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Child Socialization Goals in Western versus East Asian Nations from 1989 to 2010:

Evidence for Social Change in Parenting

Heejung Park, Jordan A. Coello, and Anna S. Lau

Our study challenges the notion that parenting is individualist in the West and collectivist in the East, while showing the importance of social class and generational differences in cultural understanding of child socialization.

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SYNOPSIS

Objective. This study examines East Asian versus Western parents' valuation of child socialization goals and aims to shed light on the contributions of social change and sociodemographic factors to child socialization. **Design.** Using global surveys of values in three waves from 1989 to 2010, we examined East Asian and Western parents' endorsement of 10 socialization goals. **Results.** Contrary to the widespread individualist-collectivist dichotomy, East Asian parents were more likely than Western parents to prize canonical individualist socialization goals (e.g., independence), and Western parents were relatively higher than East Asian parents in their endorsement of obedience, unselfishness, and tolerance/respect as valued child qualities. Additionally, parents were more likely to endorse individualist socialization and less likely to value collectivist socialization if they were born in later birth cohorts, had higher education and income, and used more information/technology. The findings were similar across mothers and fathers. **Conclusions.** Our study challenges stereotypical assumptions about East Asian versus Western parents. It advocates for the consideration of specific cultural dimensions as well as social class and generational differences in understanding child socialization cross-culturally.

Keywords: childrearing, collectivism, cross-cultural, globalization, individualism, parenting, social change, socialization, sociocultural context

INTRODUCTION

Parents across cultures engage in child socialization practices to cultivate values and behaviors that promote adaptation to the social, economic, and ecological conditions of their society (Super & Harkness, 1986; Quinn, 2005). However, there are cultural differences in which values are prioritized to define the optimal endpoint of child development (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni & Maynard, 2003; Harkness & Super, 1996; LeVine, 2003). To study cultural variation in child socialization, researchers have often compared and contrasted independence-promoting Western parenting and interdependence-promoting East Asian parenting based on the widely studied framework of individualism-collectivism (e.g., Chao, 1995; Chao & Tseng, 2002; Greenfield et al., 2003; Yang & Laroche, 2011). However, the utility of dichotomy between individualist West and collectivist East for child socialization can be called into question. First, social orientations ascribed to individualism-collectivism have not consistently discriminated Easterners and Westerners (e.g., Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Second, the relevance of East-West distinctions may be waning as families around the globe encounter economically driven social change that may shift the ecological conditions relevant to socialization of individualism-collectivism (Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, & Lu, 2011; Greenfield, 2009). The first aim of our study was to describe East Asian and Western parents' valuation of child socialization goals to evaluate assumptions about cultural differences in goals related to individualism-collectivism and other value orientations. The second objective was to examine whether indicators of social change and parental sociodemographic characteristics predict child socialization goals beyond the variance explained by the East-West dichotomy.

The Western Individualism versus Eastern Collectivism Dichotomy

Conventional arguments contend that Easterners, as members of collectivist societies, construe the self in relation to others and prioritize group goals over individual goals. By contrast, Westerners are regarded as individualists who consider the self as independent from others and value self-expression and pursuit of personal goals (Keller et al., 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, Triandis, Brislin & Hui, 1988; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). In line with the prevailing individualist-West and collectivist-East dichotomy, parents have been described as instilling in children collectivist attributes in the East and individualist goals in the West (e.g., Chao & Tseng, 2002; Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000). For instance, collectivist East Asian parents emphasize social norms and hierarchies so that children may contribute to the harmonious functioning of the social unit, whereas individualist Western parents socialize their children to assert the self and value individual agency (Greenfield et al., 2003; Kagitçibasi, 1996; Keller, 2003; Keller et al., 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Dimensions of Individualism-Collectivism

Despite the rich tradition supporting the individualism-collectivism contrast between Westerners and Easterners, findings have challenged the utility of the dichotomy. In particular, there appear to be more specific cultural dimensions within the broader individualism-collectivism framework (Oyserman et al., 2002). Moreover, some value orientations may have been erroneously subsumed within individualism-collectivism prototypes (Fernandez, Paez, & Gonzalez, 2005). For instance, the broad individualism-collectivism dichotomy obscures distinctions between values favoring respect of social hierarchy and deference to authority (vertical collectivism) from orientations promoting harmony and benevolence in relationships (horizontal collectivism) (Cross, Bacon & Morris, 2000; Fernandez et al., 2005; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Individualism likewise encompasses multiple dimensions. In their survey of

college students from 29 nations, Fernandez et al. (2005) identified two salient facets of individualism: (1) promotion of autonomy and uniqueness and (2) personal agency achieved through self-directed action towards individual goals.

