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Socioeconomic Status and Parenting Priorities: Child Independence and Obedience Around the World

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent to which national and personal socioeconomic status shapes national norms and parenting priorities concerning child socialization. Data came from European Values Survey, World Values Survey, and World Bank Data Catalog, resulting in 227,431 parents from 90 nations across fives study waves (1981-2008). At nation-level, child *independence* was more popular in nations with greater wealth and higher percentage of educated populations; *obedience* was more popular in nations with less wealth and lower percentages of educated and urban populations. At person-level, personal socioeconomic status rather than national socioeconomic characteristics predicted individual parents' prioritization of child independence and obedience; higher social class predicted greater likelihood of endorsing independence and not endorsing obedience. Time slope estimation across study waves revealed that parental prioritization of both independence and obedience expected to rise over time in developing nations. Results provide implications for education, practice, and policy concerning cultural variation in parenting.

Keywords: culture, family economics, parenting, social trends/social change, socioeconomic status, sociohistorical change

Around the world, parents cultivate in their children values and behavior governing the society (Super & Harkness, 1986; Quinn, 2005). Yet, societies vary in which types of values take priority in socializing children (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Maynard, 2003; Quinn, 2005). A key factor that guides family values and societal norms concerning child socialization is socioeconomic status of individuals and societies (Greenfield, 2009; Kağıtçıbaşı 2005, 2013; Lareau, 2002, 2011). Based on the data of 227,431 parents in 90 nations across fives study waves (1981-2008), we investigated how national and personal socioeconomic status shape national culture and parental goals concerning child *independence* and *obedience*.

Parenting Priorities in Individualistic and Collectivistic Societies: Independence and Obedience

Individualism-collectivism is a widely used paradigm for capturing cultural differences, including in the realm of parenting and child socialization. Individualism and collectivism at the cultural level are expressed through independent and interdependent self-construal at the individual level (Kağıtçıbası, 2013). In this study, we further focus on a specific domain within the broader construct of collectivism/interdependence to address vertical collectivism, or a way of viewing the self as related to others in an obligatory, hierarchical fashion.

In individualistic societies where the self is understood as an independent entity, parents place much emphasis on fostering child independence in order for their children to grow up as autonomous and independent individuals (Greenfield et al., 2003; Heine, 2012; Keller et al., 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Early on, children are encouraged to explore the surrounding environments on their own, away from the proximal bodily contacts with their caregivers (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2009; Greenfield et al., 2003; Keller et al., 2006). Furthermore, positive child development is often evinced by self-assertion and self-enhancement (Greenfield et al., 2003; Keller et al., 2006), Thus, parents who exercise close monitoring and frequent

solicitation in parent-child interactions risk the negative perception that they may be controlling and thwarting children's learning and achievement of self-regulation (Greenfield et al., 2003; Keller et al., 2006; Landry, Smith & Swank, 2003; Rubin, Cheah, & Fox, 2001). In the context of individualistic socialization, independence is a central theme.

By contrast, parents in collectivistic societies emphasize group harmony, based on the notion that the self is understood in relation to one's context and relationship with others (Greenfield et al., 2003; Heine, 2012; Keller et al., 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Although relationships are valued across societies, collectivistic societies are differentiated by a more pervasive emphasis on relating to others within roles defined by vertical relationships; in individualistic societies, relationships are more likely to be egalitarian and based on choice (Cross et al., 2000; Fernández et al., 2005; Oyserman et al., 2002; Park, Coello, & Lau, 2014; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Thus, a strong sense of connectedness among individuals through duty and obligation is central in collectivistic societies and tied to interdependent self-construal.

In the realm of child socialization, parental emphasis on child obedience is a way through which close-knit vertical relationships are structured and maintained. Indeed, in collectivistic societies, parents who display high levels of directiveness and authority toward their children are viewed as practicing appropriate parenting that fosters obedience, respect, and competence in children (Bugental & Grusec, 1998; Chao & Tseng, 2002; Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Even in infancy, parents use guidance designed to cultivate compliant toddlers with the ability to inhibit rewarding but socially sanctioned actions (Keller, 2007; Keller et al., 2004, 2005, 2006).

Influence of Socioeconomic Status on Parental Valuation of Child Independence and Obedience: Nation- and Person-Level Associations

Individualism is commonly described as associated with Western Anglo societies whereas collectivism is associated with non-Western and non-Anglo societies. Yet, this gross distinction between Western and non-Western societies ignores that cultural values are dynamically shaped by ecological and societal factors (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Particularly in the current era of social change and globalization, socioeconomic conditions of nations and families invoke adaptation in values and socialization (Greenfield, 2009; Kağıtçıbaşı 2005, 2013), possibly even more so than national or ethnic heritage (Park, Joo, Quiroz, & Greenfield, 2015).

