influx of Western culture and Christianity in the 1960s, does not originate from Christian beliefs; rather, it originates from Buddhist and Confucian beliefs”. In the Korean Encyclopaedia, career calling is translated into “soomyung”, defined as fulfilling an order from a ruler to perform a specific task with the aim of serving the greater good. Like with western countries, there are also many similarities between these Asian countries, the big exception being that no real translation exists for the calling construct. There are clearly many differences between Asian and Western countries as a result of different historical roots and contrasting cultural values. On the other hand, with the effects of globalisation, technological advancement, and cultural amalgamation, these roots may become less influential, and we may see a more globalised concept of calling.

2.4.3 African countries

African culture is unique to the rest of the world. Many of its values are distinctive of its complex historical roots. The continent counts 54 countries and more than 3000 languages. Despite this, there is no real translation to calling, with many words capturing singular features of the western concept of the construct. The idea of vocational purpose

and fulfilment is widespread among African ethnic groups. For example, the Yoruba ethnic group captures the idea of fate and destiny with “Nkù”. In Yoruba culture, individuals believe their lives are guided by destiny, and they may perceive this as a calling to fulfil their destiny and embrace a role in society. This concept aligns with “Ori”, literally meaning “head” and referring to one’s destiny and intuition. The Yoruba people believe that whatever one becomes or whatever happens in one’s life is destined by Ori. These translations, together with many others, are influenced by Africa’s communalism. Many African cultures emphasise communal values and interconnectedness, where individuals are deeply connected to their families, clans, and communities. Calling may be seen as a collective endeavor, with individuals feeling a sense of duty to contribute to the community. African culture also has rich oral traditions, rituals, ceremonies, and spiritual practices that differentiate the perception of calling and vocation from the western definition. Overall, calling may have a more spiritual undertone, being affirmed through ceremony, traditions, and spiritual practices. The idea may also originate from oral traditions; stories of heroes, ancestors, and mythical figures may be the inspiration to fulfil one’s calling. Studying the concept of calling in Africa may help us understand how the cultural and religious background influence the construct and the experience of living out a calling. Ugwu et al. (2018) studied a group of Nigerian teachers and showed that calling had a moderating effect on the negative relationship between perceived organisational frustration and work engagement. This shows that calling is also influential outside of western countries

2.4.4 Israel and the Jewish culture

The last definition of calling I want to explore is that of the Jewish culture. The complex historical and cultural background makes for a unique population that deserves attention when it comes to vocational studies. Central to Jewish belief is the notion of a covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people, as outlined in the Torah. According to Jewish tradition, God has chosen the Jewish for a special purpose and has given them a set of commandments (mitzvot) to follow. Within this context, individuals may perceive their calling as fulfilling their role within the covenantal relationship, contributing to the fulfilment of God’s plan. The history of the Jewish people, characterised by exile, persecution, and resilience, has deeply influenced their collective identity and sense of

purpose. Throughout history, Jews have faced numerous challenges and adversities, yet they have also demonstrated remarkable resilience and perseverance. This historical experience may shape individuals' perceptions of their calling, imbuing their vocational pursuits with a sense of continuity, identity, and commitment to the Jewish people and their values. Connected to this is the idea of “Tikkun olam”, which means “repairing the world” in Hebrew, a central concept in Jewish ethics and theology. It conveys the idea that individuals have a responsibility to actively participate in the healing and repair of the world through acts of justice, compassion, and righteousness. In the context of calling, individuals may see their vocational path as an opportunity to contribute to “Tikkun olam”. Finally, Jewish culture also places a strong emphasis on education, learning, and scholarship as pathways to personal and communal growth. As the next section will explore, education, teaching, and scholarly endeavours are influential when it comes to perceptions of calling and vocation.

In conclusion, we may say that the concept of calling is way broader than what current studies may show. A wider view, outside of westernised countries, is needed to properly understand the different ways in which individuals view their vocational journeys. Many deeply rooted cultural and historical values are still the foundations of modern society, but this may change with the unstoppable progress of globalization. With time, it may also be interesting to develop some longitudinal studies to understand if the concept of calling is a stable construct or if it is influenced by social and economic episodes.

2.5 Educational systems: shaping career path and calling

Education is a cornerstone of personal and professional development, shaping individuals' values, skills, and career aspirations. Educational systems worldwide vary in structure, philosophy, and approach, influencing how individuals perceive their vocational calling and navigate their career paths. This chapter explores the effects of educational systems on career calling, looking into examples from different countries to illustrate the diverse influences of educational experiences on individuals' vocational trajectories and sense of purpose.

2.5.1 The influence of Educational Philosophy

Educational philosophy shapes the learning experiences of students, influencing their development, values, and aspirations. Different educational systems prioritise distinct approaches to teaching and learning, which can in turn impact students' perceptions of their vocational calling. Finland's education, for example, is famous for its progressive approach, rooted in constructivist principles. In Finnish schools, students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning through hands-on activities and collaborative projects. Teachers act as helpers rather than simple lecturers, guiding students in their exploration of topics and skills. This progressive approach nurtures students' curiosity, creativity, and autonomy, empowering them to take ownership of their learning and pursue paths that align with their interests and strengths. As a result, these students develop a stronger sense of agency and self-efficacy, and they view their vocational calling as a reflection of their unique talents and passions rather than societal expectations. In contrast, South Korea's education system is characterised by a more traditional approach emphasising rote memorization, academic achievement, and high-stakes testing. From a young age, South Korean students face intense academic pressure to excel in standardised exams, which serve as gateways to prestigious universities and lucrative careers. This highly competitive environment can limit students' opportunities for self-exploration and personal development. The emphasis on academic performance may overshadow students' interests and passions, leading them to pursue a career based on societal expectations rather than personal fulfillment. By understanding these influences, countries can learn to create better environments that empower students to discover their passions and pursue careers that align with their sense of calling.