Understanding cross-cultural child socialization requires attention to specific dimensions often subsumed within the individualism-collectivism framework. Indeed, East-West differences are more consistently observed in specific social orientations within the individualism-collectivism framework. In their meta-analysis, Oyserman et al. (2002) showed that individualism-collectivism differences across groups varied as a function of the item and scale content. Contrary to expectations, European Americans often scored similar to East Asians on scales purported to assess collectivism. A closer look revealed that European Americans generally scored lower than East Asian groups on items tapping duty to ingroups (in line with vertical collectivism) but scored as high or higher on items concerning a need for belonging to ingroups (which may represent a universal human motivation for relatedness). Oyserman et al.'s (2002) analysis also revealed that East-West differences in individualism might be overstated. Scale content concerning competition and goal-driven agency did not differentiate European American and Japanese samples, although European Americans score higher than Easterners on valuation of uniqueness.

Therefore, it is imperative to consider a more differentiated set of values that may intersect with facets of individualism-collectivism when comparing child socialization pathways in the East and the West. In our evaluation of child socialization goals, we examined socialization goals conventionally associated with individualist values of autonomy and self-expression (*independence, imagination*) and collectivist values of duty and relatedness (*obedience, unselfishness, tolerance/respect*) as well as virtues that may subserve either

individualism or collectivism (*determination/perseverance, hard work, and responsibility*). By studying a range of socialization goals, we can evaluate consistency with predictions of individualism-collectivism theory, while unpacking discrete values that may be obscured when broad orientations are assessed. We hypothesized that East Asian parents would be more likely than Western parents to endorse *obedience* as a goal reflecting vertical collectivist orientation toward duty and obligation. However, the relational goals of *unselfishness* and *tolerance/respect* may reflect values represented in horizontal collectivism that have not previously discriminated East Asian and Western groups. Consistent with individualism-collectivism theory, we hypothesized that Western parents may be more likely to prioritize the goals of *independence* and *uniqueness* relative to East Asian parents.

Furthermore, we included socialization goals (*thrift, religious faith*) beyond individualism-collectivism that could be mapped onto aspects of conservatism and traditionalism (Bomhoff & Gu, 2012; Li & Bond, 2010). These could be contrasted with constructs of materialism and modernity (Greenfield, 2013; Li & Bond, 2010). For instance, the notion of saving and conserving (*thrift*) contrasts with the idea of self-expression (Inglehart, 1997) through spending money or owning expensive materials (Park, Twenge, & Greenfield, 2013). In one study, young people valued luxury lifestyles during economically prosperous times, but they showed intentional efforts to save energy and conserve the environment during times of national economic depression (Park et al., 2013). Relatedly, analyses of global data have shown declines over time in references to spirituality (Greenfield, 2013) and rises in secularism (Li & Bond, 2010). Although not typically examined in the context of East-West differences, values related to thrift and religiosity are expected to be sensitive to social change as a function of economic development. Given that East-West differences are often confounded with differences in

economic development, it is meaningful to attend to these values outside the individualism-collectivism framework.

Social Change and Socialization Goals

Although cross-cultural differences in parenting have long been a subject of scholarly focus, research has more recently attended to the impact of social change on patterns of child socialization. As families around the globe encounter economically driven social change that shifts the ecological demands placed on families, the relevance of East-West ideological distinctions may be waning. According to Greenfield (2009), worldwide social change associated with economic development is altering cultural values and socialization environments as parents make ecological adaptations to promote the success of their offspring within society. Within a small rural community characterized by subsistence economy, face-to-face interactions within small stable social networks, lower levels of formal education and technology, socialization favors rearing children to promote group solidarity to meet their needs communally. By contrast, in an urban society characterized by formal schooling and commercial economic conditions that yield more fleeting interactions with strangers, socialization may favor independence and competition in educational and economic realms. Greenfield (2009) reasoned that as an environment shifts toward urbanization and economic development, collectivist socialization decreases and individualist socialization rises. This reasoning aligns with Inglehart's (1997) concept of transition from premodern to postmodern societal values, cultural evolutionary theory predicting shifts from social to individual learning (Boyd & Richerson, 2005; Chang et al., 2011), and theories concerning class-based differences in individual values (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011). Kraus et al. (2011) assert that personal economic resources offer people more control over their life outcomes, rendering communal resources less essential and enabling

pursuit of private interests. As such, increased economic prosperity have been linked to increased individualism.