National Socioeconomic Status

At the nation-level, socioeconomic conditions can shape cultural norms concerning child socialization as parents cultivate child attributes that are adaptive in their ecological settings. Greenfield (2009) explains that in rural communities with little economic and educational development, group solidarity and obligatory social roles are beneficial to meeting communal needs in face-to-face interactions. By contrast, independence is adaptive in urban ecologies with characteristics of formal schooling and commercial economies; children are socialized to effectively participate in independent pursuits and compete in educational and economic realms (Greenfield, 2009). Based on Greenfield's theory, we hypothesized that nations with characteristics of urban, educated, and wealthy ecologies would evidence national culture that prioritizes child independence rather than obedience.

Kağıtçıbaşı (2005, 2013) also recognizes the importance of nation-level socioeconomic characteristics in governing value priorities but views agency-based independence and relationship-based separation as two different dimensions. She asserts that although socioeconomic development of a society decreases intergenerational material interdependency in the family, allowing room for more agency-based independence (e.g., autonomous and

independent child), family members may well maintain intergenerational psychological interdependence and relatedness. Fostering child deference may remain an important tactic to shape and preserve intergenerational relatedness. According to Kağıtçıbaşı's view, indicators of national socioeconomic development (e.g., urban, educated, wealthy ecology) may be associated with parental valuation of child independence but not with obedience. Considering both Greenfield's (2009) and Kağıtçıbaşı's (2005, 2013) models, we examined independence and obedience separately without presupposing an inverse relation between the two constructs.

The association between national socioeconomic status and parental values can be investigated at two mutually constituting levels, given that parental values are found within each individual (personal priorities), as well as within each nation (population norms). As individual parents adapt a set of values to meet the needs and demands of the broad ecological national setting, these individual-level adaptations are then reflected back at the structural level and define the national culture. That is, parents' socialization values in a given nation collectively further produce institutional and population level norms (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Despite this mutual constitution over time, individual parental values and nation-level norms can yield two inputs on child socialization at any given time. Therefore, valuation of child independence and obedience were investigated at two levels: first, at the nation-level by calculating the percentage of parents in a given nation who endorsed independence and obedience to assess population norms; second, at the person-level by examining whether or not an individual parent personally endorsed independence and obedience as valued child qualities.

Personal Socioeconomic Status

Besides national socioeconomic status, one's social class within a nation can influence whether or not a parent values child independence and obedience. Within a nation, social class

may discriminate parenting priorities above and beyond other family characteristics such as race and ethnicity. Based on extensive home observations and interviews, Lareau (2002, 2011) found that middle-class White and Black parents used child-centered parenting fostering independence. For instance, the middle-class parents placed children in organized activities that focused on developing children's special talents, and they used talking as a disciplinary strategy. These approaches are in line with individualistic child socialization that cultivates child independence and self-regulation (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2009; Greenfield et al., 2003; Keller et al., 2006; Lareau, 2011). By contrast, working-class White and Black parents used less verbal speech and issued more directives to their children (Lareau, 2011), strategies that foster child deference and obedience (Bugental & Grusec, 1998; Chao & Tseng, 2002; Rudy & Grusec, 2006).

The association between one's social class and valuation of independence and obedience is also demonstrated within cultural groups that are typically considered collectivistic. For adolescents in China, family affluence and parental education predicted independent self-construal on a variety of self-report, social-cognitive, perceptual, and behavioral tasks (Hamamura, Xu, & Du, 2012). On the other hand, lower parental education was associated with Chinese adolescents' greater sense of duty and obligation towards the family (e.g., Fuligni & Zhang, 2004). In Taiwan, mothers with less education were found to be higher on valuing conformity and self-constraint in their children (Yi, Chang & Chang, 2004). These findings suggest that higher social class is linked with valuing independence and not valuing obedience. Yet, such studies in the extant literature are limited to a few nations and do not capture the worldwide trend..