2.5.2 Role of Vocational training and Career guidance

Vocational training and career guidance play a crucial role in preparing students for their future careers by providing them with practical skills, knowledge, and support to navigate their career paths effectively. The availability and effectiveness of training and guidance vary across educational systems, impacting students' ability to understand their calling and how to live it out. Germany's dual education system is a prime example of effective vocational training that seamlessly integrates classroom learning with hands-on apprenticeships in various industries. Students in the German education system have a

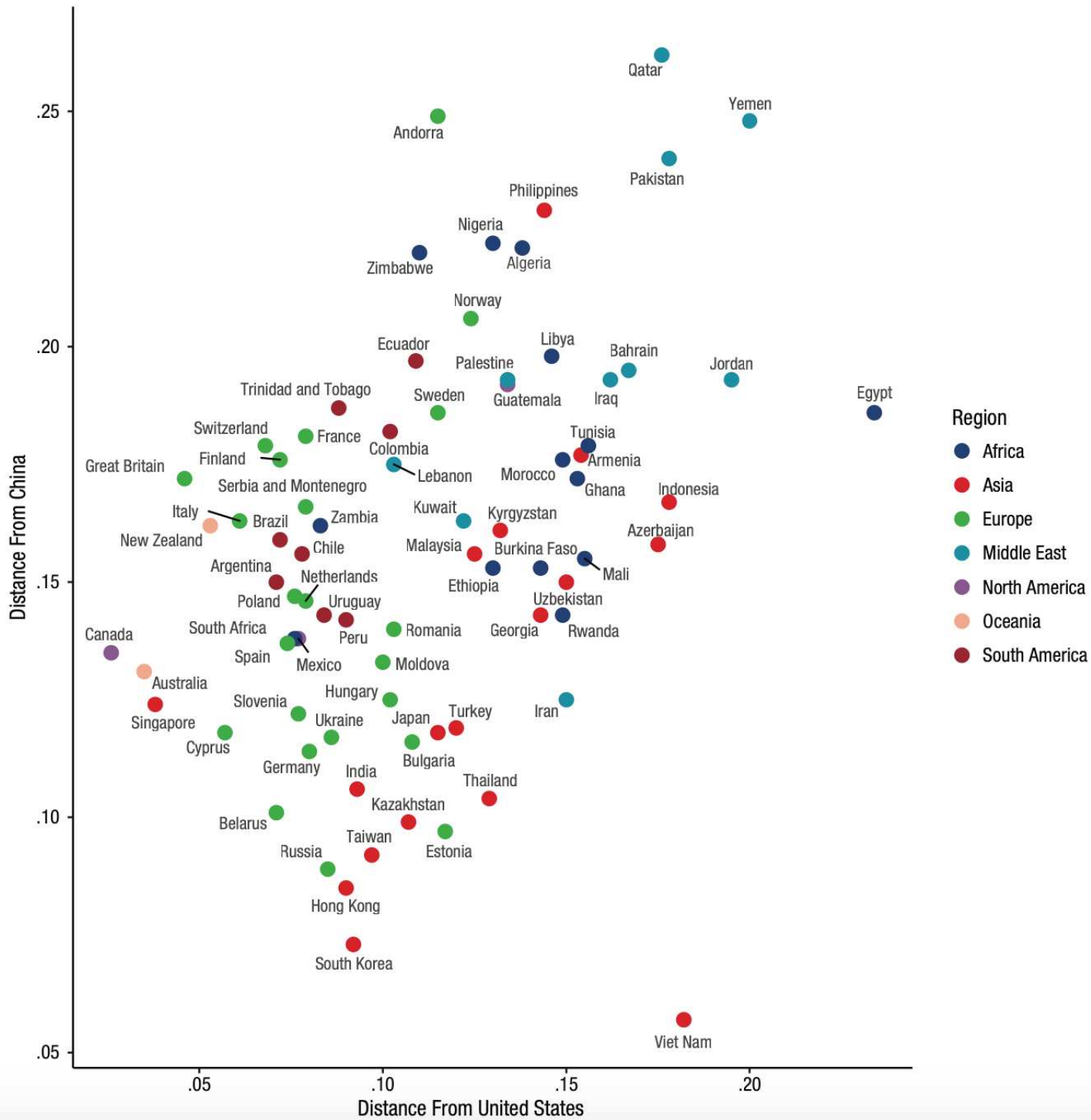
better opportunity to pursue vocational pathways alongside traditional academic tracks, allowing them to gain practical skills and real-world experience while earning a formal education. Career guidance services provided within the dual education system help students identify their strengths, interests, and career goals, guiding them towards apprenticeships and vocational pathways that align with their vocational calling. In contrast to countries with well-established vocational training and career guidance systems, many developing countries face challenges in providing adequate support to students in their career development. Limited resources, infrastructure, and trained personnel often hinder the implementation of effective career guidance programs in these countries. As a result, students may lack access to essential information, resources, and opportunities to explore their career options and make informed decisions about their future. Without proper guidance and support, students may struggle to identify their vocational interests and navigate the complexities of the job market, leading to mismatches between their skills and aspirations and the available employment opportunities. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to create inclusive and supportive educational environments that empower students to discover their passions and pursue careers that align with their sense of calling. By recognising the diverse influences of educational experiences, countries can foster environments that nurture individuals' personal and professional development, ultimately contributing to their fulfilment and success in the workforce.