Indeed, educated upwardly mobile individuals in historically collectivist societies have been characterized as individualist. Keller et al. (2005, 2006) found that urban, educated Indian and Chinese mothers showed autonomy goals akin to mothers from traditionally independent nations (e.g., German and European American). Findings from a three-generation study on Turkish mothers showed declines in the importance of obeying parents and the emergence of independence and self-reliance, a pattern more apparent among high-SES mothers in urban areas (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005). Furthermore, Japanese mothers now endorse childrearing beliefs that align with goals of nurturing child independence (Shimizu, Park, & Greenfield, 2014), and Chinese parents show evidence for individualist approach towards co-parenting their children (Chang, Chen, & Ji, 2005). Moreover, a survey study found that Chinese university students scored higher than American university students on six of eight individualist values and lower on six out of nine collectivist values (Parker, Haytko, & Hermans, 2009); the researchers suggested a closing or reversing of previously observed East-West differences in values, in light of rapid social change in China accompanying market-based reform and massive economic growth.

It remains unclear to what extent values change as societies encounter economically driven social change. In Keller et al.'s study (2005, 2006), urban Indian and Chinese mothers endorsing autonomy goals also emphasized relatedness goals similar to mothers from traditionally interdependent settings (e.g., Cameroonian Nso and Gujarati). These results are in line with Kagitcibasi's (2005) observations of conserved family interdependence values even as individualist socialization takes hold in traditionally collectivist societies undergoing socioeconomic development. Likewise, Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2008) pointed out that their

national and international samples of parents from diverse ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds provided interview accounts about their children in ways that revealed valuation of both individualism and collectivism. Furthermore, Bomhoff and Gu (2012) found that East Asians continue to endorse traditional and conservative values despite their residence in economically developed nations including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. As such, there is a limited understanding of the persistence or robustness of East-West differences in child socialization goals in the context of globalization and social change. It is essential to unpack influences related to social change from the national origin of samples. The sociodemographic characteristics of parents can serve as meaningful proxies for examining economically driven social change (Greenfield, 2013). Finally, examining the imprint of historical time on parents' priorities in child socialization goals may also reveal important pancultural shifts worldwide.

The Current Study

The purposes of our study were to examine: (1) differences in child socialization goals between parents in East Asian and Western nations and (2) the role of economically driven social change and sociodemographic factors in child socialization. First, we investigated whether and how East Asian and Western parents differed in their valuation of ten child socialization goal items: *independence*, *imagination*, *determination/perseverance*, *hard work*, *responsibility*, *tolerance/respect*, *unselfishness*, *obedience*, *thrift*, and *religious faith*. Based on the extant individualism-collectivism literature, we hypothesized that East-West differences in socialization goals would be most apparent for items relating to notions of individualism associated with autonomy and uniqueness (*independence* and *imagination*) and vertical collectivism (*obedience*). To examine the contributions of social change and sociodemographic factors to child socialization, we examined the associations between parent socialization goals and birth cohort,

as well as socioeconomic indicators (education level, income level, use of information/technology). In addition to parents' birth cohort, data collected from three study waves (1989-1993, 1994-1998, 2005-2010) afforded the opportunity to investigate changes across historical time.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in our study were 9,734 parents from four East Asian nations (China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) and 9,046 parents from four Western nations (Australia, Britain, Canada, and United States). We drew the data from the multi-nation European Values Study (EVS, 2011) and the World Values Survey (WVS, 2009), which included many overlapping survey questions with some nation- and wave-specific items. Following the official protocol based on a global data dictionary and common recoding of variables that ensured compatibility (Inglehart, Basanez, Diez-Medrano, Halman, & Luijkx, 2004), we created a single aggregated dataset using available EVS and WVS data collected in 1989-1993, 1994-1998, and 2005-2010 from the eight nations.

For each nation at each data collection point, stratified random sampling was used to draw a representative national sample of adults aged 18 years and older. 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. The minimum sample size in each nation was 1000. Principal investigators from participating nations worked together to formulate and agree on 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. We identified parents for inclusion in our study sample based on their

responses to an item asking “how many children do you have?”; respondents were excluded if they reported having no children.

Table 1 shows the sample size and participant age and gender composition by study wave and nation. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 95, with the mean age ranging from 45 to 53 across study waves. Across waves, participant gender was balanced in our East Asian sample (49% - 52% mothers), however there were slightly more mothers (54% - 59%) than fathers in our Western sample. Analyses of East West differences included covariates to account for differences in age (birth cohort) and gender.

Socialization Goals

Participants were presented with a list of “*qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home*”. They were then asked to choose up to five qualities that they considered especially important. Thus, our study sample was limited to participants who selected between one to five socialization goals (95.3%). Based on participants’ selection of important socialization goals from the list, each goal was coded a binary variable (0 = *not endorsed*; 1 = *endorsed*). Across three waves, the list included, in its presentation order, *independence, hard work, feeling of responsibility, imagination, tolerance/respect for other people, thrift/saving money and things, determination/perseverance, religious faith, unselfishness, and obedience*.

