Chinese and European American Cultural Models of the Self Reflected in Mothers' Childrearing Beliefs

RUTH K. CHAO

Beliefs as a construct has been receiving increasing attention largely because beliefs are purported to form an important psychological guide to action by way of motivational or intentional force (D'Andrade 1992; Lightfoot and Valsiner 1992; McGillicuddy-De Lisi 1985; Quinn and Holland 1987; Sigel 1985; Strauss 1992). However, the belief-behavior connection, according to Sigel, has encountered some difficulties—namely, that a one-to-one correspondence between beliefs and behaviors is too simplistic in that it does not consider the "mental steps leading to the expression of intended action" (1985:346). On the other hand, Sigel also argues, "the consequence of that intention—action—lends more credence to the significance of beliefs as guides or determinants of actions" (1985:346). Thus, the construct of beliefs comprises an important, although complex, relation to behaviors that necessitates further study.

In the study of childrearing, McGillicuddy-De Lisi (1985) has argued that parental beliefs play a very important role in child outcomes. Too often in understanding the interrelationships among parental beliefs, parental practices, and child outcomes, only the parental practices are regarded as having an effect on the child. McGillicuddy-De Lisi has demonstrated that beliefs may also have an effect on child outcomes, in addition to their indirect effect of beliefs as translated into parental practices. In particular, she stresses that much of the influence of parental beliefs may not be evidenced in direct observations of interactions between parent and child and, in fact, may be more evident in the organization of the home. Also, for the most part, beliefs are often communicated in a very subtle manner that cannot be directly observed—beliefs have a more *cumulative* effect "over a long history of interactions with the child in countless contexts" (McGillicuddy-De Lisi 1985:8).

In addition, as Goodnow and Collins (1990) have also stressed, the study of the *nature* of parents' ideas or beliefs may be particularly informative as these ideas are not only about children but also about parents and the relationship of the "family." These ideas encompass a range of concerns about the needs of children, contributions of heredity, and the way children change over time, as well as the joys and difficulties of parenting, the value of advice, the obligations of family members to one another, and the way family members are linked to the community. Thus, not only the effects of parents' beliefs, but also the exact nature of these beliefs, constitute an important influence on the parent-child interaction.

Other researchers (D'Andrade 1992; Harkness and Super 1992; Lightfoot and Valsiner 1992; Quinn and Holland 1987; Strauss 1992; Valsiner 1988) have also emphasized the need to address the *source* of parents' beliefs, emphasizing the role of culture—with culture described by Lightfoot and Valsiner as "a heterogeneous entity that entails a variety of meanings, cultural models, and their encodings in the physical environment" (1992:393). Child development is viewed as a product of what Lightfoot and Valsiner (1992) and Valsiner (1988) label "societal culture" or "collective culture." These researchers distinguish societal culture from personal culture, or that which takes place in the psychological domains of individual persons and represents the internalization of experiences in the sphere of social transaction. Societal or collective culture, on the other hand, refers to the structural organization

of social norms, rituals, conduct rules, and meaning systems that are shared by individuals belonging to a specific ethnically homogeneous group.

This "structural organization" of meaning systems has often been referred to as "ethnotheories," "cognitive schemas," or "cultural models" and has been defined as "presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it" (Quinn and Holland 1987:4). Strauss (1992) emphasizes that these cultural models have *motivational force* because they not only describe the world but also set forth goals. However, the directive force of these cultural models is dependent upon the degree to which they are internalized by the individual—recognized in Valsiner's idea of "personal culture," described above. In other words, not all parts of a culture or not all cultural models are held by people in the same way or to the same degree. D'Andrade (1992) points out, referring to Spiro's conceptualizations of internalization, that at the first level, a person may simply be acquainted with some part of the cultural system without necessarily assenting to it; at the second level, cultural beliefs are acquired more as clichés, honoring the directive force, but more in breach than in observance. The third level represents the degree to which the cultural belief system is internalized; and the fourth level, the degree not only to which the cultural system is internalized, but also is highly salient—the extent that "it engages not only their minds but also their emotions" (D'Andrade, citing Spiro, 1992:37).

Cultural models of the "self" have received a great deal of attention by researchers in anthropology and, more recently, in psychology. Psychologists have just begun to recognize that their view of "human nature" is largely dominated by a Western perspective of the person defined as independent, self-contained, and autonomous (Markus and Kitayama 1991). This restricted view may not capture many non-Western conceptions of the individual (i.e., the person viewed in terms of his or her relations to others, or the "person in relationships"). On the other hand, anthropologists have accepted for quite some time that this more individualistic view of the self has been rather limited in that it represents somewhat of an " 'egocentric' reductionist view of the individual-in-society" (Hollan 1992:284).

As developmental psychologists, Markus and Kitayama (1991) have reviewed a number of different studies that they believe demonstrate the cognitive, emotional, and motivational consequences for those who hold the "independent" view of the self (refer to the left-hand portion of Table 1). According to them, Western individuals particularly stress attending to the self with the self defined in terms of internal attributes (i.e., psychological attributes or generalizable traits) that remain fairly stable across situations or relations with others. On the other hand, Markus and Kitayama have also provided a review of the consequences for those who hold a more "interdependent" or sociocentric view of the person (refer to the right-hand portion of Table 1). They stress that Asians emphasize an interdependence between the self and other with the self defined in terms of behaviors that are more context specific (i.e., based on particular situations, rules of interpersonal conduct, or roles in interpersonal relations). Although within both cultural groups there appears to be some variability in the extent to which the cultural ideal is apparent, Markus and Kitayama believe that these cultural distinctions for the concepts of self are quite predominant in the areas of cognition, emotion, and motivation.

This cultural model of "interdependence" is also echoed in Hsu's (1971) concept of *jen*. Specifically, interpersonal transactions are the core of the meaning of jen and represent an alternative to the Western idea of "personality." With this concept the nature of the individual's behavior is not seen as an expression of internal attributes or the "individuals' mental qualities" but rather as a reflection of how the behavior fits or fails to fit the interpersonal standards of the society or culture. Jen, then, emphasizes the interpersonal transactions rather than the person's psyche.