Furthermore, there has been the lack of systematic investigation capturing the association of socioeconomic status with parental values distinctively at nation- and person-levels. How does

national socioeconomic condition shape both national norms and individual parenting priorities concerning child socialization? It is important to understand child socialization values not only as individual parents' preference in childrearing, but also as societal norms and expectations that define national culture. Increasing multiculturalism around the world (e.g., immigrants, international students), intra-society variations in parenting ideals, and changing societal norms all necessitate the multifaceted understanding of cultural values at both individual and societal levels. In addition, is it one's social class within a nation or national socioeconomic status that discriminates parenting priorities around the world? It remains unclear whether proximal (person-level) and distal (nation-level) socioeconomic status differentially shapes parenting goals (Child Trends, 2013; Luster & Okagaki, 2006). Our study was unique in its approach to differentiate national and personal socioeconomic status, as well as national norms and individual parenting priorities concerning child socialization. To achieve our goals, we culled multiple global datasets and included many developing nations underrepresented in scholarship.

Time Trend of Goal Endorsement as a Function of National Socioeconomic Characteristics

In addition to representing the global pattern based on our data of 227,431 parents from 90 nations, we utilized five different data collection periods (1981-2008) and birth cohort data to examine the effect of time on parental values. In light of globalization, it is important to understand how cultural values have changed at the global scale as children around the world are reared with evolving values compared to prior generations. Developmental emphasis in socialization can shift when environmental change is introduced as culture is dynamically constructed based on human interactions with the surrounding context (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). We applied Greenfield's (2009) and Kağıtçıbaşı's (2005, 2013) models to predict the time trends: Both models suggest increased emphasis on child independence with economically

driven social change, and there has been the global pattern of economic development. Thus, we expected that parental valuation of child independence would be more likely in later study waves and for later birth cohorts. On the other hand, the two models differ in whether the rising emphasis on independence should be coupled with declines in one's sense of obligatory social roles and close-knit relatedness among family members (e.g., child obedience). The global pattern of decline in parental endorsement of child obedience would support Greenfield's (2009) model, whereas the pattern of stability would support Kağıtçıbaşı's (2005, 2013) model.

Moreover, we explored whether the effect of time on parental valuation of independence and obedience would differ between nations of varying socioeconomic conditions. Globalization is a pattern of worldwide social change that is inclusive of, but certainly not limited to, the shift towards more urbanized, educated, and wealthier ecology; various societal factors of globalization co-contribute to the modification of cultural values over time (Hamamura, 2012; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Due to globalization, developing nations may expect the rise of individualism and become more similar to developed nations in parenting ideals over time. Thus, we tested the moderating role of national socioeconomic status in the association between study wave (time) and parental goal endorsement of child independence and obedience; this allowed us to explore whether differences in the goal endorsement between developing and developed nations remained the same between 1981 and 2008, providing a unique test of globalization.

The Current Study

In sum, we investigated the association between socioeconomic status and parental valuation of child independence and obedience at nation- and person-levels. First, we hypothesized that the national indicators representing more urban, wealthier, and educated

ecology would be associated with higher national popularity in independence and lower national endorsement in obedience. Second, we hypothesized that the same national indicators would also predict individual parents' higher likelihood of endorsing independence and lower likelihood of endorsing obedience. Third, we hypothesized that parents' higher social class within the nation (greater education level and higher family income) would predict endorsing independence and not endorsing obedience. Lastly, we explored the overall effect of time on parental values, and whether the extent to which independence and obedience were valued in developing versus developed nations changed between 1981 and 2008 as well as in later birth cohorts.

METHOD

Data

Data on parental valuation of child socialization goals and social class were obtained from the European Values Study (EVS, 2011) and World Values Survey (WVS, 2009). EVS and WVS are large-scale, cross-national, and multi-wave surveys that are available for public downloads. They include many overlapping questions with some nation- and wave-specific items. EVS and WVS have an agreement to harmonize variables and data on a basis of a common dictionary. We merged EVS and WVS data, following the official protocol based on the global data dictionary and common recoding of variables that ensured compatibility (Inglehart, Basanez, Diez-Medrano, Halman, & Luijkx, 2004). As a result, we obtained a single dataset of data collected from 90 nations over five study waves (Wave 1: 1981-1984, Wave 2: 1989-1993, Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999-2004, and Wave 5: 2005-2008). Nations varied in the number of study waves in which they participated, with an average number of waves in which nations participated equaling three. All nations were included in our study to represent the global trend.

The EVS and WVS survey teams used stratified random sampling to draw a

representative national sample of adults aged 18 years and older, within each data collection period. Regional sampling points (e.g., census units, election sections) were randomly selected within each nation, taking into account the population size and the degree of urbanization of the primary sampling units. Principal investigators from participating nations worked together to formulate and agree upon the survey and sampling procedures, which were monitored during check-ins throughout the data collection. Internal consistency checks and rigorous data cleaning procedures were also carried out before the archived data were made available to public (WVS, n.d.). In our study, we excluded non-parents (42.94%) based on their responses to an item asking "*how many children do you have*?"; respondents were excluded if they reported having no children (Park et al., 2014).