Social Change

To investigate the link between social change and individualist-collectivist socialization goals, we examined participants’ birth cohort and sociodemographic variables as proxies of social change.

Birth cohort. Participants were assigned birth cohort scores based on their birth years (range = 1886-1988) regardless of the study wave in which they participated. Birth cohort of the participants ranged from 1 (born in 1880-1889) to 11 (born in 1980-1989).

Income level. Participants were given a 10-point scale of incomes in their country (1 = *lowest income decile*; 10 = *highest income decile*) and asked to select the one in which their household belonged.

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*.

Information/technology use. In Wave 3, four items related to information/technology use were administered. In three items, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they used technology (i.e., news broadcasts on radio or TV; in depth reports on radio or TV; Internet/e-mail) in the past week as a source of information (0 = *not used last week*; 1 = *used last week*). In the fourth item, participants were asked to indicate how often they use a personal computer (1 = *never*; 2 = *occasionally*; 3 = *frequently*). Standardized item scores were summed to create a composite with adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .63$).

Data Analysis Strategy

We examined descriptive statistics to describe patterns of endorsement of the 10 child socialization goals by national grouping. We then used ensemble methods and logistic regression to investigate whether East Asian and Western parents could be differentiated based

on their endorsement of child socialization goals. Ensemble methods are powerful statistical classifiers where classification tree and random forest algorithms partition the data into homogenous groups (Breiman, 2001; Cutler et al., 2007). Using R, we generated a set of trees from the random forest procedure. Default values were used to determine the number of trees grown (500), the number of variables randomly sampled as candidates at each split (the square root of the number of predictors, rounded down, or 3 in this case), and tree complexity (minimum terminal node size = 1). The 10 socialization goals were the input variables that partitioned the data into homogenous nodes based on participants' East versus West membership. This procedure produced a list of the permutation importance values for each goal for accurate classification of East versus West group membership. The permutation importance of a predictor variable reflects the average reduction over all trees in classification accuracy when this variable is left in as a predictor but its values are randomly permuted, so that any association with the dependent variable is eliminated (Strobl, Malley, & Tutz, 2009). These ensemble methods were applied to data from each of three waves. After identifying the goal items that had permutation importance, we proceeded with multiple logistic regression in SPSS version 22 to determine statistical significance of increased classification accuracy, directionality, odds ratio, and 95% confidence intervals. Socialization goals with high permutation importance were entered simultaneously into logistic regression to determine which goals uniquely predicted East/West group membership.

To test the link between social change proxies and parents' endorsement of child socialization goals, we employed logistic regression where parents' birth cohort, income level, education level, and use of technology were entered as predictor variables of each socialization goal. Because there were missing responses on a portion of the sample, the regression analyses

were performed based on a subsample (85.4%) that responded to the social change indicator items. We controlled for East/West group membership and participant gender and number of total goals endorsed. Given the potential importance of parents' gender in childrearing, we further analyzed our results separately by mothers and fathers then also conducted formal tests of moderation.

RESULTS

Descriptive Patterns: Endorsement of Socialization Goals in Eastern and Western Nations

Figure 1 depicts the percentages of parents who endorsed each of the 10 child socialization goals in the East Asian and Western nations by wave. In the East Asian nations, the top three socialization goals across waves were *responsibility*, followed by *independence*, then *hard work*, with an exception of *thrift* ranking second in Wave 2. For Western parents, across three waves, *tolerance/respect* was the most important goal, followed by *responsibility*, then *independence*. Thus, *responsibility* and *independence* were among the top three goals in both the East and the West. *Independence*, *determination/perseverance*, *hard work*, *responsibility*, and *thrift* were more highly endorsed in the East than the West, whereas *imagination*, *tolerance/respect*, *unselfishness*, *obedience*, and *religious faith* showed higher endorsement in the West than the East. This pattern was evident in all three waves.

Socialization Goals that Discriminate Eastern and Western Parents

To further investigate which socialization goals best differentiated East Asian and Western parents, we used classification tree and random forest algorithms to partition parents into representative groups based on their selection of socialization goals. These methods are designed to optimize classification accuracy. Notably, *thrift* and *religious faith* stood out as the goals that best discriminated between Eastern and Western parents in all three waves with the

largest mean decrease in classification accuracy ranging from 40% to 47%. Although not as high as *thrift* and *religious faith*, the mean decrease in accuracy for the other eight socialization goals still far exceeded 0, with the lowest mean decrease recorded at 31%, suggesting that all 10 socialization goals contributed to overall classification accuracy in discriminating between East Asian and Western parents.

