Accelerating Conscious Human Development
Using the iConscious Model as an Integrative Framework

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Abstract

Higher stages of human development are directly correlated with increased happiness, feelings of love, reduced suffering, flow states, improved physical health, reduced mortality, and other measures of wellbeing. A new model of Conscious Human Development is offered as a means for accelerating wellbeing; both individually and collectively, internally (subjective experience) and externally (objective observations). It's theorized that applying this model using exponential technologies (such as AI) will help evolve humanity - and its environment - to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

Introduction

Human development is the study of how humans grow and mature, individually and in groups, through discernable stages. Higher stages of human development are directly correlated with reduced suffering (Szabo 2016, Klein 2011), increased feelings of love and compassion for self and others (Heffernan 2010, Homan 2016, Jennings 2009), feelings of deeper connection with self, others, and life (Pettit 2011, Pastorelli 2016) increased happiness and well-being (Bonini 2008, Welzel 2010) more continuous access to flow states (Ullen 2012, Aube 2014) improved physical health (Currie 2009, Morisaki 2014), improved mental health (Khazaei 2017, Schimmel 2009, Minas 2013), reduced mortality rates (Singh 2012, Alvarez 2009), better outcomes as team players and collaborators (Momeni 2009, Stubbs 2008) , increased productivity (Kidwell 2011, Thirumurthy 2012), increased wealth (Susnik 2017, McKee 2009, Mayer-Foulkes, 2008, Kurniawan and Managi, 2018), improved living standards (Harttgen 2012, Th Le 2014), having more choices available (Inglehart 1981-2007, Boateng 2008), increased fulfillment of purpose and potential (Cattivelli 2012, Reichstadt 2010, Proskurina 2015), improved quality of life (Uthman 2009, Skevington 2010), more fulfilling relationships (Malouff 2014, Sanchez-Nunez, 2013), and increased concern for other species and the environment (Nukherjee, 2010). Therefore, it's evident that human development is a crucial key in making the world a better place.

Lack of development negatively impacts human endeavors and cultural wellbeing (Oesterdiekhoff 2016, Olaniyan 2012). It's also been shown that environmental constraints slow progress, and even in disastrous conditions, begin to reverse human development (Hughes, B.B., 2011).

Humanity is facing an unprecedented series of challenges, both at the level of individuals and at the level of groups, societies, and nations (Hanjra 2010, Filho 2018, Biggs 2011). The more developed people are, the wiser their choices (Oesterdiekhoff 2014). Because technology may be the single biggest factor accelerating people's impact on each other (Mukherjee 2012), we theorize that humanity can improve its own well being by applying exponential technologies, such as AI, to accelerate human development.

People living in undeveloped stages use only a tiny fraction of their potential (Oesterdiekhoff 2015, Commons, M. L. 2008). In our view, each person's level of development directly impacts everything they do; including the technology they create. We've noticed a trend that the more developed people are, the more capacity they have for cooperatively solving increasingly difficult issues. So, as we see it, individuals and groups evolve, technology evolves, and the world evolves.

How to accelerate human development?

To accelerate human development, we must understand its primary dimensions. From reviewing prominent researchers in the field of human development (listed in Figure 1 below), we see three major dimensions as primary factors in understanding and affecting the evolution of human potential. We call these factors Development, Domains, and Views.

By Development we mean growth toward embodiment of full potential; individually and collectively. Within the Development dimension, we see three major phases, listed below. Each of the three phases includes a number of distinct stages. We describe the 3 phases as follows:

- Dual: Life and self are experienced as partial, fractured, confining, and disconnected
- Unified: All Domains are known as whole, unified, and integrated
- Singular: Dissolution of subject/object perspective

Domains is our term for the five major aspects or layers of human experience that we find are key elements of human potential. These include:

- Consciousness: The layer that is universal and registers experience,
- Uniqueness: Personality, gender, likes, dislikes, and any aspects of humans that can be assigned to "type" categories,

- Emotions: Energetic feeling-sensations such as joy, anger, fear, sadness, etc.,
- Mind: Thoughts, beliefs, and perspective-taking capacities, and
- Body: Growth of presence in and ownership of the body.

It's our theory that neglecting to consider all five of the above Domains results in slowed and imbalanced Development. When the above 5 Domains are considered throughout the spectrum of Development, some of the mysteries of human development that have previously been inscrutable yield to understanding. One example is how there have been supposed highly enlightened leaders found to cause great harm to so many people (Archer, R 2018). The addition of the Domains dimension makes clear that such people may be more developed in one Domain (ie, Consciousness), while simultaneously being quite less developed (and possibly even traumatized) in another (ie, Emotions).