National socioeconomic data were drawn from the World Bank Data Catalog (World Bank Group, 2014). We culled national indicators of wealth (GNI per capita), education (% post-secondary enrollment), and urbanization (% urban population), matching on each nation and data collection year for respondents in the EVS/WVS aggregate data (e.g., urban population in South Africa was 49% in 1982 [Wave 1], 52% in 1990 [Wave 2], 55% in 1996 [Wave 3], 57% in 2001 [Wave 4], and 60% in 2006 [Wave 5]). The wave-varying nature of the national socioeconomic indicators was accounted by nesting study waves within nations in our data analyses.

Specifically, the national socioeconomic dataset from the World Bank was merged with our EVS/WVS aggregate dataset of parents to yield a three-level dataset: parents (Level 1) were nested within waves (Level 2), which were nested within nations (Level 3). That is, all participating parents at a given study wave in a given nation were assigned the same Level 2 national socioeconomic data of the survey year (e.g., 2,061 South African parents who participated in Wave 5 were assigned 60% for their national % urban population variable). Given

that the Level 2 national socioeconomic indicators had different data points for multiple study waves within a given nation, the observations were further nested within nations (Level 3). For the nation-level analysis of the association between national socioeconomic indicators and national popularity of independence and obedience, only study waves (Level 1) were nested within nations (Level 2) as there were no person-level data. Our final dataset included 227,431 parents (54.94% mothers) from 90 nations, with sample sizes for analytic models ranging from 114,058 to 227,431 parents and from 75 to 90 nations due to listwise deletion of missing data. The sample characteristics of nations and persons across study waves are reported in Table 1.

Measures

Parental Valuation of Child Independence and Obedience

Participants were presented with a list of "*qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home*" and asked to choose up to five qualities that they considered most important. Our study sample was limited to parents who selected between one to five goals (5.86% of respondents across waves were excluded because they selected no socialization goals or more than five goals). For the purpose of this study, we examined and coded participants' selection of independence and obedience at the nation level (national endorsement percentage of each goal) and person level (whether or not a parent selected each goal). Specifically, for the nation-level coding, we calculated each nation's percentage of parents who endorsed independence and obedience as important child qualities in each study wave (e.g., in Wave 4, 61.50% of the U.S. parents who participated in the study endorsed *independence*). At the person level, independence and obedience was each coded as a binary variable (0 = "*not endorsed"*; 1 = "*endorsed"*).

National Socioeconomic Indicators (World Bank Group, 2014)

Gross national income (GNI) per capita. GNI per capita came from the World Bank Data

Catalog that used the Atlas method for conversion. GNI per capita was the gross national income divided by the midyear population. Using the Atlas method, the World Bank converted GNI per capita in national currency to U.S. dollars at the official average exchange rates for that year, with additional calculations to handle inflation for comparison across economies. The method reduced the impact of exchange rate fluctuations in the cross-country comparison by taking into consideration each nation's exchange rates for the two preceding years, rate of inflation in the country, and international inflation.

Raw GNI per capita data culled for the nations in our study ranged from $210 to $85,560 and showed positive skewness. Thus, we performed a logarithmic data transformation (Howell, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), which resulted in the transformed GNI per capita index that ranged from 2.32 ($210) to 4.93 ($85,560). The log transformation of GNI was also needed for meaningful interpretation of coefficients in our data analyses. The unit of raw GNI was $1, thus using raw GNI would have meant that we expected a linear relationship between raw GNI and our outcome variables (every $1 makes a difference in whether or not independence/obedience is valued). This had little conceptual meaning given our use of GNI as an index for national variations in economic status around the world. Data transformation allowed us to interpret that every log of GNI (e.g., going from $100 to $1000) was associated with our outcome variables. We confirmed in our data analyses that using raw GNI and log GNI did not change our findings.

Post-secondary education enrollment. Gross enrollment ratio for post-secondary education was used as an index of the penetration of higher education at the population level across nations. This statistic was the percentage of people who went on to receive post-secondary education within five years of completing secondary school, regardless of age.

Urban population. The degree of urbanization was assessed as an index of modernization at the nation level. The index was the percentage of the population living in urban areas as defined by national statistical offices.

