

MOTHERS' GOALS FOR ADOLESCENTS  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA:  
CONTENT AND TRANSMISSION

BY

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THESIS

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### **Abstract**

The current research examined how children are socialized toward culturally valued goals during adolescence in the United States and China. 221 mothers listed and ranked their 5 most important goals for their children (mean age = 12.85 years). Children also ranked the importance of the goals and explained why they were or were not important to them. Mothers from the 2 countries held some similar goals (e.g., for children to be prosocial), but also differed. Most notably, American mothers placed heightened emphasis on children maintaining feelings of worth as well as pursuing what they enjoy. Chinese mothers stressed children achieving outcomes to a greater extent, as did African (vs. European) American mothers. European American children's rankings of importance were the least similar to those of mothers, and they gave the fewest autonomous reasons for importance indicating that goal adoption was weakest among European American children. The findings suggest that the transmission of goals from one generation to the next may be weaker in the United States, particularly among European Americans, than in China.

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## Introduction

Culturally valued goals are transmitted to children through a variety of sources (e.g., media and schools). Central are parents who in most cultures are not only considered responsible for children's development, but also looked to by children for guidance in regards to which goals to pursue. As adults are knowledgeable about what is valued by their culture, parents may adopt goals for children that will help children to develop the skills necessary to succeed in their culture. Indeed, several studies indicate that there are cultural variations in the goals parents hold for children during the first several years of children's lives (e.g., Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003; Ng, Tamis-LeMonda, Godfrey, Hunter, & Yoshikawa, 2012; Suizzo & Cheng, 2007). However, little is known about parents' goals for children during the adolescent years. Given that children's entry into adolescence is often considered a first step toward adulthood (for a review, see Collins & Steinberg, 2006), parents' goals for children at this phase of development may not only be particularly important, but also particularly reflective of cultural values.

A key aim of the current research was to address this lacuna by evaluating whether the *content* of parents' goals for children during adolescence differs in the United States and China, two countries that have distinct cultural orientations along several dimensions (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Guided by the idea that value transmission from parents to children may be moderated by a variety of forces (e.g., Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Knafo & Schwartz, 2003), the current research also addressed a second lacuna. Although there has been much attention to cultural variation in the content of parents' goals for children during the first several years of children's lives, there has been almost no attention to such variation in the *transmission* of parents' goals to children. Thus, a key aim of the current research was to determine if children's adoption of parents' goals during adolescence differs in the United States and China.

## **Cultural Orientations**

Although there is some debate (Killen, 1997; Killen & Wainryb, 2000), Western countries such as the United States are frequently characterized as being relatively independence-oriented (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Such an orientation places emphasis on the individual, with particular significance given to uniqueness and autonomy. In contrast, East Asian countries such as China have been depicted as possessing a relatively interdependent orientation in which group harmony is highly valued (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Part of such an orientation in China is an emphasis on filial piety which involves, among other things, children repaying their family for their efforts in raising them by bringing honor to their family, making sacrifices for them, and psychologically as well as materially supporting them (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Ho, 1996; Wang & Hsueh, 2000). The distinct American and Chinese cultural orientations in the United States and China may create differences in the content of some of parents' goals for children as well as children's adoption of parents' goals.

## **Content of Parents' Goals in the United States and China**

**Self-related goals.** The American orientation toward independence has been argued to lead to a concern with maintaining feelings of worth, achieved in large part through views of the self that maximize positive attributes of the individual (e.g., Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Heine et al., 2001). The concern with self-worth maintenance is evident among parents in the United States, particularly those of European descent, who also place emphasis on children following their own path (e.g., Miller, Fung, & Mintz, 1996; Miller, Wang, Sandel, & Cho, 2002). For example, Harwood, Schoelmerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, and Wilson (1996) found that European American mothers of toddlers more often mention qualities of self-maximization (e.g., "I guess the main thing is to feel good about themselves and to be self-

assured.”) as desirable long-term goals for children than do Puerto Rican mothers. In contrast, the East Asian interdependence orientation has been argued to create a focus not on enhancing the self, which can disrupt the group, but rather on improving the self so as to avoid such disruption (e.g., Heine et al., 1999; Heine & Hamamura, 2007).

These different themes around the self are evident in Chao’s (1995) interviews with European American and immigrant Chinese mothers of preschoolers: A majority of European American mothers indicated that they viewed building children’s self-esteem as a major child-rearing goal, whereas few immigrant Chinese mothers mentioned it. European American mothers also place more emphasis on the development of individuality for young children than do Taiwanese mothers (Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003), although not all of the evidence is consistent (Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger, & Liaw, 2000). Given that American adolescence is characterized as a time when children seek to establish independence from parents (for a review, see Collins & Steinberg, 2006), American parents may encourage self-maximization, with an emphasis on individuality, during this phase of development as well. In contrast, Chinese parents may emphasize improving the self not only to ensure that children maintain interpersonal harmony, but also because Confucian philosophy, which is central in China, views the constant striving to improve the self as a moral endeavor (Li, 2002, 2003).