This article will examine the extent to which beliefs or ideas involving *parenting* reflect such cultural models of the self described by these independent-interdependent distinctions. In other words: Do these cultural models have a directive force that is apparent in the personal beliefs that mothers, in particular, hold about parenting or childrearing? This article will then report the childrearing perspectives or beliefs of two different cultural groups of mothers, immigrant Chinese (in the United States) and European American, to determine the extent to which an identifiable pattern or

TABLE 1
MARKUS AND KITAYAMA (1991) REVIEW OF THE CULTURAL CONSTRUALS OF THE SELF

Independent construal	Interdependent construal
1. Individual separate from others and social context	1. Person in relation to others
2. Describe person according to internal attributes (psychological attributes or generalized traits)	2. Describe person according to specific behavior related to specific context
3. Internal attributes remain fairly stable across relations or situations with others	3. Context determined by situation, social role, or rules of interaction
4. More focus on the expression of these internal attributes	4. Focus on developing a highly differentiated and sensitive knowledge of others and rules of conduct
5. Stress emotions that more ego-focused (anger, pride)	5. Report emotions that are more other-focused (sympathy, shame)
6. Need to be experts in the experience and expression of these emotions	6. Experts in managing the experience and proper expression of these emotions
7. Concerned with a consistency between feeling and action	7. Concerned with restraining feelings and emotions to avoid negative expression
8. Individually oriented motive to achieve (desire to achieve some internalized standards of excellence)	8. Stress a socially oriented motive to achieve (desire to meet expectations of others)

organization exists that reflects the cultural distinctions of the self drawn by Markus and Kitayama (1991).

SETTING AND SAMPLE

Forty-eight immigrant Chinese mothers, mostly from Taipei, Taiwan, were recruited through preschools in the greater Los Angeles area. All immigrated to the United States as adults (19 years at immigration was the youngest age) for one or more of the following reasons: (1) they wanted to attend a bachelor's or graduate degree program in the United States; (2) they moved to the United States with their husbands to start their own business or for better business opportunities; or (3) they wanted their children to attend school here in the United States. None immigrated for political reasons (i.e., political duress or persecution). All were

higher SES (i.e., either they or their husbands held professional/white-collar occupations) and very well educated, with at least a bachelor's degree (the mean number of years of education was 16.58). All spoke English. Their children were preschool aged, ranging from two to five years, with a mean of 3.72 years. There were 25 girls and 23 boys.

Fifty European American mothers of at least the third generation were recruited from various preschools in the West Los Angeles area. However, their mean number of years of education (17.76) was significantly higher than the Chinese mothers ($t = 2.64$, $df = 1$, 99, $p = .01$), although there was no significant difference between both groups on the father's mean number of years of education ($p = .32$). Their children ranged in age from two to five years, with a mean of 3.88 years, not significantly different from the Chinese children ($p = .36$). The numbers of European American girls and boys (26 and 24, respectively) were very close to the Chinese numbers, also a nonsignificant difference ($p = .27$).

The difference in years of education reflects the fact that this is an immigrant sample (i.e., immigrants to the United States typically have lower education levels than those born here). In addition, Chinese males still have higher education levels than Chinese females (indicated by the fact that there were no significant ethnic-group differences in *father's* number of years of education). Thus, among Chinese immigrant women, the mothers in this study were some of the most educated, just as the European American mothers in this study were some the most educated nonimmigrant women.

METHODS

Mothers were interviewed face-to-face and were presented with the specific questions, "What is your view of childrearing? What do you think is important for raising children?" Analysis of the content of each mother's response was done so that overall topical themes could be derived for each ethnic group. The researcher reviewed each mother's response, determining the actual wording used along with how each word was elaborated (i.e., the variations or interpretations given to specific words). Themes were created from either explicit wording or else similarities in the interpretation or meaning implied from the wording (conceptual similarity). Thus, although many of the themes were based on explicit wording, such

as "self-esteem" or "self-confidence," there were some themes that consisted of variations in wording involving the same general idea. For instance, the first category for the European American mothers included a number of specific wordings all applied to the general idea of providing emotional love or support to the child: providing the child with "consistency" and "love," a "secure base" or "home base," "being there for them," "listening to the child," and "appreciating the child for who he or she is." At least seven mothers had to use the same wording in order to be listed as a wording category and included in each theme. When one mother's response contained content for more than one theme, each theme was counted separately. Thus, the percentages given below represent the rate of each theme out of the total number of mothers within each particular ethnic group. In addition, within each theme the rates of each of the specific wording categories are also presented.

Intercoder agreement between the researcher and a coder who was blind to the differences as well as the ethnicity of the mothers was calculated separately for each of the themes as well as for each of the specific wordings categories. The calculations were based on one-third of the sample (31 total, 15 Chinese and 16 European Americans). The percentage agreements for each theme ranged from .84 to 1.00 (mean = .94). The percentage agreements for each specific wording category ranged from .87 to 1.00 (mean = .97).

FINDINGS

THE EUROPEAN-AMERICAN VIEW OF CHILDREARING

In comparison with the Chinese responses, the European American responses were longer. They often included more elaboration of their thoughts and sometimes included more themes. The mothers' responses can be summarized around nine general themes, with each theme listed in order according to the degree or frequency of occurrence (refer to the left-hand portion of Table 2).