Personal Socioeconomic Indicators

Household income. Participants were asked to indicate their annual household income by selecting an income band that corresponded from a 10-point scale of income levels in their nation (1 = *lowest income decile* to 10 = *highest income decile*).

Education level. Participants were asked to report the highest educational level they attained by selecting one of the eight options: 1 = "*some elementary education"*; 2 = "*completed elementary education"*; 3 = "*some technical/vocational type secondary school"*; 4 = "*completed technical/vocational type secondary school"*; 5 = "*some university-preparatory type secondary school"*; 6 = "*completed university-preparatory type secondary school"*; 7 = "*some university/higher education"*; 8 = "*completed university/higher education"*.

Birth Cohort and Study Wave

Participants were assigned to a birth cohort based on their birth year (range = 1886-1988), irrespective of the study wave in which they participated. The birth cohort variable ranged from 1 (born in 1880-1889) to 11 (born in 1980-1989) and indexed the historical time. In addition, there were five study waves corresponding to following years: Wave 1: 1981-1984, Wave 2: 1989-1993, Wave 3: 1994-1998, Wave 4: 1999-2004, and Wave 5: 2005-2008.

RESULTS

All analyses were performed with STATA 12 (StataCorp, 2011), which was suitable for handling large complex survey datasets with nested data structures. We estimated a series of multilevel regression models where national and personal socioeconomic indicators were entered

as the predictors of parental valuation of independence and obedience. The outcome variables, *independence* and *obedience*, were examined separately as the national norms (national popularity of each goal) and personal priorities (whether or not a parent chose each goal).

National Popularity of Child Independence and Obedience

First, we tested the hypothesis that national socioeconomic indicators of urban, educated, and wealthy ecology would predict the national popularity of child independence and obedience. The unit of analysis was a nation at a given wave. The predictor variables were GNI per capita, % post-secondary enrollment, and % urban population of a nation at a given study wave. The outcome variables were the percentages of parents who endorsed independence and obedience as valued child qualities in each nation at a given study wave. To account for the fact that a nation had different national socioeconomic indicators if the nation participated in multiple waves, study waves (Level 1) were nested within nations (Level 2). The wave-varying national socioeconomic indicators were Level 1 predictors. There were no Level 2 predictors. Separate multilevel regression models were tested for GNI per capita, % post-secondary enrollment, and % urban population, because we were interested in the predictability of individual national socioeconomic indicators for the national popularity of child independence and obedience.

Results of the nation-level associations are presented in Table 2. As hypothesized, higher national socioeconomic status was associated with greater national popularity of independence and lower popularity of obedience. Specifically, greater national endorsement % of independence was predicted by higher GNI per capita ($b = 8.37$, $SE = 2.01$, $p < .001$) and higher % post-secondary enrollment ($b = 2.38$, $SE = 0.66$, $p < .001$). Also as hypothesized, national endorsement % of obedience was predicted by lower GNI per capita ($b = -10.88$, $SE = 1.65$, p

< .001), lower % post-secondary enrollment (b = -1.87, SE = 0.54, p < .001), and less % urban population (b = -2.96, SE = 0.55, p < .001).

Personal Endorsement of Child Independence and Obedience

For the person-level analysis, we tested the hypothesis that both national socioeconomic indicators and one's social class within the nation would predict the likelihood of a parent endorsing independence and obedience as valued child qualities. Given the unit of analysis at the person level and the binary response pattern (i.e., whether or not a parent endorsed independence and obedience), we employed three-level logistic regression: persons (Level 1) were nested within waves (Level 2), which were nested within nations (Level 3).

The Level 1 (person) predictors were participants' household income, education level, birth cohort, and gender. Household income and education level were group-mean centered within each study wave of each nation to reflect one's social class in the nation at the time. Birth cohort was entered to examine the effect of historical time, and gender was included as a control variable. The Level 2 (wave) predictors were the national socioeconomic indicators, which had different data points for multiple study waves within a given nation: GNI per capita, % post-secondary enrollment, and % urban population of a nation at a given wave. The wave-varying Level 2 data were nested within nations at Level 3. There were no Level 3 predictors.

Results are presented in Table 3. In line with our hypothesis, parents were more likely to endorse child independence if they had higher annual household income (b = 0.05, SE = 0.003, p < .001) and attained higher formal education (b = 0.09, SE = 0.003, p < .001). There was also the expected birth cohort effect, such that those born in later decades were more likely to endorse independence as a valued child quality (b = 0.08, SE = 0.01, p < .001). Also as hypothesized, parents were less likely to value child obedience if they had higher household income (b = -0.05,

SE = 0.004, $p < .001$) and attained higher formal education (b = -0.12, *SE* = 0.01, $p < .001$), although birth cohort was not associated with endorsing obedience.