Most goal items showed statistically meaningful permutation importance (all $ps < .001$ for Eastern parent, all $ps < .05$ for Western parents excluding *obedience* in Wave 1 and *determination/perseverance* and *independence* in Wave 2). Therefore, we proceeded with logistic regression where the 10 goals were simultaneously entered to predict membership in the East Asian versus Western nations. Odds ratio values greater 1 indicated a greater likelihood for the item to be endorsed by Eastern than Western parents, whereas odds ratio values less than 1 meant a greater probability for the item to be selected by Western than Eastern parents. Figure 2 displays the odds ratios and associated confidence intervals for each goal.

Determination/perseverance, *hard work*, and *responsibility* were generally significantly associated with Eastern membership ($OR = 1.29$ to 2.59 , $p = .003$ to $< .001$). The only exception was a non-significant association between *responsibility* and East/West membership in Wave 2 and a significant association between *determination/perseverance* and Western group membership in Wave 3 ($OR = .80$, $p = .001$). *Tolerance/respect* and *unselfishness* were associated with Western membership ($OR = .28$ to $.69$, $p < .001$), with the only exception of *unselfishness* not discriminating East/West membership in Wave 1. *Thrift* was the most robust predictor of Eastern group membership ($OR = 4.23$ to 4.76 , $p < .001$) and *religious faith* was the most robust predictor of Western membership ($OR = .16$ to $.29$, $p < .001$).

Contrary to expectations, *obedience* was associated with Western instead of Eastern membership in all three waves ($OR = .32$ to $.65$, $p < .001$) and *independence* was associated with Eastern, not Western, membership ($OR = 1.30$ to 2.45 , $p = .001$ to $< .001$). However, *imagination* was consistently associated with Western membership ($OR = .66$ to $.81$, $p = .024$ to $< .001$) as predicted.

Looking within the Eastern and Western Groups

Results in our previous analysis stages identified consistent East-West differences across 10 child socialization goals across the three waves of data collection. Given the possibility of national variability within the Eastern and Western nation clusters, we present the nation-by-nation item endorsement percentages of each goal in each wave in Figure 3. There was a discernible clustering of East Asian nations and Western nations albeit some overlap between Eastern and Western national means. The only notable outliers were Japan's high endorsement of *determination/perseverance* and low endorsement of *hard work* relative to the other East Asian nations, and a one-time drop in endorsement of *responsibility* in Wave 2 for China.

Association with Birth Cohort and Sociodemographic Variables

To answer our second research question about the link between economically driven social change and child socialization goals, we conducted another set of logistic regressions where we examined how birth cohort and sociodemographic variables (education level, income level, and information/technology use) were associated with parental endorsement of the 10 items as valued child qualities. Separate analysis was run for each goal and each study wave. We controlled for East/West group membership and respondent gender (mother versus father) as control variables, given the East-West differences in our previous analyses and the possibility of parent gender effects on child socialization values. We also controlled for the total number of

endorsed goals because parents who selected more goals within the permissible range (1-5) would have been more likely to endorse any given goal. Complete results are presented in Table 2. Birth cohort and sociodemographic variables were significantly associated with child socialization goals, and the magnitude and directionality of the associations were largely the same across the three waves for each goal.

Birth cohort. Compared to earlier generation parents, parents from later birth cohorts were more likely to endorse the two canonical individualist socialization goals, *independence* ($OR = 1.10$ to 1.15 , $p < .001$) and *imagination* ($OR = 1.27$, $p < .001$). They were also more likely to value *determination/perseverance* ($OR = 1.05$ to 1.14 , $p < .001$) and *unselfishness* ($OR = 1.05$ to 1.14 , $p = .021$ to $< .001$) as child socialization goals.

By contrast, parents from later birth cohorts were less likely than earlier generation parents to value *hard work* ($OR = 0.88$ to 0.90 , $p = .037$ to $< .001$), *responsibility* ($OR = 0.84$ to 0.94 , $p = .003$ to $< .001$), *obedience* ($OR = 0.94$, $p = .003$), *thrift* ($OR = 0.87$ to 0.94 , $p = .001$ to $< .001$), and *religious faith* ($OR = 0.81$ to 0.95 , $p = .015$ to $< .001$) as child qualities.