The lack of integration in Development between Domains is common today in a way that may be difficult to see without understanding all five Domains. Our model shows how Development moves toward increasing levels of integration. Therefore, one aspect of understanding Development is to understand the degree of integration. We think this will be true of individuals as well as groups and societies.

Views refers to the following four perspectives that are always present; one or more can be taken at any given time:

- Subjective - an individual person's interior experience
- Objective - Anything that can be observed about an individual from the outside, including behaviors and biometric measurements
- Relational - Shared interior experience in relationships and groups, including cultural ideas and feelings.
- Systemic - Observable systems View, including economies, transportation and physical infrastructure.

Problem: Partial perspectives within human development

Over history, human developers including researchers and theorists tended to focus on partial aspects within the larger field of human development (see research below). For example, most seem to study one of the five Domains individually (such as Consciousness or Emotions), or in pairs, such as psychosomatic (Mind and Body), or psychological (Mind and Emotions). Within Views, most tend to focus on one or two of the four Views, such as correlating subjective experience with objective behavior, such as brain wave patterns or other

biometrics. And many mix one or two Domains with one or two Views over a partial range of the Development we can see.

The following chart shows how specific developers cover various -- and most often partial -- aspects of Domains, Views, and Development. To see the most updated charts we produced that separately show 1) developers by extend of maturity through our 3 Phases, and 2) developers by Views within Domains, please visit: https://iconscious.global/researchers/.

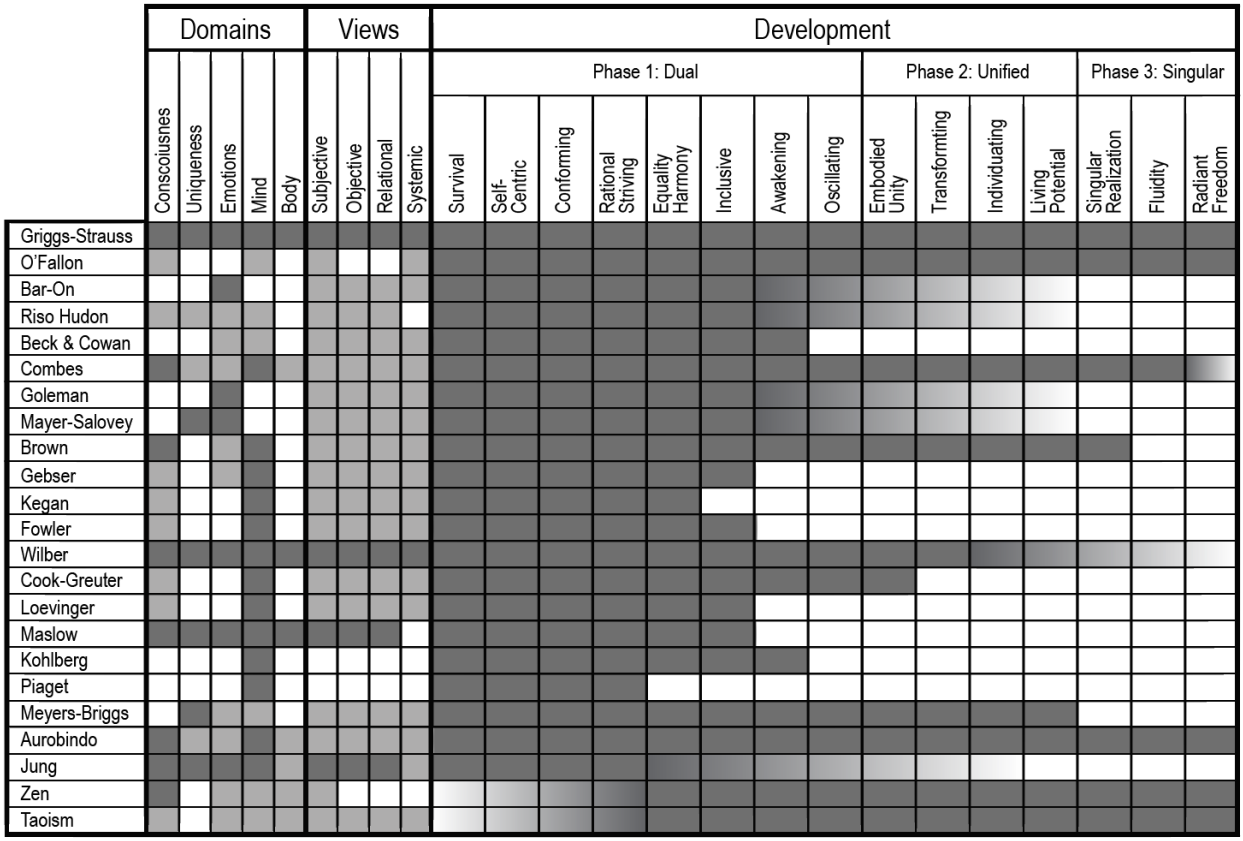

Figure 1

In Figure 2, the dark boxes indicate focused study or teaching by the developer, and the lighter boxes indicate that this area has been touched on but not deeply studied or elucidated. An empty box means we found no significant work in that particular Domain, View, or Stage of Development by the developer. As you can see, some of the researchers in the above chart focus primarily on one particular Domain, ie: Consciousness (Aurobindo, Zen), some on Uniqueness (Ruso/Hudson, Meyers-Briggs), and others primarily on Mind (Cook-Greuter, O'Fallon, Piaget), etc. Others focus on one or two of the Views.