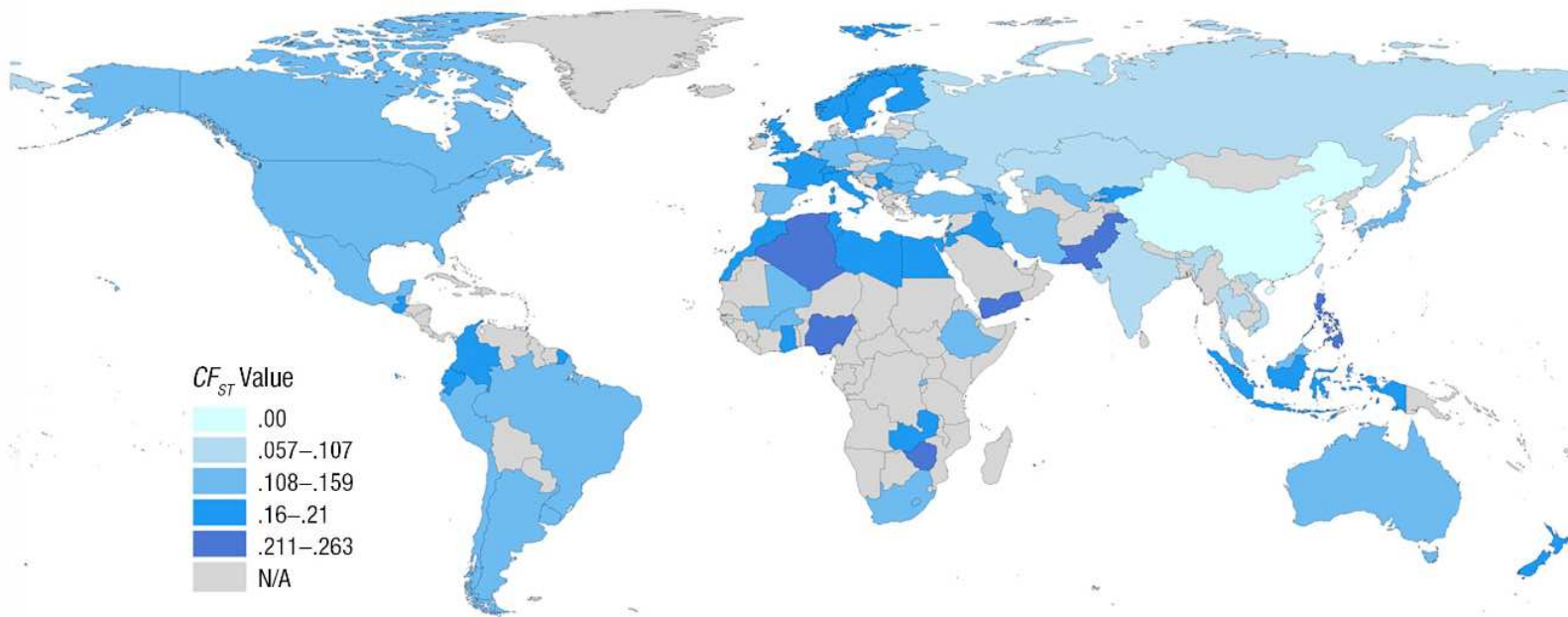
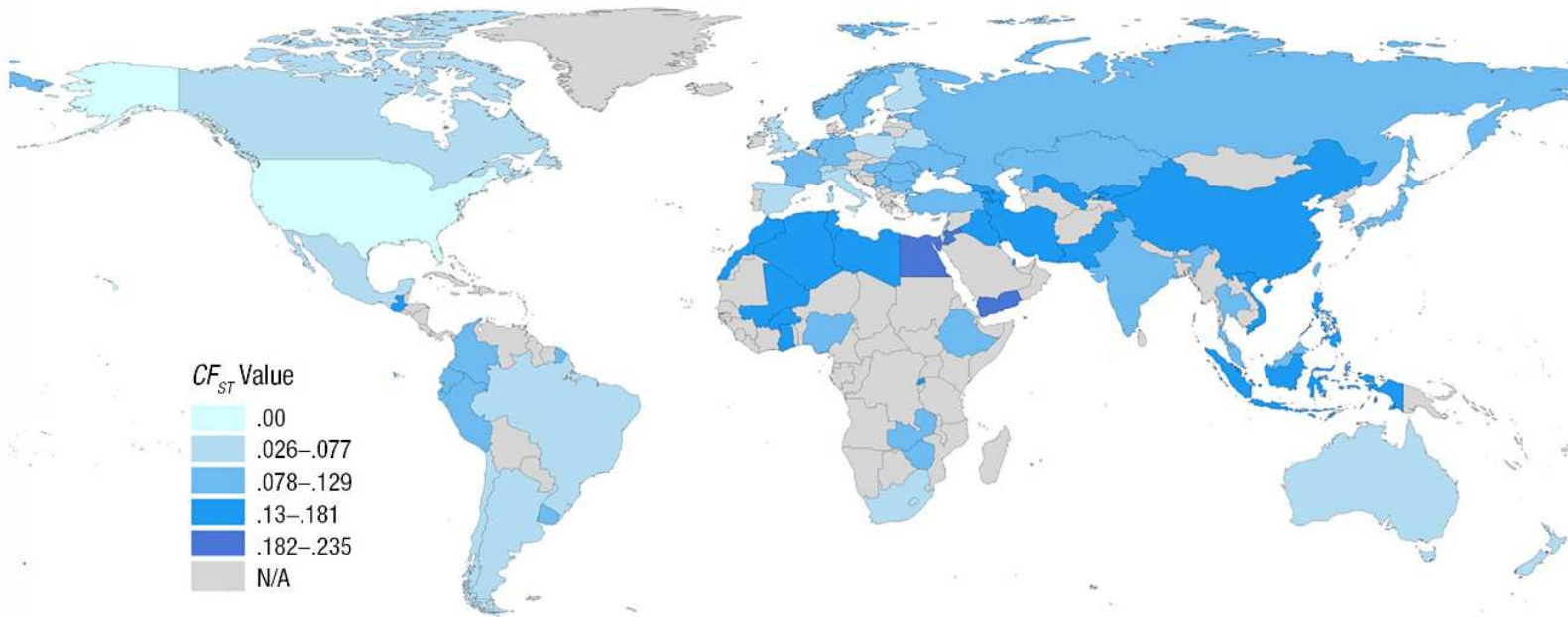
2.6 WEIRDness and its effects on Calling