Sociodemographic variables. Looking at the association between sociodemographic variables and socialization goal endorsement, we found that parents with higher education level were more likely to endorse *independence* as a socialization goal ($OR = 1.03$ to 1.09 , $p = .037$ to $< .001$). Parental endorsement of *imagination* was also associated with higher level of education ($OR = 1.10$, $p < .001$), as well as with income ($OR = 1.05$, $p = .003$) and technology use ($OR = 1.33$, $p < .001$). In addition to *independence* and *imagination*, *determination/perseverance* ($OR = 1.03$ to 1.06 , $p = .002$ to $< .001$), *responsibility* ($OR = 1.05$ to 1.20 , $p = .001$ to $< .001$), *tolerance/respect* ($OR = 1.04$ to 1.08 , $p = .015$ to $< .001$), and *unselfishness* ($OR = 1.03$ to 1.06 , p

= .037 to < .001) showed overall positive associations with sociodemographic variables indicating higher levels of education, income, and technology use.

By contrast, parents were more likely to endorse *hard work* ($OR = 0.69$ to 0.97 , $p = .025$ to $< .001$), *obedience* ($OR = 0.74$ to 0.95 , $p < .001$), and *thrift* ($OR = 0.80$ to $.95$, $p < .001$) if they came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as indicated by less education, income and technology use. Endorsing *religious faith* was also associated with less parental income ($OR = 0.91$ to 0.96 , $p = .003$ to $< .001$), but *religious faith* was associated with higher education level ($OR = 1.05$, $p = .008$ to $< .001$).

Mothers versus Fathers.

As shown in Table 2, we found that mothers were more likely than fathers to endorse *independence* ($OR = 1.18$ to 1.23 , $p = .003$ to $< .001$), *responsibility* ($OR = 1.14$ to 1.20 , $p = .042$ to $.005$), *tolerance/respect* ($OR = 1.13$ to 1.21 , $p = .047$ to $.003$) and *religious faith* ($OR = 1.59$, $p < .001$) as valued child qualities. By contrast, fathers were more likely than mothers to value *hard work* ($OR = 0.61$ to 0.80 , $p < .001$) and *obedience* ($OR = 0.87$, $p = .038$). There was no main effect of parent gender on the endorsement of *imagination*, *determination/perseverance*, *unselfishness*, and *thrift* as child qualities.

We conducted additional analyses to determine whether our main pattern of findings held across mother and father samples separately. We ran all our models separately by gender, then examined whether there were differences by gender in the main effects of East-West group membership, birth cohort, and sociodemographic variables in predicting endorsement of the 10 child socialization goals. In a small number of cases, we found apparent differences in simple effects of sociodemographic variables, birth cohort, and East-West group membership for mothers versus fathers (i.e., typically a coefficient being significant in one group but not the

other). These differences were only sporadically found across waves. In Wave 1, birth year predicted valuation of *religious faith* only for mothers ($OR = 0.92, p = .012$). For fathers only, income predicted endorsing *independence* ($OR = 1.04, p = .021$) and birth year predicted valuation of *obedience* ($OR = 0.92, p = .009$). In Wave 2, for mothers only, valuation of *determination* was predicted by income ($OR = 1.07, p < .001$), *respect* by education ($OR = 1.07, p = .006$), and *obedience* by West group membership ($OR = 0.75, p = .004$). For fathers only, education predicted valuation of *religious faith* ($OR = 1.07, p = .021$). In Wave 3, for mothers only, income predicted *thrift* ($OR = 0.93, p < .001$) while education predicted *religious faith* ($OR = 1.09, p = .001$). For fathers only, income predicted valuation of *unselfishness* ($OR = 1.06, p = .003$) and technology predicted valuation of *religious faith* ($OR = 1.30, p = .020$). In these cases, we undertook formal tests of moderation but found no significant interactions between gender and the sociodemographic, birth cohort, and East-West membership variables across models.

DISCUSSION

Child socialization is often simply portrayed as individualist in the West and collectivist in the East, but our findings challenge the utility of this dichotomy. Survey data spanning from the late 1980s to the 2010s did not support the contention that East Asian parents endorse more collectivist socialization goals and less individualist goals compared to Western parents. Instead, East Asian parents were more likely than Western parents to endorse independence, and less likely to endorse obedience, as valued child qualities that should be cultivated.

We had predicted that East Asian parents would value obedience more than Western parents based on the established notion that vertical relationship structures characterize family relations in Eastern cultures (Oyserman et al., 2002; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Thus, it was striking that obedience was more highly endorsed by Western parents than East Asian parents

across all three waves. At the same time, it is also important to note that obedience was not one of the popular socialization goals either in the East or the West overall. Therefore, our finding may be best interpreted as little recognition of obedience as an important child socialization goal across East and West, with the lack of popularity even more salient in East Asia. These data suggest that the emphasis on child deference as a cardinal feature of parental expectations in East Asian cultural contexts may be overstated (Kwon, 2010; Sung, 2001).