(1) *Providing Consistency, Unconditional Love, and a Loving, Secure Environment.* The European American mothers mentioned at least one of the following: the importance of the mother's providing consistency in terms of being the caretaker and not working, providing discipline, structure or expectations, or providing a structured schedule concerning eating, napping, and bedtime

TABLE 2
CHILDREARING THEMES FOR EUROPEAN AMERICAN AND IMMIGRANT CHINESE MOTHERS

European American mothers	Immigrant Chinese mothers
1. Providing consistency, love; making the child feel safe	1. Loving the child or fostering a good relationship with the child
2. Building the child's self-esteem or self-confidence	2. Valuing education for the child
3. Creating an environment for learning and exploring	3. Stressing combination of obedience and respect with the child's making choices
4. Instilling values (respecting others, value of money and work)	4. Teaching respect for others
5. Processing feelings with the child (getting in touch with feelings, labeling and articulating them to others)	5. Fostering good personality, ability to get along with others, and adaptability
6. Stressing independence and individualism	6. Instilling good moral character (good judgement, honesty, good person)
7. Providing a "child-centered" environment and a developmental appreciation of the child	7. Teaching child to be independent or self-reliant
8. Stressing importance of family and community	8. Maintaining Chinese culture
9. Having fun with child, making the child's life enjoyable	

Note: Listed in order according to the frequency that each was stressed.

(48% stressed at least one of these); being there for them, making them feel loved, or letting them know they are first or very important to the parents' lives (24%); providing a loving, secure environment or "home base" (24%); or listening to them and understanding them (10%).

This area was very much tied to the next area of building self-esteem, and both reflect the independent construal of the self. These mothers believed in the importance of providing children with love and support for the purpose of building their self-esteem or making them feel good about themselves. Mothers believed that high self-esteem would provide children with the foundation for them to get all their needs met. Thus, the kind of love and support

offered was not for fostering closeness between the mother and child per se (i.e., to foster their *relationship*). Instead, this maternal love and support was primarily offered to bolster the child's confidence to go out into the world to explore his or her own interests and achievements, reflecting an independent view of the self.

(2) *Building the Child's Self-Esteem.* Building the child's self-esteem or "sense of self" was a childrearing aim that strongly differentiated the European Americans from the Chinese. Only 8 percent of the Chinese mothers mentioned this, compared with 64 percent of the European American mothers. As mentioned earlier, often the idea of self-esteem was defined as the foundation for happiness or the full potential of life. As one mother described it:

[That] you like yourself, value yourself as an individual; that your feelings about yourself are more important to you than the judgments of others . . . [is] the foundation for happiness in life; if you have a strong self-esteem you can live up to your full potential in relationships, future family, education, career, everything. It's the foundation; without it you're lost.

Mothers said they try to build children's self-esteem by being very nurturing and patient, always encouraging and reinforcing their ideas and thoughts, and, at all costs, avoiding any negative comments or criticisms, *looking* instead for opportunities to praise (40% mentioned at least one of these things). Mothers also stressed that when they do use punishment, they try to "separate the behavior from the child's ego" (what these mothers described as unconditional love). In other words, while the behavior may be regarded as "bad," the child is not, and his or her "self" is therefore always loved and accepted.

With this area, European American mothers conveyed ideas or perspectives that are directly related to the independent construal of the self. Parents try to help children feel good about themselves and to value themselves as individuals. Indeed, Markus and Kitayama stress that individuals with an independent perspective of the self are particularly predisposed to enhancing themselves or their view of themselves, resulting in what Markus and Kitayama label a "pervasive self-serving bias" (1991:242).

(3) *Creating an Environment for Learning and Exploration.* Creating an environment for learning or exploring was also stressed by 29 mothers (58%). However, their descriptions of this environment did not entail the importance of academics or education per se, but rather a more global idea of learning. This learning environ-

ment was fostered primarily through four different means: promoting creativity and exploration (12 of 29 mothers said this); providing a stimulating home environment (4 of 29); exposing them to a variety of different experiences (7 of 29); and valuing reading (6 of 29). One mother combined all aspects:

Create a good learning environment by having things available to learn with and explore. Availability, but it's not necessarily the most expensive things like Ninja Turtle, or motor-driven gadgets. It's important to read, and there's a whole gamut of books out there. . . . Also, an exposure to as many elements that are age-appropriate as possible, like museums for children, plays for her age, hiking, camping.

Other mothers simply mentioned "providing a stimulating environment with lots of opportunities for exploring and learning."

This third area of providing the child with a creative and stimulating learning environment does not directly relate to the construals of the self but instead reflects the influences of cognitive and developmental psychology in the United States. This childrearing theme is quite related to what Hess and Holloway (1984) describe as the "facilitative model." According to them, the facilitative model is the most current theoretical perspective adhered to by many American cognitive and developmental psychologists. With the facilitative model, parents are regarded as having some role in the child's learning process, although indirect. Hess and Holloway explain:

It emphasizes the active role that the young child plays in organizing the raw data of the environment to develop educationally useful skills. . . . Parents facilitate these processes, providing the raw material of experience that is needed for cognitive growth and helping the child acquire executive cognitive strategies for solving problems. [1984:194]

European American mothers, therefore, appear to be in tune with the current trends of cognitive and developmental psychology.

(4) *Instilling Values Such as Respect, Value of Money, Work, and Responsibility.* Twenty-nine mothers (58%) also stressed that they try to teach their children values. However, eight were quite vague about what they meant by values and just said "values," "getting back to traditional values," or "having good values" without being more specific. There were some, however, who mentioned one or a combination of less global references such as respecting others and being polite and considerate of others' feelings (11 of 29); not being materialistic or indulgent of children by giving them too

much (5 of 29); or learning the value of work, responsibility for something such as household chores, or "looking out" for their siblings (5 of 29). Some mothers specifically criticized the more affluent lifestyles of some families in Los Angeles:

We have sort of lost the values that I thought were really good from my upbringing. Now it's the yuppy Los Angeles, have a lot of money and spend a lot, and because of that we spend a lot. . . . We're trying to slow that down. . . . We're trying to give them things they need as opposed to things they want all the time. To give them an understanding of what things cost and where things come from.

Many of the explanations involved in this theme of instilling values may indicate a concern for the self in relation to others, or the interdependent construal of the self. This desire may be a reaction to the perceived *lack* of values in their own society, especially with valuing others. Specifically, these mothers expressed that there is too much emphasis on material things within the more affluent Los Angeles communities and not enough regard for human relations or the quality of human relations. Therefore, they perhaps may have stressed "going back to a sense of values" or the need for more "traditional values" because of a certain void created from this affluent lifestyle. These mothers may also feel that the more "traditional" European American values do stress more interdependency.