“WEIRD” is an acronym used to describe societies that exhibit certain characteristics: Western, referring to societies historically influenced by Western cultural, political, and economic values; Educated, indicating populations with high levels of education and literacy, often characterised by widespread access to education; Industrialised, describing societies that have undergone significant industrial and technological advancement; Rich, indicating societies with relatively high standards of living, characterised by high GDP per capita and access to goods, services, and amenities; Democratic, as in societies that have democratic forms of government and citizens enjoy civil liberties. The term “WEIRD” was coined by social scientists Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan in their provocative paper "The Weirdest People in the World?" published in 2010. They argue

that much of the research in psychology and social sciences has been conducted on WEIRD populations, which may not be representative of humanity as a whole. Most of the data from these studies does not apply universally because it is based on a narrow, unrepresentative sample. The authors review existing literature to examine the prevalence of WEIRD samples and discuss the methodological issues, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive measurement tools. Additionally, they draw on examples from various cultural contexts to illustrate the diversity of human behaviour and psychology. A central theme of the article is the recognition and exploration of significant cultural variations in cognition, perception, decision-making, and social behaviour across different societies. Cultural differences in cognition refer to variations in how cultures perceive, process, and elaborate on information. A notable distinction highlighted by the paper is that of Analytic thinking, often observed in western countries, focusing on breaking down complex systems into discrete components and analysing them independently, and of Holistic thinking, prevalent in East Asian countries, which tends to consider the broader context and perceive objects and events in relation to their surroundings. Cultural context also influences how individuals perceive the world around them, shaping their interpretations of spatial relationships, temporal concepts, colours, and social cues. For example, studies have found that the perception of colours varies across cultures with some languages and cultures categorising colours differently than others (Kay et al. 1991; Robertson et al. 2000). Cultural values also influence decision-making processes, including risk perception, risk-taking behaviour, preferences, values, and moral judgements (Hofstede 1980; Oyserman et al. 2002; Gelfand 2011). Finally, cultural norms can shape social behaviour, influencing differences in communication styles, conversational norms, and expressions of emotion (Gudykunst et al. 1988; Matsumoto 1990; Matsumoto 1993). Addressing these important differences is essential to being able to advance our understanding of cultural diversity in human psychology and foster rigorous cross-cultural research practices. The implications of the authors' findings call into question the universality of psychological theories and concepts derived from predominantly WEIRD samples. A shift towards a more culturally inclusive approach to psychological research can be useful to develop more robust theories that capture the full spectrum of human behaviour and psychology. "The Weirdest People in the World?" serves as a wake-up call to psychologists to broaden their horizons and perfectly aligns with the message of this

paper. When it comes to vocational research on calling, it is imperative to move away from WEIRD samples and measures, as WEIRD countries are a minority of the world's population and will never be able to effectively represent eight billion individuals. Muthukrishna et al. (2020) presented a tool for measuring the psychological and cultural distance between societies and creating a distance scale with any population as the point of comparison. Since research and data are dominated by WEIRD nations and, overwhelmingly, the United States, they focus on distance from the USA. They also present the distance from China as a point of comparison and to reinforce the point that cultural distances do not range from WEIRD to non-WEIRD. To create the measurement scales the authors use the Cavalli-Sforza fixation index (F_{ST}), a method to calculate the size of the genetic differences between populations. As they say "the (CF_{ST}) is calculated in the same manner as the genetic (F_{ST}), but instead of a genome, we use a large survey of cultural values as a "culturome," with questions treated as loci and answers treated as alleles". Since the CF_{ST} is a composite of many questions that look only at the distance from a particular point (the United States in the American scale, China in the Chinese scale), countries with similar distance from the US are not necessarily similar to each other. CF_{ST} values can range from 0 to 1, yet all values are less than .3. This shows that we have more in common across cultures than we have differences. "Yet just as only 4% of our genes separate us from chimpanzees, those differences can be important and predictive" (Muthukrishna, 2020). The graphs below show the results of data calculated using combined data from the two most recent waves of the WVS (World Values Survey, 2005–2009 and 2010–2014; Inglehart et al., 2014). The waves contain answers from 170,247 participants from nationally representative samples. The first graph shows the distances of each country from both the USA and China, while the second shows the distances from the USA at the top and from China at the bottom. The results suggest that WEIRD countries are in fact the outliers and imply that if psychology were dominated by Chinese psychologists, we may see a different idea of psychology all together.