Furthermore, our findings suggest possible underestimation of individualist child socialization in East Asian contexts. Independence and imagination are regarded as defining features of individualist Westerners (Fernandez et al., 2005; Oyserman et al., 2002), but child independence was more widely valued in the East than in the West across the three waves in our study, although imagination was more highly endorsed by Western than Eastern parents as expected. These findings suggest that independence and uniqueness may be distinct facets of individualism (Fernandez et al., 2005; Oyserman et al., 2002). Independence may converge with notions about children's development of self-regulation and mastery valued in the East, whereas imagination may more specifically relate to uniqueness and agency in self-expression prized in the West (Trommsdorff, 2009). In line with this notion about nuanced differences, Schulze et al. (2002) found that mothers from European American and Puerto Rican backgrounds commonly valued independent socialization, but European American mothers placed an emphasis on emotional autonomy while Puerto Rican mothers focused on instrumental independence.

East Asian parents were also higher in endorsing determination/perseverance, hard work, and responsibility, whereas Western parents were higher in their valuation of tolerance/respect and unselfishness as child socialization goals. Consistent with our findings, researchers have suggested that personal agency achieved through self-directed action towards individual goals is

important for Easterners, despite having been subsumed under the idea of Western individualism (Fernandez et al., 2005; Oyserman et al., 2002; Suizzo & Cheng, 2007). Our findings are also in line with previous research that suggests general relationality is compatible with Western cultural values (e.g., Fernandez et al., 2005; Oyserman et al., 2002; Suizzo & Cheng, 2007). For instance, Suizzo and Cheng's (2007) factor analysis of mothers' socialization goals parsed attributes of relatedness into family obligation and relational intimacy; relational intimacy was valued more highly by European American than Taiwanese mothers. By contrast, Taiwanese mothers were more likely than European American mothers to value agency-status goals concerning power and achievement. As such, our findings extend the individualism-collectivism literature by supporting the notion that broad dichotomization is insufficient in characterizing cultural priorities in the East and the West.

It is noteworthy that thrift and religious faith were the child socialization goals that most prominently discriminated East Asian versus Western parents in our study; these two goals did not belong to cultural dimensions based on the individualism-collectivism framework. This finding bolsters the argument for considering specific value dimensions instead of relying on overly broad dichotomization in understanding child socialization cross-culturally. Thrift, tapping the notion of traditionalism and conservatism (Bomhoff & Gu, 2012), was more salient in the East than the West. Valuation of thrift remained across an era of rapid economic growth within these East Asian nations during the study. Personal endorsement of child socialization values may be more closely tied to individual social class than global national socioeconomic standing (Park & Lau, 2014). Another traditional value, religious faith, was more important in Western than East Asian child socialization. Nation-by-nation comparisons indicate relatively clear East-West separation in endorsing religiosity, with the United States being particularly

rooted in faith-based tradition. Future research should investigate the importance of thrift and religiosity in cross-cultural child socialization and their implications for child developmental outcomes.

In the current study, we also attended to the notion of cultural shift and social change, by examining the link between child socialization goals and birth cohort and other sociodemographic factors pertinent to social and historical change. Relative to earlier generation parents, later birth cohort parents highlighted child independence, imagination, and determination/perseverance; they were less likely to value hard work, responsibility, obedience, thrift, and religious faith. Social change toward economic development may be associated with de-emphasis on traditional mores, hierarchy, and work ethic while orienting parents to child-centered parenting. Indeed, parents from higher socioeconomic standing were more likely to endorse independence, imagination, and determination/perseverance, while less likely to value hard work, obedience, and thrift. This set of findings is consistent with emerging evidence concerning shifts toward materialism and individualism as economic fortunes increase at national and familial levels (Park et al., 2013).

Overall, our findings regarding birth cohort and social class are consistent with previous research suggesting economic development and schooling to be especially influential to cultural change (Kashima et al., 2009; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; LeVine et al., 1994). They are also in line with the assertion that sociodemographic changes shift values from collectivism to individualism with the worldwide movement towards urbanization (Greenfield, 2009; Kagitçibasi, 1996, 2005). Cohort effects in child socialization have been documented among children in China, where social reticence formerly valued in traditionally collectivist Chinese

contexts no longer appears adaptive in urban centers favoring selection of social initiative (Chen, Cen, Li & He, 2005).