(5) *Processing Feelings and Emotional Honesty.* Processing feelings with the child was another childrearing theme that especially differentiated the European American mothers from the Chinese—while 40 percent of the European Americans endorsed this, no Chinese mothers did. One aspect of processing feelings involved helping children to be aware of their own feelings and to identify or label them "as sources of information for themselves." However, mothers often also insisted on the verbal expression of these feelings when children were in conflict with each other:

[This] involves stopping something between kids and analyzing what's going on. Letting kids evaluate their feelings, talk about their feelings, get their feelings out. You know, "It sounds like you're angry; it sounds like you're hurt; it sounds like you don't want that." Encouraging them to talk about what their feelings are. . . . Empowering them to take charge of their feelings and be able to . . . say without intervention what she wants and how she wants it if she doesn't like dealing with something. Dealing with conflict. Like with boys hitting her, teaching her how to *say* something instead of hitting or pushing or whatever, or "No, I don't like that." . . . Or appropriate good stuff as well: "I like something. I want

to do more of something." . . . Teaching them how to intervene on behalf of themselves.

This fifth theme very strongly reflects the "independent" construal of the self because it specifically focuses on the inner states of the individual (the child's awareness of his or her own *inner emotions and feelings*). These mothers are trying to teach children to be, as Markus and Kitayama put it, "experts in the expression and experience of their own emotions" (1991:235). This expertise is fostered by getting children to label or put into words their emotions, and then to articulate these emotions to others. Thus, as these mothers have stressed, their paramount concern is to help children to convey or articulate their *own* emotions and feelings so that ultimately they can "get their needs met." In contrast, mothers do not discuss the importance of the child's developing skills for understanding *others'* needs and emotions or for *listening* to what others need or feel. Instead, European American children learn to expect that others should understand and listen to their individual needs.

(6) *Independence: Emphasizing the Child as an Individual.* This aspect of independence emphasized the child's individuality and self-expression and did not emphasize the Chinese idea of self-reliance, discussed later. Thirty-eight percent of the mothers talked about the importance of fostering independence. One mother stated, "Independent—to do things on her own and question things . . . enjoy the freedom that a five-year old can have in exploring the world . . . and trying to let her come to some of her own conclusions." Other mothers also described independence as "my child breaking away from me, breaking away on his own" or as "choosing what she wants to do or doesn't want to do, or how to be with people."

Within this area, mothers reiterated the importance of the child's individuality, freedom, and separateness from the parents, not only in action, but in thought. This depiction of independence highlights the *distinctness* of the individual and, therefore, explicitly reflects the independent construal of the self.

(7) *The Child-Centered Orientation and Developmental Perspective.* Another aspect of European American childrearing involved the "child-centered" or "developmental" perspective, with 24 percent of the mothers stressing this. As one mother expressed about her home:

> We're real child-centered. We have a household for the child, like in the house they can climb on the furniture, can do what they want in the living room, and the yard is set up just for them. The environment is theirs. Vacations are theirs, and we take the kids with us a lot and have family outings.

In addition, mothers also expressed a developmental appreciation of the child, trying to interact with the child at their "developmental" or "age appropriate" level. One mother explained this very clearly:

> We are child-oriented. We do not treat her as a miniature adult, but we try to appreciate what developmental level she's at and to respect that. We try to gear the activities of the family around her and what her needs and abilities are at any given point in time. Not that she controls the family or runs the family. We respect where she is developmentally . . . and sort of orient the family around that.

This developmental and child-centered emphasis relates somewhat more indirectly to the independent self: the child's actions are motivated and understood in terms of a general "developmental" framework that emphasizes the specific *inner* attributes of each child (cognitive, emotional, and psychological); this appreciation or understanding of the child also involves recognizing the child as an individual by stressing "where each child is in the developmental process."

(8) *The Importance of the Community and the Family Unit.* About 20 percent of the mothers also stressed the importance of the child's having a sense of family and/or community: "I want to give my child a sense of her community like family and extended family. To know your place on the planet, globally, and in the family unit. To communicate what we do and don't do, and who we are." This explanation of the importance of family appears to reflect a concern for the child's knowing his or her own identity through the context of the family or community—in other words, through his or her relations with others. Because many of these mothers also mentioned that this sense of family and community is missing in today's society, perhaps this concern represents a recognition of the isolation of the individual. Thus, although this concern for family and community was not widely endorsed or valued, this area appears to indicate a desire for a more interdependent perspective.

(9) *Having Fun with the Child, Making the Child's Life Fun.* About 14 percent of the mothers stressed that they try to make sure they provide their children with a fun and enjoyable life. One mother described this as giving them a pressure-free life:

I try to be a lot of fun. The most important thing is to have fun with your children, and not take everything too seriously.... I basically like them to have a low-pressure, enjoyable life. A fun life. I would like them to be able to look back on their upbringing and to say we just had a lot of fun with mom and dad. To lead a pressure-free life as much as possible.

The purpose of "making the child's life fun" is very similar to the first area of providing the child with love and support—both are related to the more independent construal of the self. This fun is not for fostering a relationship between mother and child per se but to offer the child a certain type of environment so that the child can feel good. Thus, the parent's role is to provide a life for the child with the least amount of constraints so the child can be free to pursue his or her own ideas and, ultimately, happiness. In the first area mothers want the child to feel good about himself, while in this area mothers want the child to feel good about his life. With both cases there is a focus on the "experience" of the *individual* child, not of his or her *relations* to others.

THE CHINESE VIEW OF CHILDREARING

All of the interviews with the Chinese were conducted in English. The Chinese mothers' childrearing beliefs can be summarized into eight different themes, with each theme listed in order according to frequency of occurrence (refer to the right-hand portion of Table 2).