As the graphs from the survey data reveal, many countries fall within a range that is neither closely aligned with the United States nor China. This highlights the diversity and complexity of cultural values and attitudes across the globe. In recognition of this diversity, the authors of the study have developed an online tool that allows users to compare any two or more countries based on their cultural values and attitudes. This tool enables researchers and the general public to explore the similarities and differences between countries in a systematic and accessible manner. Additionally, the techniques used in the study are not limited to comparing countries on a global scale. They can also be useful to explore cultural differences between regions within countries, between age groups, or between any other kind of grouping. By examining cultural variation at various levels of analysis, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that shape human behaviour and psychology within and across societies. Overall, Muthukrishna et al. significantly enrich the ongoing discourse on the significance of cultural diversity, equipping forthcoming researchers with invaluable tools and insights to propel further advancements in the field.

3. The GFS, Weirdness and Calling.

3.1 The Global Flourishing Study

The GFS is an ambitious five-year project of longitudinal data collection and cooperation between researchers at Baylor and Harvard University, in partnership with Gallup and the Centre for Open Science (COS). COS is making the data an open-access resource for researchers and journalists worldwide so they can access detailed, longitudinal information about what makes for a flourishing life. The GFS employs an inclusive definition of flourishing: “living in a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good”. The GFS’s definition of human flourishing encompasses six areas of well-being: Happiness and life satisfaction; Mental and physical health; Meaning and purpose; Character and virtue; Close social relationships; Material and financial stability. The project includes data collection from 200,000 participants from 20+ geographically, economically, and culturally diverse countries. Researchers from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, epidemiology, economics, history, philosophy, and theology have

all combined their expertise to produce one of the most comprehensive studies of human existence. The goal of the study is to obtain nationally representative data from each country, with collection on the same panel of individuals annually. Participants will be surveyed at multiple points over five years, allowing researchers to observe the long-term effects and changes in human flourishing. The study employs standardised scales and questionnaires to ensure consistency and reliability of data globally. Surveys were complemented by in-depth face-to-face, online, or telephone interviews that followed 60 extensively pretested questions, ensuring that the data produced will meet researchers' highest standards for relevance and reliability. In-depth interviewer training and careful quality control also ensure meticulous attention to details, which in turn helps reduce any other form of error. The study may be able to shed light on what factors contribute to human flourishing, whether it be cultural or socioeconomic, individual or collective, or, as we might expect, an intricate fusion of all.

3.2 The GFS Registry

The [Global Flourishing Study Registry](#) contains preregistrations using the GFS dataset. This registry serves as a central repository for information on participants, their responses, and various aspects of the study. It's primary purpose is to support the study's longitudinal design by ensuring systematic data collection and management over an extended period. The GFS uses the Open Science Framework, which is a free, open-source platform designed to support the whole research lifecycle. The OSF promotes, transparency, reproducibility, and collaboration in scientific research. Thanks to this framework the GFS registry provides a platform for researchers to access and analyse the data collected by the GFS. The goal is to support many various research initiatives aimed at exploring all the different aspects of human flourishing across diverse cultural contexts. The GFS only accepts preregistrations, which involve documenting the study's hypothesis, methods, and analysis plans before accessing or collecting the data. This practice is increasingly adopted in scientific research to avoid presenting exploratory results as confirmatory, a practice that in the past hindered transparency and credibility (Wagenmakers et al., 2012). Preregistration ensures that everything is documented before the study begins, creating a transparency that helps other researchers understand the original intentions of the study.

It also forces the authors to go public and allows for open scrutiny and validation by the broader scientific community. Preregistration also increases credibility since it prevents data dredging and p-hacking. When researchers adhere to their preregistration plans, the findings are viewed as more credible and trustworthy.

Overall, preregistration forces comprehensive reporting of all planned analyses and outcomes. Researchers are required to think critically about their research design and analyse plans in advance, anticipating potential challenges and limitations, allowing them to address these issues proactively.