Therefore, Level 1 personal social class variables (household income and education level) always predicted a parent's likelihood of endorsing independence and obedience, and in the hypothesized direction. On the other hand, Level 2 national socioeconomic indicators (GNI per capita, % post-secondary enrollment, % urban population) inconsistently predicted whether or not a parent endorsed independence and obedience as child socialization goals. Higher GNI per capita (b = 0.67, *SE* = .17, $p < .001$) and % post-secondary enrollment (b = 0.08, *SE* = 0.04, p = .034) were associated with greater likelihood of a parent endorsing independence, but greater % urban population was associated with *less* likelihood of endorsing independence (b = -0.22, *SE* = 0.05, $p < .001$). Furthermore, none of the national socioeconomic indicators predicted a parent's likelihood of endorsing obedience. That is, a parent's social class within a nation more robustly predicted his/her personal valuation of child independence and obedience than did the national socioeconomic characteristics.

Time Trend of Goal Endorsement as a Function of National Socioeconomic Characteristics

The effect of time on parental goal endorsement by national socioeconomic status was explored in moderation analyses. We tested the interaction of study wave with national socioeconomic indicators in parental valuation of child independence and obedience. This allowed us to examine how parents in nations of various socioeconomic status differed in their likelihood to value child independence and obedience across study waves, as well as whether the estimated time trends in the parental goal endorsement differed between developing and developed nations. Parents in a given nation had different study wave data points, and accordingly, different national socioeconomic data points corresponding to the study wave. Thus,

parents (Level 1) were nested within waves (Level 2), which were nested within nations (Level 3). Study wave and wave-varying national socioeconomic indicators were Level 2 predictors.

Interaction terms were created for each national indicator (i.e., wave X GNI per capita, wave X % post-secondary enrollment, wave X % urban population). Separate models were run to examine the moderating effect of the three national indicators given our interest in the role of national wealth, education, and urbanization independently from one another. Separate models also maximized the number of nations included in the analyses, and importantly, prevented the deletion of developing nations that did not have all three national indicators available in the World Bank Data Catalog. Study wave was entered as a random effect parameter to account for other potential nation effects beside the effect of national socioeconomic characteristics on parental valuation of independence and obedience.

As shown in Table 4, national socioeconomic indicators moderated the extent to which study wave was associated with parental endorsement of independence and obedience across five of the six models. The only exception was that % urban population did not moderate the association between study wave and endorsing independence. To interpret significant interactions, we estimated simple slopes of the association between study wave and endorsing independence and obedience by levels of national wealth (GNI per capita), education (% post-secondary enrollment), and urbanization (% urban population) (see Figures 1 and 2). For instance, simple slopes were estimated at 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% for post-secondary enrollment. Each slope represented the expected probability of endorsing independence or obedience across study waves (1981-2008) under certain national socioeconomic characteristics.

As shown in Figure 1, the probability of endorsing independence was significantly higher in later study waves than in earlier waves for parents in nations with low GNI per capita and

low % post-secondary enrollment. However, the probability of endorsing independence was not associated with study wave if parents lived in nations with high GNI per capita and high % post-secondary enrollment. That is, parental valuation of independence was expected to increase over time, but only in nations with lower socioeconomic status (e.g., developing nations). As a nation rises in its socioeconomic status, the nation expected a reduced effect of time on the parental valuation of child independence, as shown by the estimated simple slopes for nations with high socioeconomic status. Examining the pattern by study wave, the probability of endorsing independence was greater for parents in nations with higher GNI per capita and % post-secondary enrollment at Wave 1 (1981-1984). Yet, the probability difference by national socioeconomic characteristics converged in Wave 4 (1999 - 2004) for GNI per capita and Wave 5 (2005 - 2008) for % post-secondary enrollment. In later waves, national socioeconomic status no longer discriminated whether or not parents endorsed independence as a valued child quality.

Figure 2 displays simple slopes for parental endorsement of obedience across study waves by national socioeconomic characteristics. Looking across study waves, in nations with lower GNI per capita, % post-secondary enrollment, and % urban population, parents were more likely to endorse obedience in later waves than in earlier waves. This direction of the time effect was different from our expectation as parental endorsement of obedience increased, rather than declined (Greenfield, 2009) or remained stable (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005, 2013). In nations of high socioeconomic status, study wave was not associated with the endorsement of obedience. Looking across the simple slopes, parents in nations with low % post-secondary enrollment and % urban population were more likely to value obedience than those in nations with high % post-secondary enrollment and % urban population. This probability difference in endorsing obedience by national socioeconomic characteristics became more apparent in later waves.