(1) *Mentioning Love and Sacrifice: Fostering a Good Relationship with the Child.* Chinese mothers mentioned some aspect of a close mother-child relationship or love. Twelve explicitly mentioned the word "love" or a "loving relationship." Other mothers described aspects of this relationship, such as talking and listening to children (10 mothers), being their friend (5 mothers), or wanting them to be happy (14 mothers). Mothers mostly stressed that if they talk and listen to their children now, when they are young, when they are older their children will continue to want to talk with their mothers and, it is hoped, seek them for help and guidance. Often, the mothers also described their high investment in the child and their sacrifice and devotion (19 mothers). As one mother said:

I intend to do more things for the kids than I should. Chinese mothers prepare everything for the kids and are overprotective. They do more things than they actually do for themselves, but I read in a book that they may actually be depriving the kids the privilege of being independent. My mother arranged everything; she

even carried my violin case to my music lessons. They sacrifice everything . . . giving up their own time, and even their own entertainment . . . all for the kids. American mothers have their own time, they go out on their own, have their own interests, social life, and save room for themselves. . . . Friends try to ask me to a picnic or out to lunch or coffee, but if it conflicts with the kids' schedules, I will give it up . . . but I do try to have some time for self-improvement or saving time for myself. . . . Americans leave their child to a babysitter just for going out and do not feel guilty. If I had to work or something serious like that, then I don't feel guilty. . . . Americans leave the child for a concert or movie and they think it's part of ordinary life, but I hate to do that.

As also stressed by the European American mothers, the Chinese mothers felt that providing love and making the child feel loved were very important. However, the Chinese emphasis on this aspect of mothering was quite different than the European American emphasis: the Chinese mothers talked at great length about loving the child and showing the child you love him or her for the goal or desire of fostering a very close relationship with the child and for the *continuity* of this close relationship as the child grows older; the European American mothers stressed this because they wanted to build or foster the child's self-esteem. The Chinese mothers also mentioned that they want the child to be happy so they read, play, and listen to the child, again to foster a happy relationship as well as to make the child feel happy. The stress placed on this relationship implies a value for more harmonious relations between mother and child. The Chinese mothers also stressed what they do or sacrifice for the child that also is a reflection of an interdependent perspective. Specifically, they defined their relationship with the child in terms of their "caretaker role"—a role that especially emphasizes devotion and self-sacrifice (part of a contextually based view of the self).

(2) *The Importance of Education.* Many mothers emphasized the importance of providing their children with a good education. Most said they try to teach the value of education for the child's future (i.e., for getting a good job, having a good career, or being successful in general). These mothers felt they have a responsibility not only to ensure their children are educated but to ensure they attend the best schools. They stressed that they will pay or do whatever it takes for the child to attend these good schools. Out of a total of 48 responses, 33 (69%) of them stated that education was very important for their children. However, 16 of these qualified this by saying that they don't want to push or expect *too* much.

This area may also be a reflection of the interdependent or sociocentric view of the self because this area implies a concern for the family as well as the larger society. Attaining a good education is also regarded as the necessary requisite to being a successful, contributing member of society. Chinese children are also expected to do well in school in order to fulfill their role obligations to the family. With this identical sample of mothers, I also found that Chinese mothers believed that their children do well in school because of the value placed on the family (Chao, in press). They explained that Chinese culture has traditionally emphasized that achieving academic excellence is the primary way for a child to honor his or her family and do well for the family. Indeed, Markus and Kitayama differentiate the *socially* oriented achievement motive of the Chinese, in which "the individual perseveres to fulfill the expectations of others" (1991:241). This family-motivated achievement is found to be reflective of cultures that value familialism and filial piety.

(3) *Balance of Choices with Obedience and Parental Respect.* Twenty-seven mothers (56%) also mentioned the importance of obedience and respect for parents while letting the child have choices, or offering "a balance of the two." Many felt that today's generation of Chinese mothers will explain and reason with the child but will still punish him or her if they have to. As one mother put it, "I try to have the child be as obedient as possible but I also try to have the child understand why." Other mothers also talked about the traditional value of children respecting or honoring parents and other family members such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

This area, therefore, is a core part of the sociocentric or interdependent perspective because it stresses the child's role obligations to the parents, or, in other words, the child's expected relationship to his or her parents. This role or relationship has traditionally been defined by the precepts of filial piety, or the unquestioned obedience, honor, and respect of the child to the parents. However, Chinese mothers today, especially those who have immigrated from Taipei, are looking for more of a balance between offering the child choices, when possible, while still stressing parental respect and obedience. Yet even with the more "modern" or current interpretation of filial piety, children are still expected to recognize and understand the parent's wishes. In other words, they are not encouraged to just pursue their own desires without con-

sidering the wishes of the parents. Therefore, Chinese children are taught to consider their relationship to their parents (the interdependent perspective).

(4) *Respect and Concern for Other Children or Others in General.* Another aspect mothers regarded as important for the child was to have respect and concern for other individuals (23 mothers— 46%— said this). One mother described this as "teaching kids how to love." This involved showing them how to share toys or food and not being envious of other children. Many mothers also stressed politeness toward others.

(5) *A Good Personality and Adaptability.* This stress placed on politeness is also related to another concern for the child to have a good personality, make a lot of friends, and be adaptable (20 mothers—42%—said this). These mothers said they would try to teach the child to be nice to others; as one mother stressed, "I like that my child can make the best of what is given to her by being adaptable, having a pleasant character, and knowing how to respect people and herself." Other mothers stressed that they want the child to have closer relations with others so they foster this by bringing the child everywhere with them, including shopping, visiting friends, and attending social gatherings.