**Achievement-related goals.** Given that children’s interest in school often declines over adolescence in the United States and China (Wang & Pomerantz, 2009), parents in both countries may be concerned with children’s achievement during this phase of development. However, this may be particularly true in China where children’s achievement becomes increasingly consequential (Pomerantz, Ng, & Wang, 2008). The American concern with uniqueness and autonomy may manifest itself in the goals parents have in regards to children’s achievement. Chao’s (1996) interviews reveal that European American (vs. immigrant Chinese) mothers place

heightened emphasis on children's exploration and autonomy in the learning process, with a focus on enjoying learning. Although Chinese parents place much import on effort (Stevenson et al., 1990), this may be seen as a means to the achievement of a tangible outcome (e.g., getting into a high achieving high school). Indeed, in China, performance on an exam taken at the end of ninth grade determines what type of high school children attend, which influences whether and where children go to college. Moreover, a college education matters more to income than in the United States (Tang, Luk, & Chiu, 2000). Hence, Chinese parents may see outcomes in the achievement arena as more important than the process of learning (e.g., enjoying it).

Chinese parents' goals may also revolve around achievement outcomes more than do those of their American counterparts because of the emphasis on filial piety in China. For Chinese parents, children's performance in school reflects on their parenting (Chao, 1995) as well as worth (Ng, Pomerantz, & Lam, in press). This along with the practical importance of achievement makes achievement a key way for children to fulfill their filial duties (Chao, 1996; Ho, 1994; Yu, 1996). Much research indicates that Chinese parents place more emphasis on children's academic success than do European American parents (e.g., Chao, 1996; Chao & Tseng, 2002; Lin & Fu, 1990; Stevenson, Chen, & Lee, 1993; Suizzo & Cheng, 2007; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). Chao's (1996) interviews indicate that both European American and immigrant Chinese mothers view education as important; however, European American mothers highlight the negative effects of placing too much emphasis on achievement, whereas immigrant Chinese mothers express high expectations for children's school success, focusing on its utility.

**Social-related goals.** Just as independence may be emphasized in both independence- and interdependence-oriented cultures, albeit in different ways, so too may interdependence (Killen & Wainryb, 2000; Tamis-LeMonda, Way, Hughes, Yoshikawa, Kalman, & Niwa, 2008). Indeed, in both the United States and China, children feeling connected to others is valued by

parents of young children (e.g., Tamis-LeMonda, Wang, Koutsouvanou, & Albright, 2002; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003), although intimate relationships are sometimes seen as more important by American (vs. Chinese) parents (Suizzo & Cheng, 2007). However, in line with the centrality of filial piety in Chinese culture, Chinese parents may place particular emphasis on vertical relationships, such as respecting elders (Ho, 1996; Triandis, 1995). Indeed, studies comparing Taiwanese and European American parents' goals for young children indicate that Taiwanese parents value conformity, obedience, and politeness more than do their European American counterparts (Jose et al., 2000; Suizzo & Cheng, 2007; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). Thus, connectedness with others may be important to both American and Chinese parents, but among the latter there may be a heightened emphasis on respecting elders.

### **Transmission of Parents' Goals in the United States and China**

The orientation toward independence in the United States and interdependence in China may create differences in American and Chinese children's adoption of parents' goals. The American emphasis on uniqueness and autonomy may focus children on defining and pursuing their own interests. As a consequence, although European American children may place importance on parents' goals, they may not prioritize them to the same extent to which parents do. Moreover, even when children do see parents' goals as important, they may not always have autonomous reasons for pursuing them – that is, they may not personally value the goals or be intrinsically interested in them; instead children may pursue them for more controlled reasons involving internal (e.g., avoiding guilt) or external (e.g., attaining rewards) pressure (for a description of the autonomous vs. controlled continuum, see Ryan & Deci, 2000). In contrast, given the orientation toward interdependence in China, Chinese children may see the family as a single unit, which may lead them to take parents' demands on as their own (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Hence, Chinese children may not only prioritize parents' goals in a similar manner to

parents, but also hold autonomous reasons for such goals. In addition, the heightened adherence to cultural norms in East Asia (vs. the United States; Gelfand et al., 2011) suggests that Chinese children may be particularly likely to adopt mothers' goals because of the strong pressure to abide by cultural norms.

Although the transmission of American and Chinese children's adoption of parents' goals has not directly been examined, there is some evidence supportive of the possibility that the two differentially adopt parents' goals. For example, in an Iyengar and Lepper's experimental study (1999), European American elementary school children spent less time and performed worse on a task than did their Asian American counterparts when they were told that the task was chosen by mothers (vs. they chose it themselves). In a similar vein, when given scenarios in which teachers used controlling practices (e.g., asking a student to stay after school to complete assignments not submitted on time), European American elementary school children agreed less with teachers' practices than did Chinese children (Zhou, Lam, & Chan, 2012).