Our findings underscore East-West differences in parental socialization goals that diverge from the conventional understanding of the East as collectivist and the West as individualist. It is also important to note the commonalities across Eastern and Western samples in our study. Independence, responsibility, and tolerance/respect were among the most popularly endorsed goals in both the East and the West across three waves. The popularity of these three socialization goals may reflect a universal parental desire to rear children to become independent and responsible adults who respect others in society (Quinn, 2005). Although the timeline for autonomy and the specific behaviors deemed to fulfill this independence vary across cultural contexts (Stewart, Bond, Deeds, & Chung, 1999), the more abstract aspirational goal may be ubiquitous. Certainly, the individuation of offspring is seen as desirable and essential for successful lineage, and an optimal endpoint of human development. To move forward the field, future research should continue to understand both universal and cultural aspects of child development (Jensen, 2012) as well as unpack why cultural differences in parenting arise and under which conditions (Bornstein & Lansford, 2010).

Commonalities between mothers and fathers were also found in our study. Across three waves, birth cohort and social class indicators were associated with the 10 socialization goals in the same pattern for mothers and fathers. This suggests that economically driven social change may similarly influence parental valuation of child qualities, regardless of parent gender. At the same time, some child qualities were more popular among mothers than fathers, and vice-versa. In future research, it will be meaningful to further understand the role of parent gender as well as child gender in parenting practices and priorities.

This study was limited by the use of existing survey data, wherein East Asian parents and Western parents could have differentially interpreted meaning of child socialization goals. For example, the goal of cultivating tolerance and respect for others could have been interpreted by Western respondents as denoting open-mindedness towards diverse individuals and respect of individual rights and freedom, whereas Eastern parents could have associated it with giving respect in the context of age veneration. Nonetheless, given that obedience—in line with the concept of honor and respect in vertical relationships—was associated with Western instead of Eastern group membership, our results consistently deviate from the conventional collectivist East and individualist West framework in ways that cannot easily be dismissed as measurement error. However, it is also possible that the order of presentation in which the 10 child qualities were presented could have influenced participants' selection of up to five goals that were important in their home. The goals were presented on a card shown to the respondent and were not counterbalanced in order; independence was listed first and obedience was last. It is possible that the presentation order could have contributed to the higher endorsement of independence and less frequent selection of obedience as valued child qualities. Thus, future research using different measures is necessary to replicate this pattern of findings before clear conclusions can be drawn. Furthermore, qualitative methods may shed light on how individuals and groups from various cultural contexts interpret socialization goals, for instance through ethnographic observation and discourse analysis. In addition, given that participants were asked to select goals that children can be encouraged to learn *at home*, it remains an empirical question whether the results would be replicated if participants were asked to think about important child qualities in *their society*.

Concerning the association between social change and child socialization, future research should continue to disentangle this complex link. We found robust associations between child socialization goals and birth cohort, as well as sociodemographic factors, but results also showed notable consistency in which goals were popular across three waves in the East and the West. The similarity across waves may be due to the fact that our study included nations that were more developed and economically advanced even at the first wave of data collection. Furthermore, the time span of approximately 20 years (1989-2010) may not have been sufficient to reveal macro-level historical shifts. Therefore, future research should include regions and nations that broaden the range of socioeconomic conditions. Examining nation-level socioeconomic conditions would also shed more light on the link between social change and child socialization.

Utilizing global data that captured childrearing values of parents from Western and East Asian nations across multiple time periods, our study contributes to the literature by offering the possibility that East-West differences in the ultimate goals of childhood socialization may have been overstated. Moreover, by focusing on parents who came from a wide age range, our study expands the individualism-collectivism literature and research on socialization goals and values that have largely relied on college student samples from restricted demographic and age groups (Moghaddam & Lee, 2006). Furthermore, our study highlights the role of economically driven social change in child rearing beliefs and poses important questions for child socialization across cultures in the era of urbanization and globalization.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, APPLICATION, AND POLICY

Our study challenges stereotypical assumptions about East Asian and Western parents. Findings from our study have implications for practice including interventions that aim to promote

adaptation of immigrant families from sending countries typically characterized as collectivist to destination countries typically classified as individualist (e.g., Quiroz, Greenfield, & Altchech, 2003; Renzaho & Vignjevic, 2011). Teachers and practitioners interacting with immigrant and ethnic minority families should be cautious in acting upon stereotypical views about cultural variability in parenting and instead have collaborative discussions with parents about their priorities in childrearing. Our study also underscores the importance of social class consideration. Practitioners as well as policy makers should attend to social class differences when implementing programs designed to promote healthy child development, such as by tailoring to the needs and expectations of high- versus low-income communities and nations (Child Trends, 2013).

ADDRESSES AND AFFILIATIONS

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