(6) *Good Character, Morals, and Ethics.* Fourteen mothers (29%) expressed the importance of teaching their children "to have good morals," or "to know right from wrong," and "to have a good character." Some explained that they were Christians and wanted to teach their children Christian morals, the Christian faith, or "religion." Other mothers mentioned specific characteristics such as "being responsible or developing a sense of responsibility for themselves," "being honest," "not having bad friends" (i.e., friends that do drugs or are loud or dirty), or not lying, stealing, or being violent.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth areas are quite related to each other and are very tied to the sociocentric view of personhood through their emphasis on "harmonious relationships." For instance, with the fourth area, respect and concern for others, mothers wanted to teach their children "humanistic" ideals such as how to *love* others, rather than just how to relate to others or learn about others. The fifth area (having a good personality, being adaptable, and having a pleasant character) involves characteristics that are likely to *promote* harmonious interactions and relations with others.

The sixth area of good character, morals, and ethics involves more *moral* proscriptions for proper conduct (i.e., being an upright individual and not transgressing against one's fellow man). These proscriptions ensure harmonious transactions among individuals in the *larger society* beyond the kin group.

(7) *Importance of Independence, or Self-Reliance.* The importance of fostering independence in the child was stressed by 10 of the mothers (21%). However, this independence did not entirely seem to involve the European American idea of individuality, as discussed earlier, but rather the idea of self-reliance. The Chinese mothers felt that since they are in another country and are therefore not as knowledgeable about the skills necessary to succeed, the child needs to be more active and independent: "When I came to the United States I had to learn on my own, and I really grew up. I will guide my daughter, but not overprotect her. Let her go out on her own and learn herself and not smother her." A second way other mothers described self-reliance involved the child's learning specific skills such as grooming, keeping house, and ultimately learning general life skills.

This area of independence or self-reliance does not directly stress the sociocentric or interdependent perspectives. Specifically, many mothers mentioned the importance of fostering self-reliance as a reaction to being in the United States. On the other hand, other mothers who did not mention the United States nonetheless still stressed the idea that children must learn some things on their own or from their own experiences. However, their descriptions of "independence" did not indicate that the child must "break away" or do his or her own thing, totally *separate* from the family, such as the more individualistic interpretation of "independence" given by the European American mothers. In fact, teaching self-reliance in children is still very tied to the interdependent construal of the self. Specifically, in Chinese society, individuals are expected to know how to take care of themselves and to have the life skills to become successful and useful persons. Self-reliance is fostered in children so they may grow up to be contributing members of the family and society—an inextricable part of the interdependent view of personhood.

(8) *Maintaining Chinese Culture.* Ten mothers (21%) also stressed that they want to "maintain the Chinese culture" by having the child involved in the Chinese community, speaking Chinese to the child

in the home, sending them to Chinese schools and also back to Taiwan, and teaching them "the Chinese way." Some mothers said they want their children to learn they are from a different background and to be proud of it: "I always tell my child you are Chinese no matter where you are born."

This area is clearly a reaction to living in the United States and thus is not a reflection of the influences of the self-construals. These Chinese mothers may feel a certain tension or difficulty in trying to raise their children with some of the values of their own culture while living in the United States and being influenced by American culture. However, this concern involves a more "group-related" identification (i.e., an ethnic or cultural identity) that is consistent with the idea of interdependence (i.e, the self as part of a group).

CONCLUSIONS

CENTRAL FEATURES REFLECTING THE CULTURAL MODELS OF THE SELF

The differences in childrearing beliefs between the Chinese mothers and the European American mothers appear to be similar to the cultural differences purported (Markus and Kitayama 1991) in their construals of the self. However, rather than only reflecting the construals or views of the self, many of the European American views of childrearing may also be tied to the larger influence of the North American psychology movement in the United States. The third area, creating an environment for learning and exploring, is an example of this. Specifically, stressing creativity and the "facilitative" role of the parents (i.e., providing a "stimulating environment") are strong reflections of the theoretical models and findings of developmental psychology (e.g., the facilitative model described by Hess and Holloway 1984). Furthermore, many of their appreciations or views of the child involved what the mothers themselves labeled a "developmental appreciation." These mothers also talked about their more "child-centered" approach having to do with providing an environment for the child that directly supports their developing needs.

Harkness et al. (1992), in their study of parents' theories of child behavior and development, found that the American parents (from the Boston area) stressed two main areas, "independence" and the idea of "stages." The use of these two ideas were also quite

interrelated—with the idea of "stages" defined as "frequently occurring behaviors that seem to function as prototypical event sequences" (1992:177). These event sequences are used to explain behaviors that, on the surface, may seem quite unrelated but may be linked to each other in terms of parents' perception of the underlying motivation (e.g., the child's need for independence). These behaviors are also linked by the mere fact that they represent more *problematic* behaviors for the parents. Therefore, in order to make some sense out of these seemingly spurious and difficult-to-handle child behaviors, parents recast them in a more positive light, as part of the *parent's* desired goals for the child, primarily involving independence.

A second major influence of North American psychology upon the childrearing beliefs of European American mothers involves the psychotherapy movement. The use of psychotherapy has become very popular in the United States, so much so that the "psychotherapy process" has even permeated how adults relate to or communicate with children. Specifically, in the fifth area, involving processing feelings, European American mothers often played the role of psychotherapist in dealing with their children's conflicts. That is, during the child's emotional outbursts or conflicts with others, including the mothers themselves, the mothers would attempt to intercede and help the child first to experience or "get in touch with" his or her feelings, identify or label these feelings, and then articulate these feelings or needs to others. Thus, just as with the psychotherapy process, there is the supposition that individuals must be adept at experiencing and articulating their emotions in order to understand the needs associated with these emotions. Therefore, many of their interactions with the child incorporate the rudiments of the psychotherapy approach. Overall, many of the distinctive elements of their childrearing beliefs reflect this broader North American "psychology."

On the other hand, many of the Chinese mothers' childrearing beliefs emphasize the individual in relation to others. In fact, only the eighth area, independence or self-reliance, appears to be more reflective of an individualistic or independent view of the self. However, a more "Chinese" appreciation or interpretation of self-reliance underscores the relation of the individual to others, such as the family and the larger society. In general, the central features of their childrearing beliefs involve *more* than an interrelatedness

among individuals: Chinese mothers qualify that they desire a *harmonious* interrelatedness.