Such differences in American and Chinese children's adoption of parents' goals are particularly likely to be evident during adolescence given different conceptions of this phase of development in the United States and China. As they move into adolescence, American children may be majorly concerned with establishing individuality from parents (e.g., Pomerantz, Qin, Wang, & Chen, 2011), which may dampen their receptivity to parents' goals. In contrast, in China, the emphasis on filial piety may cause maturity to be defined in terms of children fulfilling their responsibilities to parents, leading them to adopt parents' goals as their own to a greater extent. Indeed, although American children's sense of responsibility to parents (e.g., feelings of obligation to parents) declines over the initial years of adolescence, this is not the case among Chinese children (Pomerantz et al., 2011). Because Chinese children may view the fulfillment of their responsibilities to parents as personally important during adolescence, they

may not only prioritize parents' goals similarly to parents more than do American children, but also hold more autonomous reasons for pursuing them.

### **Beyond European American Representation of the United States**

We went beyond studying only European Americans to also studying African Americans in the United States. As the second largest ethnic group, African American families are exposed to the mainstream American culture; hence, they share many features with European American families. Given their unique historical and cultural background, as well as historical and contemporary discrimination (McAdoo, 2002), however, African American families also have distinct traditions that may influence parents' goals and children's adoption of them (García Coll & Pachter 2002; Hill, 2001). To overcome the obstacles of disadvantaged social conditions (e.g., racism, poverty, and economic inequality), African American parents' goals may be aimed at psychologically and materially protecting children. In many cases, African American parents may not have the luxury to encourage children to enjoy the process of learning. Indeed, they place a strong emphasis on children's outcomes, particularly school achievement, which they see as key in overcoming barriers created by racism (e.g., Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Draper, 2002; Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008). Both children's short- and long-term educational attainment are important goals for African American parents, because achievement in the academic arena can have a critical impact on children's future. African American parents, similar to Chinese parents, may emphasize the achievement outcomes over the process of learning.

Research on African American families finds that children are taught to value family and fulfill family obligations (Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008). This combined with the problem of poverty may lead African American children to be more involved with household activities (e.g., chores or caring for siblings) than are their European American counterparts (Billingsley, 1992). Moreover, much emphasis is placed on obedience and respect toward elders in African

American families (Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; García Coll, Meyer, & Brillón, 1995). Thus, African American children may see parents' demands and requirements as justified. In this sense, similar to Chinese children, they may be particularly likely to adopt the goals that parents hold for them.

### **Overview of the Current Research**

To address the lacuna in regards to the content of American and Chinese parents goals for children during adolescence as well as the extent to which American and Chinese children adopt parents' goals during this phase of development, mothers and their adolescent children in the United States and China were studied. We sought to capture some of the cultural and structural variability in the United States by including both European Americans and African Americans. Previous research has often presented parents with a list of goals and then asked them to indicate their endorsement of each (e.g., Jose et al., 2000; Suizzo et al., 2008). Although useful, this approach imposes cultural constraints on parents' goals. To avoid this in the current research, mothers were asked to list the five most important goals they have for children. So as to focus on the goals that mothers attempt to communicate to children, mothers were told that children would see the goals. They were then asked to rank these goals based on their importance. Concealing the fact that they were provided by mothers, the goals were presented to children to rank in importance as well as explain why they were or were not important to them.

We anticipated that the *content* of mothers' goals for children during adolescence would differ in the United States and China. Americans, particularly European (vs. African) Americans, were expected to place heightened emphasis on children maintaining feelings of worth as well as pursuing what they enjoy in the learning context. Chinese mothers were expected to stress children achieving outcomes to a greater extent as well as respecting others, with the possibility that African American mothers would do so as well. Given the different cultural orientations in

the two countries, we anticipated *transmission* of mothers' goals to be weaker in the United States, particularly among European Americans, than in China. We evaluated this by looking at the similarity between children and mothers' rankings of the importance of the goals and the extent to which children gave autonomous (e.g., interest and personal value) versus controlled (e.g., avoidance of punishment and attainment of rewards) reasons for the importance of the goals.