Each of the above developers/theorists has their own way of naming and defining development and each have their own set of criteria for defining the extent of stages. Some call them stages or levels, and some define that by describing expanding spheres of meaning making, ego-development, values, perspective taking, or ability to process complexity.

The field we're working in is very often split between consciousness evolution and human development. Because these fields that are often studied in separate silos, we coined the phrase "Conscious Human Development" to bring them together.

Problems with partial perspectives

The Figure 1 chart showing extent of development clearly shows that the bulk of study done to date falls within Phase 1 (Dual) of our 3 Phases of development. According to Beck and Cohen (2006), approximately .1% of the population are developed beyond what we refer to as Stage 7. Because there are so few living stably in more developed Stages, it has been extremely difficult to discern enough observables that together would define a stage that might be measured with reasonable statistical significance. This in turn, makes it hard to gather subjects for testing, which continues the mysteries of what constitutes more advanced stages of development.

The Sentence Completion Test (SCT; developed by Loevinger and elaborated by Cook-Grueter, 1999) is a good example of this problem. It was developed using people who, in our model, are in Stages 3-6. It therefore cannot identify stages beyond that. This underscores the problem that there is little data available about development beyond Stage 7 in our model.

The appearance that previous developmentalists have unknowingly conflated various dimensions of development into a single linear description also causes tremendous problems when it comes to understanding nuances of development. In our experience, if the five Domains aren't considered separately, lack of integration cannot be seen. For example, if someone is well developed in Consciousness, but poorly developed in Emotions, any model that conflates these dimensions cannot show which of these aspects are more or less developed.

We find that the lack of an understandable, comprehensive, integrated perspective causes a number of major problems for researchers and theorists. We've organized the problems according to the 4 Views in our model as follows:

1. **Subjective:** In our experience, most people don't fully understand how humans holistically grow and evolve, which in turn causes significant confusion, stuckness, slowed development, depression, and hopelessness about fulfilling one's own potential.
2. **Objective**: Lacking a comprehensive framework, developers haven't known how to integrate objective data with subjective, relational, and systemic data.
3. **Relational:** Lacking a holistic model of relational development causes difficulty understanding how the many relational development systems are related to each other and to the other major dimensions of human potential.
4. **Systemic**: Lack of an integrative model makes it hard to vision how to design systems to support humanity's most direct thriving.

It's not that we feel all developers should include everything all the time. Actually, we find it's imperative that developers and researchers focus on small areas in order to go deep. We're pointing out that what's needed for a holistic understanding of the depth and breadth of human development is a model that shows how all these aspects integrate and interrelate. This suggests a powerful need for a comprehensive, holistic model that brings together all major dimensions of human potential, and shows the relationships between the parts. While most developers have focused on partial areas, the need for an integrated perspective is getting stronger as humanity's need to evolve to survive its current challenges is getting more urgent.

Solutions

While much work has been done to divide the realm of human development study into its many aspects (per above), little work as been done to create a single, comprehensive, and accessible model that reveals how important dimensions of human potential integrate and affect each other as we grow and mature. In our opinion, such a model, especially as it becomes increasingly scientifically validated, would have enormous positive impacts on the quality of life for all humans, both individually and collectively.

Other developers and models have made huge contributions to the field of human development in one or more aspects within Development, Domains, and Views. However, until Ken Wilber's AQAL model (Wilber, 2005), almost none have shown how all these aspects integrate with each other, as you'll see outlined in Figure 1.

In theory, we agree Wilber's scheme encompasses all possible ways of studying the evolution of human potential. In practice, we find that most are challenged by the attempt to visualize and realistically apply these five dimensions to their life and/or work. As a result, it

seems a small percent fully understand it or can use it to make predictions, conduct tests, or create practical applications.