Hsu's (1981) comparisons of the Chinese child's world to that of the European American child's emphasize that Chinese children experience a highly involved and predetermined social world. For instance, Hsu explains that the American emphasis on individual choice extends even to the kin group:

> [The] American's relationship with other members of her kin group is strictly dependent upon individual preference. The American must see early in life that a powerful force composed of many aspects of individual choice-making operates to create, maintain, or cancel out interpersonal relationships. [1981:88]

Chinese children, on the other hand, learn "to see the world as a network of relationships" (Hsu 1981:88). Hsu also points out that Chinese children not only are required to submit to their parents, but also their social world is decided for them and consists of the parents and siblings as well as the extended family kin. Furthermore, Hsu also stresses that the Chinese child is intimately involved with the adult's world. Contrary to the often separate distinctions or boundaries between the American parent's world and the child's, the Chinese child is not sheltered from the everyday events and realities of the family and what goes on with the parents, and is expected to participate in the parents' social gatherings and other functions.

This type of very close and highly involved network of parent and kin-group relationships presupposes a need for harmony. Chinese individuals do not have the choice to just change or cancel out their relationships with those individuals in their social world. Therefore, their primary concern would be how to live with each other's differences and "get along." Indeed, maintaining harmony would be necessary for the overall goal involving the continuity of the family or the integrity of the family unit. The family is the cornerstone of Chinese society and provides the individual with what Hsu (1971) defines as the three basic human needs: sociability, security, and status.

Thus, the cultural models the self were quite representative of the different perspectives of childrearing espoused by Chinese and European American mothers. For European Americans there is a broader cultural value for individualism, or as Hsu (1981) has put it, "rugged individualism," that places a high premium on being

self-confident, assertive, and somewhat self-serving. These values promote the attainment of the ultimate American goal of "self-actualization"—striving to live up to one's "full potential." As mentioned previously, for the Chinese there is a larger cultural concern for harmonious relations with others and for scholarship. These values are in the service of such cultural goals as the continuity or integrity of the family unit and the family maintaining it's social status.

SIMILARITIES IN THE PRIORITIZATION OF CHILDREARING TASKS

For both groups there appears to be some important similarities involving the ordering or hierarchy of the themes (refer to Table 2). This hierarchy of themes may represent commonalities in the tasks that mothers feel they must prepare their children for, and some tasks are afforded higher priority than others.

Indeed, LeVine presents a broad overview of childrearing customs that emphasize what he labeled "the universal goals of parents vis-à-vis their children" (1977:20):

- The physical survival and health of the child, including (implicitly) the normal development of her reproductive capacity during puberty.
- The development of the child's behavioral capacity for economic self-maintenance in maturity.
- The development of the child's behavioral capacities for maximizing other cultural values—that is, morality, prestige, wealth, religious piety, intellectual achievement, personal satisfaction, self-realization—as formulated and symbolically elaborated in culturally distinctive beliefs, norms, and ideologies.

LeVine argues that these three categories would cover what parents in all human populations stress as their parental goals. LeVine also explains that there is a natural hierarchy among these goals. For example, the first goal, the health and survival of the child, is likely to receive the highest priority because if it is threatened, then goals 2 and 3 cannot be achieved. Similarly, goal 2, the child's own capacity for eventual economic self-maintenance, is necessary before one can achieve some "capacity for maximizing other cultural goals," goal 3.

LeVine's hierarchy of parental goals may be apparent across the cultural groups in this study. However, both groups of mothers did not mention LeVine's first category largely because their physical health and survival is not being threatened—both samples are fairly affluent, and, overall, the standard of living in the United States is fairly high, so this is not a conscious concern for *most* families as compared with families in other nations.

Instead, both cultural groups of mothers emphasized what may be considered the *emotional* needs of the child (i.e., the need for love and concern), mentioned as the most-emphasized theme. However, although both groups share the same childrearing task or goal, the methods used to achieve these tasks may be defined differently. For instance, although both groups stressed providing love or loving the child as their first childrearing theme, they had expressed different purposes as well as methods for providing love.

LeVine's second category or goal, involving behavioral capacities for economic self-maintenance, appeared to be very important to the mothers in this study and were mentioned as their next most-emphasized theme. However, again, the methods used to achieve this goal may differ: Chinese regard education as the avenue to social mobility, whereas European Americans emphasize self-confidence or self-esteem and a more global idea of learning, stressing creativity (see below). Each group of mothers, as their next childrearing theme, also emphasized other behaviors in the child that represent more broad universal values—what LeVine calls "cultural values"—such as concern for others, skills for getting along with others, and fostering some sense of independence along with a "group" identity.

Both groups of mothers then seem to share similar childrearing *tasks* (refer to Table 3) that follow a specific hierarchy or prioritization: (1) making the child feel loved, (2) building skills for success, (3) teaching a value for others, (4) teaching skills for relating to others, (5) fostering independence, and (6) building some group-related identity or roots. In other words, expanding on LeVine's (1977) universal parental goals, the order or prioritization of the childrearing themes for the two groups of mothers in this study are represented by the above six task or goal categories.

Both groups expressed, in their first childrearing themes, the importance of children knowing and feeling that they are loved. For the second task, both groups of mothers were also very con-

TABLE 3
PRIORITIZATION OF BOTH GROUPS OF MOTHERS

European American	Chinese
Making the child feel loved	
1. Providing consistency, love; making the child feel safe	1. Loving the child or fostering a good relationship
Building skills for success	
2. Building the child's self-esteem	2. Valuing education for the child
3. Creating an environment for learning and exploring	
Teaching a value for others	
4. Instilling values (respecting others, value of money, and responsibility)	3. Stressing combination of obedience and respect with child's making choices
	4. Teaching respect for others
Teaching skills for relating to others	
5. Processing feelings with the child (labeling and articulating feelings)	5. Fostering good personality, ability to get along with others and adaptability
	6. Instilling good moral character (good judgment, honesty)
Fostering independence	
6. Stressing independence and individualism	7. Teaching child to be independent or self-reliant
7. Providing a "child-centered" environment and a developmental appreciation of the child	
Building some group-related identity or roots	
8. Stressing the importance of the family and community	8. Maintaining Chinese culture

cerned about building skills for the child to be successful: in their second childrearing theme, European American mothers felt that self-esteem was the "foundation" for this success, whereas Chinese mothers felt that getting a good education was the essential key to success. European American mothers also stressed the importance of learning or a more global idea of learning, which was the next theme stressed after "building self-esteem."