## Method

### Participants

This research was part of the University of Illinois Diverse Adolescent Pathways Project (see Ng et al., in press). Participants were 221 mother-adolescent dyads in the United States and China. Adolescents were in the sixth ( $n = 73$ ), seventh ( $n = 91$ ), and eighth ( $n = 57$ ) grades (for a summary of participant demographic information, see Table 1). Participants in the United States were 85 European American mother-adolescent dyads (mean age of adolescents = 12.87 years; 44 boys), and 65 African American mother-adolescent dyads (mean age of adolescents = 12.94 years; 38 boys). Families resided in a small urban location in the Midwestern United States. Because the area is home to a major state university, a proportion of the residents are highly educated, but an even larger proportion comes from working- and middle-class backgrounds. Families were recruited from three middle schools housing the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, with the majority of children being European American and African American. The schools achieved at the state average, with much variation in achievement within schools. Only 2% of mothers (1% European American, 3% African American) had less than a high school education, 51% (33% European American, 78% African American) had completed high school, 23% (28% European American, 15% African American) had a bachelor's degree, and 23% (38% European American, 3% African American) had a master's degree or higher. Such a distribution of educational attainment is close to the norm for the area from which mothers and children were recruited given that in this area at the time of the study 9% of adults over the age of 25 years had not completed high school and 38% had a bachelor's degree or higher (US Census Bureau, 2011). The majority of American mothers (88% of European American, 82% of African American) worked outside the home at least part-time. Almost all of European American mothers (92%) were married or cohabiting with a partner, and more than half of African American mothers

(57%) were married or cohabiting. On average, European American children had 1.57 siblings (range = 0 to 5) and African American children had 1.95 siblings (range = 0 to 6).

Participants in China were 71 Chinese mother-adolescent dyads (mean age of adolescents = 12.74 years; 35 boys) residing in working- and middle-class areas in one of the largest urban locations on the east coast of Mainland China. Families were recruited from one below-average and one above-average achieving middle school consisting of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Children at the two schools were almost entirely of the Han descent, which is the major ethnicity in China. Fourteen percent of mothers did not have a high school education, 66% had a high school degree, 17% had a bachelor's degree, and 3% had a master's degree or higher (e.g., MD or PhD). This rate of educational attainment is slightly above the norm for the area, where 57% of those 25 years and older do not have a high school education and 12% have a college education (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). Most Chinese mothers (86%) worked outside the home at least part-time. All reported being married. Due to China's one-child policy, Chinese children were frequently the only child (mean number of siblings = .16; range = 0 to 3).

### **Procedure**

In both the United States and China, families were given a choice of completing a set of surveys at home or the laboratory. Families in the United States opted to complete the surveys at the laboratory, which was relatively near by. In China, families opted to complete the surveys at home as it was relatively far to travel to the laboratory. In both countries, mothers completed the surveys in a private room on their own, with children doing so in another room. Children completed the survey with the assistance of a trained native research assistant who explained how to answer each set of questions, with attention to how to use the rating scales. Mothers were given the option of such assistance, but generally chose to complete the surveys on their own with the opportunity to ask questions about the surveys as needed.

In completing the surveys, mothers first wrote down the five most important goals they have for their participating child. Mothers were instructed to keep the goals short and simple, and to write them in a way that their child could understand, as their child would see the goals they listed. They were given a set of five boxes on a sheet of paper; they were asked to list one goal in each box. After listing their goals, mothers ranked them in importance. Mothers' goals were then presented to children in the context of the survey they were completing. Children were not informed that these were mothers' goals. Children ranked the importance of the goals on their own. Subsequently, in an interview with a trained research assistant, children were asked why the goals were or were not important to them. American mothers received \$15 for their participation in this portion of the project; American children received a \$10 gift certificate. Chinese mothers were given RMB60; Chinese children received stationary.

## **Measures**

**Content of mothers' goals.** On the basis of prior theory and research (e.g., Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003), as well as an examination of 20% of the data, we coded the goals into five major categories, with each including two to three different types of goals (see Table 2). The *self* category includes three types of goals: Self-maximization, self-improvement, and self-reliance. Self-maximization goals focus on children having a strong sense of self-esteem, confidence in their abilities, being unique, and not being concerned about others' views (e.g., "have high esteem" and "be strong and confident in everything"). Self-improvement goals focus on children improving themselves or desiring to do so (e.g., "have a desire to improve" and "learn from your mistakes"). Self-reliance goals concern children being able to take care of themselves and being responsible (e.g., "can rely on himself for living" and "be responsible").

The *achievement* category includes outcome and process goals. Outcome goals refer to the achievement of a particular outcome in school or in general (e.g., "get good grades" and

“earn a lot of money”). Process goals revolve around working hard in school or in general, as well as the enjoyment of learning or other activities (e.g., “try your hardest” and “love to learn”). Initially, we separated working hard and enjoyment. However, initial analyses revealed practically identical trends for the two. Thus, they were combined into the single category of process goals.

The *social* category includes three types of goals: Connectedness, prosocial, and respect goals. Connectedness goals revolve around positive relationships with known others, getting along with known others, and sociability (e.g., “maintain family ties” and “make new friends and still keep old ones”). Prosocial goals refer to being kind, caring, considerate, thoughtful of others, civic-minded, and constructive (e.g., “involved in community service” and “care about other people”). Respect goals refer to respecting elders, fulfilling obligations or responsibilities to others, and obedience (e.g., “be filial to your mother” and “respect teachers”).