In the remainder of this thesis, we will present an exploratory analysis that is related to the following preregistration: <https://osf.io/d4mxa>

3.3 The GFS and WEIRDness

The concept of WEIRDness (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) dates back to a proposal by Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010), later revised by Muthukrishna et al. (2020) to create a measure of cultural distance. The GFS addresses the issue of WEIRDness by incorporating a diverse and representative sample of the worldwide population. The GFS also employs instruments that are adapted to each culture and are only administered after a long process of validation. This approach will help ensure that the constructs being measured remain relevant across the many contexts, avoiding a solely WEIRD-centric definition of flourishing. Since the study analyzes samples from both weird and non-weird countries, it will also be able to identify both universal and culture-specific aspects of human flourishing. In this study, we will focus on the “meaning and purpose” dimensions of flourishing that have been measured in the GFS to investigate whether the lives of people in WEIRD countries are – on average- less purposeful. Previous studies showed that residents of poor nations have a greater sense of meaning than residents of wealthy nations (Oishi et al., 2014). These results will be interesting for the study of calling because purpose is one of the key components of the experience of being called

3.4 Analysing the GFS's data on Life Purpose

3.4.1 Life purpose and Calling

Before analysing the data, it is important to understand the differences between the two constructs. Life purpose typically refers to a broad sense of meaning and direction in life, connected to personal values, goals, and aspirations. On the other hand, calling refers to a more specific vocation or occupation that one feels uniquely suited for. That said, the two constructs are far from independent. Dik and Duffy (2009) identified three components of calling, the second being a sense of purpose in life. Elangovan, Pinder, and McLean (2010) also identify life purpose (both personal and other-focused) as a fundamental factor in experiencing a calling. Hall & Chandler (2005) say that "Calling, considered the highest level of subjective career success, can be the work one views as one's purpose in life". Finally, Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) identify calling as resilience in the face of obstacles, feeling a sense of pride and purpose in work. The deep connection between calling and life purpose is clear, and this means we can use life purpose as a mediator between the data collected by the GFS and its possible effects on understanding individuals' calling. Although the GFS is still in an early phase of work, research has begun, and we can start looking at the first wave's results. Analysing this data can give us an initial insight into life purpose and its differences in WEIRD and NON-WEIRD countries.

3.4.2 Data Analysis

At the moment, the first wave of GFS data is available for analysis. The first graph (Figure 1) plots averages of purpose across countries, which are ordered left-to-right in terms of their WEIRDness computed according to Muthukrishna et al. (2020). The graph also shows country averages and has a 95% confidence interval around the mean item "I understand my purpose in life."