DISCUSSION

In this study with 227,431 parents in 90 nations between 1981 and 2008, we investigated the predictability of national and personal socioeconomic status for national norms and parenting priorities concerning child socialization. Two child socialization goals representing individualistic (independence*)* and collectivistic (obedience) socialization were examined at nation-level (i.e., national popularity) and person-level (i.e., personal endorsement). Child independence was more popular in nations with greater wealth and higher percentage of educated populations, whereas obedience was more popular in nations with less wealth and lower percentages of educated and urban populations. As for the personal priorities, it was one's social class rather than national socioeconomic characteristics that predicted whether or not a parent selected independence and obedience as something to be valued in his/her child. Exploring the effect of time based on the multi-wave data collected between 1981 and 2008, we found that parental endorsement of both independence and obedience expected to increase in developing nations. Furthermore, in later time periods, the difference between developing and developed nations was expected to dwindle for independence and magnify for obedience.

It was as hypothesized that the national popularity of independence was greater in high-socioeconomic status nations, whereas the national popularity of obedience was greater in low-socioeconomic status nations. That is, national socioeconomic status appeared to predict the national orientation towards individualistic and collectivistic child socialization. The results thus suggest that nations of different socioeconomic conditions are expected to vary in the societal expectations concerning child socialization at the institutional level. The nation-level findings also support Greenfield's (2009) notion that independence is more adaptive and obedience is less adaptive in relatively wealthier, more educated, and more urban ecological settings.

Interestingly, for the personal parenting priorities, one's social class within the nation mattered more than national socioeconomic status. Thus, national socioeconomic status predicted overall national culture (population norms) whereas personal social class predicted personal priorities concerning child socialization goals. The differential associations at the nation-level and person-level highlight the need to consider cultural values at multiple levels (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). In a given nation, individual parents hold a set of priorities as they engage in child socialization at home. These personal parenting priorities may or may not match the nation-level expectations and societal norms concerning childrearing. The possible discrepancy between personal values and societal norms may confer important psychological implications in transitional societies. For instance, Shimizu and colleagues (2014) showed that working mothers in Japan express conflicts stemming from the discrepancy between their personal valuation of independence in childrearing and the societal expectation for mothers to stay home to care for their children. Yet, it is possible for families in transitional societies to ultimately adapt and flourish. Thus, future research can examine the adaptation process of individuals and families in nations undergoing social change. Immigrants and international students will also provide meaningful cases for studying the influence of cultural and ecological surroundings on values.

As hypothesized, higher personal socioeconomic status predicted greater likelihood of a parent endorsing child independence and not endorsing obedience. This person-level association expands prior literature suggesting social class as a determinant of value orientations (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011) including in the realm of parenting (Lareau, 2011). Results in our study suggest that parents' socioeconomic status (education level and family income) guide their selection of prioritized parenting goals above and beyond the effect of national socioeconomic climate.

Perhaps because national conditions represent an individual's more distal social environment compared to family conditions (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), national socioeconomic climate may exert less influence on a person's value orientation for child socialization than his/her social class. Yet, it is still worthwhile to note that national socioeconomic indicators selectively predicted personal endorsement of independence and obedience. Future research can further unpack the influence of national versus personal socioeconomic status by investigating whether personal social class and parenting values are differentially associated across nations of different socioeconomic status. Relatedly, research on parenting should attend to additional indicators tapping national economic climates such as poverty rate and income inequality.

We found that the effect of time on parental valuation of child socialization goals was apparent only in developing nations. Consistent with our hypothesis, the point-estimation of time slopes revealed expected increases in parental valuation of child independence in poorer or less educated nations; wealthier or more highly educated nations showed patterns of stability in parental valuation of independence over time. The expected rise of independence in developing nations is consistent with Greenfield's (2009) and Kağıtçıbaşı's (2005, 2013) assertion that economically driven social change brings increased personal autonomy. However, we did not examine the degree of economic change in each nation but investigated the general effect of time by national socioeconomic characteristics. Future research should capture change in economic development beyond national wealth, urbanization, and education at static points of time.