Examination of 20% of mothers’ goals indicated the need for two additional categories. The *well-being* category includes psychological and physical well-being goals. Psychological well-being goals refer to happiness, loving or enjoying life, and being positive (e.g., “be happy” and “keep a positive attitude”). Physical well-being goals place importance on children’s physical health, including eating well and exercising (e.g., “eat healthy and be strong” and “have a healthy lifestyle”). The *religion* category refers to devotion to God, spirituality, or religion (e.g., “to serve God and follow his leading in your life”).

Because mothers often listed more than one goal in each box (e.g., “Do well in school, eat healthy, and help others.”), we coded each box for up to three goals. Categories were exclusive, such that each goal could receive only a single code. Theoretically, the frequency of each code could range from 0 (i.e., never mentioning the type of goal reflected by the code) to 15 (i.e., mentioning the type of goal every time a goal was listed with a total listing of 15 goals);

however, the actual ranges for each code were between 0 and 10. For each goal type, the number of times mothers mentioned it was calculated. The number of goals mothers listed ranged from 5 to 10, with ethnic variation: Both European and African American mothers listed fewer goals ( $M_s = 5.46$  and  $5.34$ ,  $SD_s = 0.87$  and  $0.69$ , respectively) than did Chinese mothers ( $M = 5.84$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ),  $t_s > 2.10$ ,  $p_s < .05$ . Thus, proportion scores were calculated, dividing the total number of times each goal was mentioned by the total number of goals listed.

Native coders trained to use the coding system coded the goals. American mothers' goals were coded by two European American coders who had spent at least 90% of their lives in the United States (Cohen's kappa = .78); Chinese mothers' goals were coded by two Chinese coders who had spent at least 90% of their lives in mainland China (Cohen's kappa = .86). To ensure that the coding was equivalent across the two countries, a coder who had spent substantial time in each country also coded 20% of the data from both the United States and China, with substantial agreement with each of the native coders (Cohen's kappas = .75 to .83). Regular meetings were held to resolve discrepancies among coders.

**Mothers and children's goal rankings.** After listing their goals, mothers ranked them in order of importance to them, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important. Children ranked the goals in terms of how important they the goals were to them. Children ranked the entirety of the content of in a single box as a single entity, even if the content was later parsed into multiple goals. Both mothers and children's rankings were reverse scored such that higher numbers indicate greater importance.

**Children's reasons.** A trained research assistant asked children why each of the goals listed by mothers is or is not important to them based on importance ratings (1 = not at all important to 5 = very important) children made of the goals (e.g., "Why is X somewhat important to you?"); children's responses were recorded verbatim by the research assistant for

later coding. For each goal, based on children's reasons, we first coded whether children accepted (i.e., agreed with the goal, e.g., "because I have always wanted to" and "because that is what makes you happy") or rejected (i.e., did not agree with the goal, e.g., "not that important" and "it does not really matter to me") the goal. A small proportion of responses (1.46%) could not be coded as accepted or rejected because children simply repeated the goal, said something that was incoherent, or did not give a reason. All children accepted at least one of mothers' goals ( $M = 5.03$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ , range = 1 to 10), with most children accepting the large proportion (European Americans accepted 87%, African Americans accepted 95%, and Chinese accepted 90%). However, there was ethnic variation in children's acceptance,  $F(2,198) = 4.75$ ,  $p < .05$ . Paired comparisons indicated that African American children were more likely to accept mothers' goals than were European American children,  $p = .002$ , with Chinese children not differing,  $ps > .09$ . Because of our interest in goal transmission, as well as the small proportion of children rejecting the goals, we focused on children's reasons for accepting mothers' goals.

Guided by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), we coded children's reasons for accepting mothers' goals as either autonomous or controlled. Autonomous reasons include intrinsic explanations reflecting a natural, inherent drive for the goal based on love or enjoyment of the activity (e.g., "Because it is fun." and "I enjoy playing the guitar.") and identified explanations reflecting personally valuing the goal (e.g., "So I can get a good education, life, and career." and "It is good to love others."). Controlling reasons include *introjected* reasons, which involve accepting the goal but without taking it on as one's own; for example, goal pursuit may be motivated by gaining trust and respect from others (e.g., "I would like to gain respect from others." and "I don't want other people to see me as ignorant.") and *external* explanations involving external demands, possible rewards, or potential punishment; this could include

religion, traditions, and social life rules to which children feel obligated (e.g., “Because my mom says so.” and “So I don’t get in trouble.”).