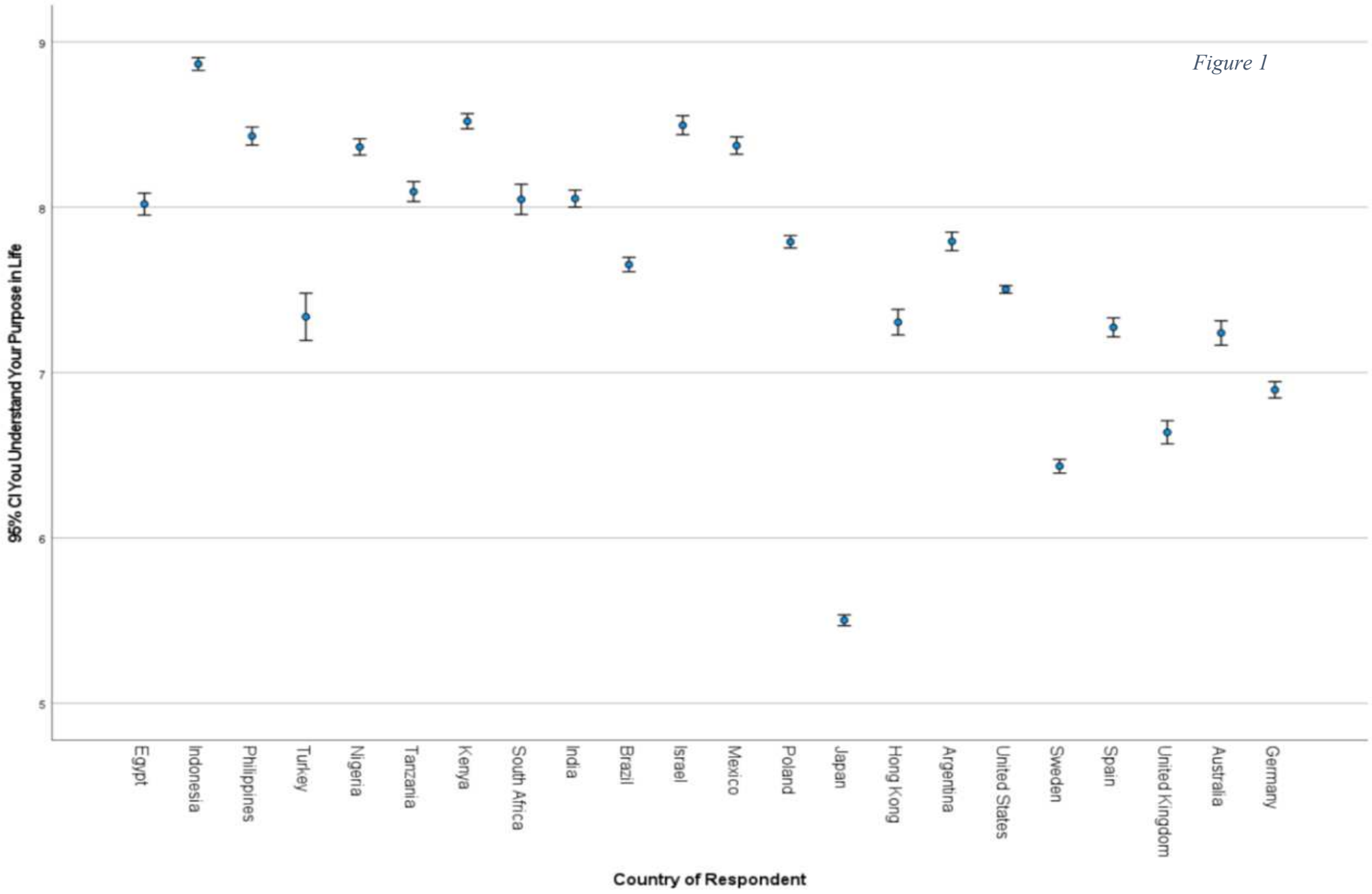


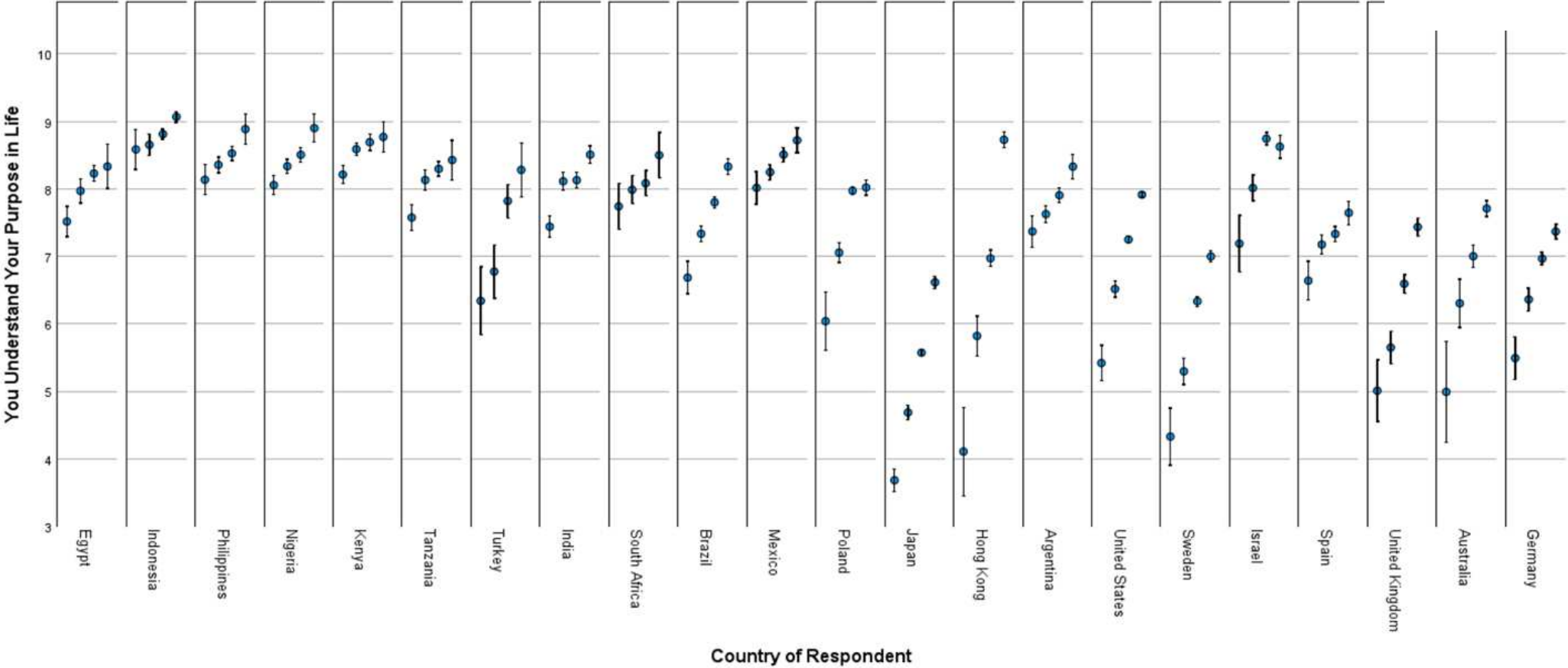
Figure 1

The graph shows that nations on the right side have lower average values of purpose in life, with some exceptions such as Japan and Turkey. Simply looking at this difference isn't enough, since the graph presents values higher than Egypt (Indonesia, ≈ 8.84) and lower than Germany (Japan, ≈ 5.49). For this reason, it is necessary to calculate the average life purpose and then understand if there is a negative correlation to WEIRDness. Results show there is still a negative trend, which suggests there may indeed be a negative relationship between life purpose and WEIRDness.

Since life purpose is tightly connected to calling, we may hypothesise that calling may also be correlated negatively to WEIRDness. These results give an initial confirmation to Vianello and Dalla Rosa's hypothesis (H1) that life purpose is higher in less WEIRD countries.

To further analyse the WEIRDness-Purpose correlation, we added a third variable, which is the GFS's Income_Feelings (Feelings About Household Income), which is measured on a 4-item scale: 1) Living comfortably on present income; 2) Getting by on present income; 3) Finding it difficult on present income; 4) Finding it very difficult on present income. Figure 2 uses the same data from Figure 1 with the addition of the 4 levels of the Income_feelings item (1=..., 2=..., 3=... 4=...)

Figure 2



The pattern of means seems to identify a Simpson's paradox where the relation between income and purpose within countries is positive, and the relation between WEIRDness and purpose across countries is negative,

This effect is led by low-income citizens of richer countries that have much lower purpose than poor citizens in poor countries.