The time effect on parental endorsement of independence can be also interpreted by examining the goal endorsement of low- versus high-socioeconomic status nations at each study wave. In earlier waves, the likelihood of endorsing independence was clearly differentiated by national socioeconomic status, such that independence was more likely to be valued among

parents in nations with greater wealth and educated population. In later waves, national socioeconomic status no longer discriminated parental valuation of independence. Other societal factors such as globalization and penetration of Western cultures may have converged the importance of independence across nations despite variations in national wealth and education.

As for obedience, we found an unexpected pattern of increasing, rather than decreasing, importance of obedience over time. As with independence, rising valuation of child obedience was driven by parents in low-socioeconomic status nations. The coupling rises of independence and obedience in developing nations favor Kağıtçıbaşı's (2005) model of autonomy-relatedness. Close-knit intergenerational ties in the form of child deference and parental authority may remain intact across time in developing nations, through placing more emphasis on child obedience in the face of rising importance of independence. Research on immigrant families in North America provides cases for managing the valuation of independence and obedience. American children and youths from immigrant families are often expected to behave autonomously in school, while socialized to defer to parents and fulfill family responsibilities at home (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Quiroz, Greenfield, & Altchech, 2003). In fact, their motivation for individual achievement in school may be their high sense of obligation to their parents who stress academic success and giving back to family (e.g., Esparza & Sanchez, 2008). Our results of the dual valuation of personal independence and hierarchical obedience in low-socioeconomic nations prompt future research to investigate the negotiation processes for families in developing nations.

Furthermore, the pattern of increase – rather than stability or retention – in the valuation of obedience suggests that other societal factors besides economic climates must be also reinforcing parental valuation of child obedience in developing nations (Markus & Kitayama,

2010). For instance, low-socioeconomic status nations tend to have higher political instability such as government collapse and conflicts (Alesina, Ozler, Roubini, & Swagel, 1996). The present danger may prompt parents to emphasize obedience in children to prepare for their life in the context (Furstenberg et al., 1993; Pinderhughes, Nix, Foster, & Jones, 2001). Unique cultural traditions and history (Gelfand & Brett, 2004; Gelfand et al., 2011; Inglehart & Baker, 2000) and close kinship bonds in the face of challenges (Child Trends, 2013) may also contribute to the heightened emphasis on obedience even with increased valuation of independence.

Our data were culled from multiple sources to assess parental values, social class, and national socioeconomic characteristics from 90 nations and five study waves. The scope of our data also meant that we worked within the limitations of extant survey data. The measurement of independence and obedience as valued socialization goals emerged from an item asking parents to select from a list up to five important child qualities that should be cultivated. Thus, it was a single item measure of dichotomous variables (endorsed versus not). Although a multi-item rating scale might have been preferred, our goal selection method offered certain advantages. Cross-cultural contrasts of Likert-scale attitude ratings can be problematic because of potential cultural variation in response style and reference group effects (e.g., Biernat & Manis, 1994; Heine, 2012; Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002). By asking participants to make a forced choice among response alternatives, this instrument avoided having participants compare themselves to an imagined standard or reference group, a flaw particularly problematic in cross-cultural studies (Heine, 2012; Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997).

Yet, the single-word representation of desired child qualities poses limitations in the ability to capture a complex concept across cultural contexts and is heavily dependent on choices made in translation. Thus, alternative instrumentation and qualitative approaches are clearly

needed to complement the findings in our study. For example, parents from various cultural and historical contexts might have interpreted the words independence and obedience differently (Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Suizzo, 2002). Relatedly, valuation of independence may appear in diverse domains including psychological independence, material independence, autonomous decision-making, and promotion of physical separation (Manzi, Regalia, Pelucchi, & Fincham, 2012; Soenens et al., 2007). Thus, future research should investigate specific domains and how valuation of independence and obedience behaviorally manifest across cultures. Child age should be also assessed as parenting goals likely differ by children's developmental stage.

In sum, our study broadens the scholarship on cultural variation in parenting and family dynamics. The scope of our data addressed limitations in past research that relied on a few nations and underrepresented low-socioeconomic status nations. Our study provides theoretical contributions as the results reveal complexity in ways that social change may be occurring, with some preliminary support for the notion that rising socialization toward independence does not mean that interdependent socialization is on the decline. Results also offer practical implications for educators, practitioners, and policy makers working with children and families of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. In promoting healthy child development, variations in social class and national economic conditions should be considered, and educational and parenting programs should be adjusted to match the developmental goals for children in different contexts (Child Trends, 2013; Park et al., 2014). For example, emphasis on child independence without recognizing family connectedness through child obedience may induce stress to families and communities in settings where both child qualities are adaptive and valued.

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