Children sometimes provided more than one reason for each goal; thus, we coded their responses to each goal for up to three reasons. Categories were exclusive, such that each reason could receive only a single code. Theoretically, the frequency of each type of reason could range from 0 to 15; however, the actual maximum ranged from 2 to 9. For each type of reason, the sum was taken across the goals mothers listed; this was then divided by the total number of reasons given, thereby creating a proportion score. Because the extent to which children’s reasons are relatively autonomous versus controlled is of significance (e.g., Connell & Ryan, 1986), we created a relative autonomy index by subtracting the proportion of controlled reasons from the proportion of autonomous reasons, such that higher numbers indicate more autonomous than controlled reasons. As with the coding of mothers’ goals, children’s reasons were coded by native coders (Cohen’s kappas = .77 for Americans and .92 for Chinese) as well as a bi-cultural coder (Cohen’s kappas = .72 to .97). Discrepancies among coders were resolved at regular meetings.

## Results

### Are there Ethnic Differences in the Content of Mothers' Goals?

The first aim of the current research was to investigate variations in American and Chinese mothers' goals. To this end, we examined the effect of ethnicity (European American, African American, and Chinese) in the context of Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVAs) on the five types of mothers' goals coded (see Table 2). We examined the frequency with which mothers mentioned each type of goal by submitting the proportion for each type to a MANOVA. Arcsine transformations of the proportions were used to ensure an even distribution (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). The importance of each type of goal was investigated by assigning the ranking mothers' provided for the first type of goal coded in each box; these were then submitted to a MANOVA. Because European American mothers were more educated than were African American and Chinese mothers, we originally included educational attainment (1 = less than high school, 2 = high school but less than college, 3 = college or more) as a covariate, but this did not influence the results. Thus, it was dropped from the analyses. MANOVAs conducted on the proportions and rankings of mothers' goals yielded multivariate effects of ethnicity (see Table 3 and 4), Roy's largest root  $> .71$ ,  $F_s > 12$ ,  $ps < .001$ . When we added children's gender and grade into the analyses, there was no main effect of gender or grade,  $F_s < 1$ , or an interaction involving either,  $F_s < 2.15$ , *ns*.

**Goal frequency.** As anticipated, the univariate test indicated that mothers' emphasis on self-maximization varied with ethnicity (see Table 3),  $F(2, 218) = 9.46$ ,  $p < .001$ . Paired comparisons showed that both European American and African American mothers more frequently gave self-maximization goals than did Chinese mothers,  $ps < .01$ . European American and African American mothers did not differ in the frequency of their self-maximization goals,  $p = .13$ . Mothers' emphasis on self-improvement also varied by ethnicity,  $F(2, 218) = 4.19$ ,  $p = .02$ .

Paired comparisons indicated that both European American and African American mothers had fewer self-improvement goals than did Chinese mothers,  $ps < .05$ . European American and African American mothers did not differ,  $p = .50$ . No ethnic differences were found for self-reliance goals,  $F(2, 218) < 1$ .

The frequency of both process and outcome goals differed across ethnicity,  $F(2, 218)s > 11$ ,  $ps < .001$ . Consistent with expectations, paired comparisons indicated that European American mothers held more process goals than did their African American and Chinese counterparts,  $ps < .01$ . African American mothers held more process,  $p = .01$ , but not outcome,  $p = .34$ , goals than did Chinese mothers. Chinese and African American mothers held more outcome goals than did European American mothers,  $ps < .001$ .

In line with the idea that filial piety is less important in the United States than China, mothers' goals about respecting elders varied with ethnicity,  $F(2, 218) = 5.55$ ,  $p < .01$ . European American (vs. Chinese) mothers emphasized respecting elders less often,  $p < .001$ . African American mothers' emphasis on respect did not differ from that of European American or Chinese mothers,  $ps > .10$ . There were no ethnicity differences in mothers' connectedness and prosocial goals,  $F(2, 218)s < 1.55$ , *ns*.

Mothers' emphasis on both psychological and physical well-being varied by ethnicity,  $F(2, 218)s > 4.70$ ,  $ps < .01$ . European American and Chinese mothers emphasized more psychological well-being goals than did African American mothers,  $ps < .05$ . European American and Chinese mothers did not differ in their emphasis on such goals,  $p = .46$ . Chinese mothers emphasized physical well-being goals more than did both European and African mothers,  $ps < .001$ , who did not differ in their emphasis on such goals,  $p = .11$ . Mothers' religion goals varied by ethnicity,  $F(2, 218) = 6.60$ ,  $p < .01$ . Both European and African American

mothers had more religion goals than did Chinese mothers,  $ps < .01$ . European and African American mothers endorsed such goals equally,  $p = .60$ .

**Goal rankings.** As shown in Table 4, the ethnic differences in mothers' rankings of importance of the goals they listed largely mirrored the ethnic differences in the frequency with which they listed the goals. The only difference was that mothers' ranking of the prosocial goal varied with ethnicity,  $F(2, 201) = 3.05, p < .05$ : European American and Chinese mothers placed more emphasis on this goal than did their African American counterparts,  $ps < .05$ . European American and Chinese mothers did not differ,  $p = .98$ .