3.5 What the results mean for Calling

Although further research is needed to draw precise conclusions, the GFS is gifting us essential data to study the relationship between Calling and WEIRDness. A first analysis of life purpose reveals a clear difference between WEIRD and non-WEIRD countries. This fact may be caused by cultural values such as collectivism or interdependence, religious and spiritual beliefs, education, or most probably by socioeconomic factors and social roles. What is clear is that WEIRDness is a determining factor in understanding people's vocation. Research on calling and its many related constructs will surely reveal the obligation to treat every case differently. What is currently clear is that there is no clear solution to help people discover and live out their calling. That being said, research and projects like the GFS will bring great innovation to both vocational and applied vocational psychology.

4 Conclusion

This paper aimed to analyse the calling construct by applying a cross-cultural view that challenges the question of generalizability. The study investigated the history of calling, dating back to 16th century Protestantism. While the concept has deep historical roots, systematic research into its role and functions only began in the late 20th century, with 80% of all studies published since 2011. We differentiated between the Neoclassical view, anchored to religious traditions and destiny, and Modern views that align with contemporary values and passions. Defining calling remains an issue in literature, as most definitions of calling sit in between these two views. Calling is distinguished from other related constructs by its emphasis on action, clarity, and pro-social intentions. Over time, many scales have been developed to measure calling, reflecting the different aspects of

the construct. Scales like the Work Orientation Scale, the Brief Calling Scale, and the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire highlight the complexity of calling, encompassing elements such as personal identification, value-driven behaviour, and a sense of purpose.

Research indicates that individuals' calling experiences can vary, manifesting both positive and negative effects. When individuals aren't able to fully live out their calling, it can lead to extremely negative feelings and consequences. Additionally, living a calling can also lead to unhealthy behaviours such as workaholism or exploitation. While calling can enhance personal fulfilment, it can also pose significant challenges; thus, a cross-cultural analysis was conducted to analyse the construct worldwide. With the help of tools like the Work Values Inventory and Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Index, we confirm that cultural values, beliefs, and norms contribute to different interpretations of calling. Furthermore, the exploration of work centrality and its connection with calling underlines how individuals perceive their vocational paths. Studies like Hattrup et al. (2007) provide insights into the relationship between work centrality, work collectivism, and pride in work across different nations, indicating how cultural factors moderate the relationship with calling. Comparing Western countries, Asian countries, African countries, and Jewish culture reveals the wide spectrum of interpretations of calling. From protestant roots in Western societies to nuanced concepts like Dharma, Karma, and Svadharma in India, they are deeply rooted in spiritual, moral, and societal values that emphasise duty, destiny, and fulfilment. Similarly, in China, influenced by Confucianism, calling is often tied to social harmony, moral values, and familial obligations. The text further delves into the African perspective, where communal values and interconnectedness shape individuals' sense of duty to contribute to the community. Concepts like 'Nkù' and 'Ori' among the Yoruba ethnic group highlight the interplay of destiny, intuition, and societal roles in understanding calling. Moreover, the examination of Israel and Jewish culture adds a unique dimension, emphasising covenantal relationships ('Tikkun olam) and the pursuit of education and scholarship as integral to fulfilling one's calling within the Jewish tradition. Overall, this comprehensive analysis confirms the need for a broader, more inclusive approach to studying calling, acknowledging the diverse historical, cultural, and religious roots that underpin individuals' vocational journeys across the globe. This view

aligns with Henrich et al.'s concept of WEIRDness coined in their paper "The Weirdest People of the World?". The paper reviews literature to show the prevalence of WEIRD samples and highlights the need for culturally sensitive measurement tools. Muthukrishna et al. (2020) presented a tool for measuring cultural distances between countries, and thanks to data collected from the World Values Survey, they were able to create a map of global cultural distances between the USA and China. The problem of WEIRDness in psychological research may soon be tackled by the impressive longitudinal project of the Global Flourishing Study. By advocating for transparent, credible, and open-access data, the study aims to collect globally representative information on people's realities and what makes them flourish. The GFS will contribute to understanding calling through life purpose, helping to develop an educational curricula and workplace environments that support individual growth and fulfillment. The knowledge that further research is needed, that we must distinguish countries (i.e. with WEIRDness), and the work of the GFS can in the future help individuals in discovering and living out their calling.

Limitations and future directions

Although the GFS will bring great innovation and change to vocational psychology, some limitations still apply. Despite the many efforts to culturally validate instruments, some measures might still carry biases that affect their relevance across different cultures. The reliance on self-reported data could also introduce biases, such as social desirability or recall bias, potentially skewing the results. The multifaceted nature of vocation, calling, and flourishing makes cross-cultural comparisons difficult to interpret. Moreover, the findings may not always be applicable or relevant to others, both globally and individually. The study itself may eventually confirm the idea that generalizability is, in fact, unfeasible. That being said, the GFS is an impressive project that should inspire researchers to conduct registered, open-access research to progress towards global research on human flourishing. As of the last century, finding one's calling has become ever more important; people do not work to live anymore but live to work. Helping individuals, both at a young age and further on in life, to discover and live out their calling should be the focus of many vocational psychologists, work psychologists, and most

importantly, countries that need to understand the importance of the work environment. Calling research in the future should focus on creating more results that we can apply on an empirical day-to-day basis. Calling research in the future should focus on creating more results that we can apply on an empirical day-to-day basis. Life purpose, satisfaction, and happiness shouldn't only be harboured outside of work but should be the result of living out a positive calling towards a job that we enjoy.

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