To accelerate conscious human development, we therefore undertook the task of modeling it in a way that is integrative, easy to understand, comprehensive, accessible, and with high resolution. To accomplish this, we have:

a. Integrated 3 major dimensions of human evolution: Development (stages of growth), Domains (Consciousness, Design, Emotion, Mind, and Body), and Views (Subjective, Objective, Relational, and Systemic). In our experience, integration is the heart of acceleration. If development is lagging in any particular Domain or View, it slows evolution in all other Domains, and creates imbalances that will impact integrity and the experience of wholeness.
b. Combined decades of experience helping thousands of students to evolve in integrated ways along with our study and background knowledge of 100+ systems and models of consciousness and human development.
c. Detailed how growth occurs in each Domain, enabling us to offer specific practices we have found to be most effective for each Domain in every Stage.
d. Consolidated what dozens of developers have found from - hundreds of studies - for Stages 1-6 (pre-transpersonal).
e. Expanded the resolution especially in the upper Phases between Stages 7-15 which are either non-existent for some researchers work, or vague in others, using others' theories and our experience working with thousands of students and clients over decades.
f. Clarified the full extent of conscious human development we can currently see so others can see the territory, avoid common detours, and progress more directly.
g. Included Ken Wilber's Quadrants, renaming them as our 4 Views
h. Clarified 3 Phases of Development; based on 3 fundamentally different orientations to self, others, and life.
i. Added average descriptions for each Stage of Development in each Domain, so users can see what integration looks like.
j. Developed an assessment which reveals growth edges

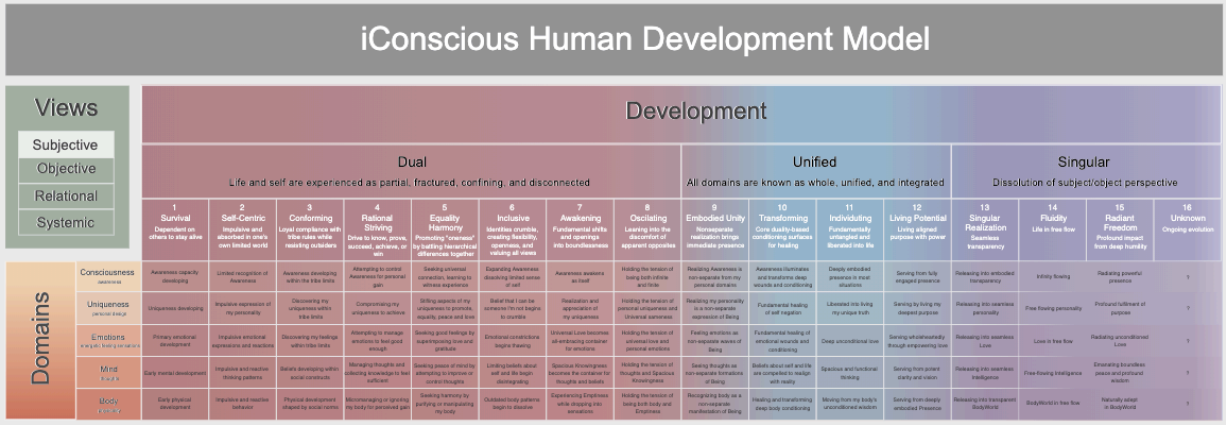

Figure 2

The model shows the three primary dimensions: Development (horizontally), Domains (vertically), and Views (in the top left corner). Development is broken into three Phases (Dual, Unified, and Singular), and each Phase is further broken into stages. To make it easy to understand how a user can find developmentally appropriate guidance, we highlight their growth edges in yellow.

To insure the model is comprehensive and can include, for example, information about States and Views within all Domains and stages, we also needed to be able to expand the data within each Field without limit. Additionally, we wanted that data to be easy to search and easy to apply to individuals who seek targeted information and resources. To achieve that, when a user clicks on any Field (cell) in Layer 1, it brings up Layer 2 within that Field, (bottom). Layer 2 allows for the endless addition of data, searchable by Views, states, or any other criteria.

Future directions

We see two main directions for further evolution: 1) further research, validation, and evolution of the iConscious model, and 2) applications for individual and collective transformative technologies (online and otherwise).

There are currently four primary ways we plan to continue evolving this model: 1) research the accuracy of Field definitions, 2) expand the Development dimension as more people evolve and Stage 16 becomes more clear, 3) further define the needs of each Field, and 4) expand the Field resources. And lastly, the more users interact with the model, the more the most effective practices will rise to the top.

We see the iConscious model eventually being used in a wide range of technologies involving humans, because helping humans evolve impacts all human endeavors, and through

humans, and all life on Earth. We are involved in developing applications using conversational agents, screen avatars, and robots, and we expect to see other developmental models used in many platforms as they become available, including in human enhancement technologies designed to overcome the limitations of the body. We also see data generated with developmental models being used in business, governments, education, and all organizations as a framework for individual, systems, and content development. Even VR, AR, and gaming will benefit from embedding developmental frameworks.

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