### **Are there Ethnic Differences in Children's Adoption of Mothers' Goals?**

The second aim of the current research was to investigate whether there are ethnic variations in children's adoption of mothers' goals. Two sets of analyses were conducted. In the first, Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) was used to examine similarity among children and mothers in how they prioritize mother's goals. That is, a within-participants approach was taken to evaluate the association between mothers and children's importance rankings. The second set of analyses focused on the extent to which children's reasons for accepting mothers' goals were autonomous (vs. controlled). To this end, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the reasons children gave for viewing mothers' goals as important. Inclusion of educational attainment as a covariate in both sets of analyses did not influence the results; this was also the case for children's gender and grade.

**Goal rankings.** The aim of the first set of analyses was to identify if there is ethnic variation in the extent to which children's goal priorities mirror those of mothers. Multilevel modeling was applied with HLM 7 (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002), which allowed us to capture the within-dyad similarity in goal rankings between mothers and children. Because these analyses focus on within-dyad similarity, they capture the extent to which there is correspondence in the

rankings of children's and mothers' goals within each dyad. The following within-dyad equation was used:

$$\text{Child ranking}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} * (\text{Maternal ranking}_{ij}) + r_{ij} \quad (1)$$

Children's ranking for a given maternal goal ( $i$ ) for a particular child ( $j$ ) was modeled by each child's intercept ( $\beta_{0j}$ ) and his or her mother's ranking for the same goal. The error term in the equation represents unexplained variance ( $r_{ij}$ ). The Level 1 (within-dyad) equation allowed for the examination of children's rankings as a function of mothers' ranking. We centered mothers' ranking at the most important goal coding it as zero, so that the intercept represents the this goal.

The Level 1 equation indicated that mother's rankings of their goals predicted children's ranking of their goals, coefficient = .30,  $SE = .04$ ,  $t(201) = 8.33$ ,  $p < .001$ . Notably, there was variability in this association,  $\chi^2(201) = 322.17$ ,  $p < .001$ . To examine if ethnicity contributes to such variability, we included Level 2 (between-dyad) equations to evaluate the moderating role of ethnicity. In the Level 2 equations, the intercept ( $\beta_{0j}$ ) and slope ( $\beta_{1j}$ ) were predicted from children's ethnicity.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(Intercept)} \quad \beta_{0j} = & \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} * (\text{European American vs. Chinese}) + \gamma_{02} * (\text{African American vs.} \\ & \text{Chinese}) + u_{0j} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(Slope)} \quad \beta_{1j} = & \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} * (\text{European American vs. Chinese}) + \gamma_{12} * (\text{African American vs.} \\ & \text{Chinese}) + u_{1j} \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Ethnicity was dummy coded, with Chinese children designated as the baseline group (i.e., always coded as 0) for comparison with children from European and African American families. Comparisons between children from European and African American families were made by changing the baseline group in the intercept and slope equations to adolescents from European

American families. Error terms contributing to unexplained variance are represented by  $u_{0j}$  and  $u_{1j}$ .

As shown in Figure 1, for mothers' most important goal (i.e., the intercept), European American children (coefficient = 1.62,  $SE = .13$ ,  $p < .001$ ),  $t(199) = 2.10$ ,  $p < .05$ , prioritized it less than did Chinese children (coefficient = 1.21,  $SE = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). African American children's ranking for mothers' most important goal (coefficient = 1.33,  $SE = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ) did not differ from European American,  $t(199) = 1.47$ ,  $p = .14$ , or Chinese,  $t(199) < 1$ , children's rankings. In terms of mother-child dyads ranking across the five goals (i.e., the slope), European American children's rankings (coefficient = .19,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ),  $t(199) = -2.49$ ,  $p < .05$ , were less similar to those of mothers that were Chinese children's rankings (coefficient = .39,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ). African American children's ranking similarity (coefficient = .34,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ) did not differ from European American,  $t(199) = 1.73$ ,  $p = .09$ , or Chinese,  $t(199) < 1$ , children's rankings. These analyses treated the rankings as continuous. However, they are ordinal. Ordinal logistic HLM is specifically designed for dependent variables with three or more ordered categories. Ordinal logistic HLM uses logistic transformation to capture the probability of being in a given category. Analyses treating children's ranking as a multi-category ordinal variable yielded identical results to those treating it as continuous.

European American children were the least likely to prioritize mothers' goals in line with mothers. Such relatively low goal transmission could be due to the fact that there was less consensus among European American mothers as to their goals for their children as reflected in the lower average proportions and ranking across goals for European Americans compared to African Americans and Chinese (see Table 3 and 4). Such differences could reflect a looser coherence to cultural norms in general – rather than mothers' goals specifically – among European Americans. To address this possibility, for each dyad, cultural normativeness rankings

were assigned to each of mothers' goals by scoring the first goal in each box as the average ranking that mothers of their ethnicity gave the goal (see Table 4). This was then entered into the Level 1 equation of the HLM analyses. Because the goals that mothers listed varied not only between but also within ethnicity (see Table 2) with variation between as well as within ethnicity, there was variation in the normativeness rankings for mothers' goals within ethnicity.