The third through sixth goals may simply be a further elaboration or specification of LeVine's third category involving "other cultural values": the third task prioritization stressed (value for

others) is reflected in the European American mothers' next childrearing theme, the fourth theme of instilling values (i.e., respecting others, and the value of money, work, and responsibility), and the third and fourth childrearing themes of the Chinese (combination of obedience and respect, and teaching respect for others, respectively). The fourth task of teaching skills for relating to or dealing with others is reflected in the European American mothers' fifth childrearing theme (processing feelings with the child), and in the fifth and sixth themes for the Chinese (fostering a good personality/ability to get along with others, and instilling good moral character, respectively). Then both groups emphasized as the fifth task children's developing some sense of independence, with the European American mothers stressing a more individualistic independence (their sixth theme), and the Chinese stressing the idea of self-reliance (their seventh theme). The European American mothers in their seventh childrearing theme also stressed the type of environment that would foster this independence (i.e., a more individual-sensitive, "child centered," and "developmentally oriented" environment). As the final task prioritization, both groups stressed fostering some basis of group identity (their eighth childrearing themes): European Americans stressed the importance of family and community, while Chinese mothers stressed maintaining Chinese culture or ethnic identity.

Thus, there appears to be a similar prioritization of childrearing tasks that is evident in the hierarchy of childrearing themes for both cultural groups. This prioritization represents, on a more global level, commonalities in the tasks that these mothers regard as relevant to the young child's development. In effect, this hierarchy of childrearing tasks represents an expansion of LeVine's (1977) universal childrearing goals by offering further elaboration of his third category, involving "other cultural values."

RUTH K. CHAO is an assistant professor of Child and Family Studies in the College of Human Development, Syracuse University, NY.

NOTES

REFERENCES CITED

Chao, Ruth K.
    In press   Chinese and European American Mothers Views about the Role of
        Parenting in Children's School Success. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychol-
        ogy.
D'Andrade, Roy G.
    1992   Schemas and Motivation. *In* Human Motives and Cultural Models:
        Publications of the Society for Psychological Anthropology. R. G. D'Andrade
        and C. Strauss, eds. Pp. 23–44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Goodnow, Jacqueline, and W. Andrew Collins
    1990   Development According to Parents. Hove, East Sussex: Lawrence
        Erlbaum Associates.
Harkness, Sara, Charles M. Super, and Constance H. Keefer
    1992   Learning To Be an American Parent. *In* Human Motives and Cultural
        Models: Publications of the Society for Psychological Anthropology. R. G.
        D'Andrade and C. Strauss, eds. Pp. 163–178. Cambridge: Cambridge Univer-
        sity Press.
Hess, Robert D., and Susan D. Holloway
    1984   Family and School as Educational Institutions. *In* Review of Child Devel-
        opment Research, 7. R. D. Parke, ed. Pp. 179–222. Chicago: University of
        Chicago Press.
Hollan, Douglas.
    1992   Cross-Cultural Differences in the Self. Journal of Anthropological Re-
        search 48:283–300.
Hsu, Francis L. K.
    1971   Psychosocial Homeostasis and Jen: Conceptual Tools for Advancing
        Psychological Anthropology. American Anthropologist 73:23–44.
    1981   Americans and Chinese Passage to Differences. 3rd ed. Honolulu:
        University of Hawaii Press.
LeVine, Robert A.
    1977   Child Rearing as Cultural Adaptation. *In* Culture and Infancy, 17. Child
        Psychology Series: Variations in the Human Experience. P. H. Leiderman,
        S. R. Tulkin, and A. Rosenfeld, eds. Pp. 15–27. New York: Academic Press.
Lightfoot, Cynthia, and Jaan Valsiner
    1992   Parental Belief Systems under the Influence: Social Guidance of the
        Construction of Personal Cultures. *In* Parental Belief Systems: The Psycho-
        logical Consequences for Children. 2nd ed. I. E. Sigel, A. V. McGillicuddy,
        and J. J. Goodnow, eds. Pp. 393–414. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
        Associates.
Markus, Hazel R., and Shinobu Kitayama
    1991   Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motiva-
        tion. Psychological Review 98:224–253.
McGillicuddy-De Lisi, Ann V.
    1985   The Relationship between Parental Beliefs and Children's Cognitive
        Level. *In* Parental Belief Systems: The Psychological Consequences for Chil-
        dren. I. E. Sigel, ed. Pp. 7–24. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Quinn, Naomi, and Dorothy Holland
    1987   Culture and Cognition. *In* Culture Models in Language and Thought.
        D. Holland and N. Quinn, eds. Pp. 3–40. Cambridge: Cambridge University
        Press.

Sigel, Irving E.
  1985   A Conceptual Analysis of Beliefs. *In* Parental Belief Systems: The Psychological Consequences for Children. I. E. Sigel, ed. Pp. 345–371. Hillsdale, NJ:
        Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Strauss, Claudia
  1992   Models and Motives. *In* Human Motives and Behavior: Publications of
        the Society for Psychological Anthropology. R. G. D'Andrade and C. Strauss,
        eds. Pp. 1–20. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Valsiner, Jaan
  1988   Ontogeny of Co-Construction of Culture within Socially Organized
        Environmental Settings. *In* Child Development within Culturally Structured
        Environments, 2. J. Valsiner, ed. Pp. 283–297. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing
        Corporation.