Cultural normativeness predicted children's rankings of their goals (coefficient = .08,  $SE = .04$ )  $t(201) = 1.98$ ,  $p = .05$ , but the association between mothers and children's rankings was still evident after adjusting for cultural normativeness (coefficient = .29,  $SE = .04$ ),  $t(201) = 8.22$ ,  $p < .001$ . Moreover, after adjusting for cultural normativeness, European American children's rankings (coefficient = .19,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were still less similar to mothers' rankings than those of Chinese children (coefficient = .40,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ),  $t(199) = 2.43$ ,  $p < .05$ . African American children's ranking similarity (coefficient = .32,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ) fell in between,  $t(199)s < 1.53$ ,  $ps > .12$ . Moreover, the association between cultural normativeness and children's rankings was evident for African American (coefficient = .22,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ ), but not European American (coefficient = -.02,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p = .80$ ) or Chinese (coefficient = .01,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p = .92$ ) children.

**Goal reasons.** To examine ethnic variation in the extent to which children have autonomous versus controlled reasons for viewing mothers' goals as important, we analyzed the relative autonomy of children's reasons when they accepted their mothers' goals. The ANOVA on the relative autonomy of children's reasons yielded an effect of ethnicity,  $F(2, 201) = 4.47$ ,  $p < .05$ . As shown in Figure 2, European American children's reasons for acceptance of mothers' goals were less autonomous than those of Chinese children,  $p < .01$ . The autonomy of African American children's reasons fell in between in that they were not different from either European American or Chinese children's reasons,  $ps > .12$ .

## Discussion

The current research represents an important step in understanding how American and Chinese children are socialized toward culturally valued goals during adolescence. Extending prior research on the content of mothers' goals for young children (e.g., Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003; Ng et al., 2012; Suizzo & Cheng, 2007), American and Chinese mothers held some similar goals for children (e.g., to be self-reliant, connected to others, and prosocial) in the adolescent years. However, there were also striking differences between American and Chinese mothers. Most notably, American mothers placed heightened emphasis on children maintaining feelings of worth as well as pursuing what they enjoy; in contrast, Chinese mothers stressed children achieving outcomes to a greater extent, as did African American mothers. Notably, the current research went beyond simply documenting the content of mothers' goals to identify the extent to which such goals are adopted by children. Transmission from mothers to children was weakest among European Americans for whom there was the least similarity between mothers and children in their prioritization of mothers' goals, with children holding the fewest autonomous reasons for such goals. Taken together, the findings on the content and transmission of mother goals, suggest that the maintenance of cultural values from generation to generation may be weaker in the United States than China.

### **Content of Mothers' Goals in the United States and China**

A key strength of the current research was that in assessing mothers' goals for children a cultural frame was not imposed. Rather, a novel approach was taken in which mothers listed their goals for their participating child. In both the United States and China, mothers' goals covered four central arenas (see Table 2) – the self, achievement, social relations, and well-being – with Americans also mentioning religion. In the self arena, in line with prior research with mothers of younger children (e.g., Chao, 1995; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003), both European

and African American (vs. Chinese) mothers placed heightened emphasis on children maintaining their feelings of worth, with an emphasis on uniqueness. In contrast, Chinese (vs. American) mothers stressed children improving themselves. Although the self-improvement goal was more common and ranked higher among Chinese (vs. American) mothers, it was surprisingly uncommon (i.e., only 2% of mothers' goals) with quite a low ranking. It may be that concerns with self-improvement are manifest in a more concrete emphasis on children's achievement, particularly outcomes – indeed, goals revolving around children's accomplishments (e.g., getting good grades and going to a good university) were the most common and important in China.

For mothers in the United States and China, the most common and important goals fell within the achievement arena. This is not surprising given that in both countries, children's interest in school wanes over the adolescent years (e.g., Wang & Pomerantz, 2009), but their performance at this time is more consequential than it was earlier, particularly in China. However, the specific form that mothers' concern with achievement took varied with ethnicity. American (vs. Chinese) mothers placed heightened emphasis on the process of learning (e.g., enjoyment and curiosity), whereas Chinese mothers stressed children achieving outcomes, a trend also evident among African American mothers. The Chinese focus on outcomes may reflect the major test children take at the end of ninth grade for admission to high school, which has major implications for their success as an adult. The similar African American focus may reflect a parallel concern with the consequences of performance during adolescence. Prior research indicates that African American parents see children's achievement as critical to overcoming discrimination, ultimately leading to success later in life (e.g., Franklin et al., 2002; Suizzo et al., 2008).

Consistent with the prior research on mothers of young children (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2002; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003), American and Chinese mothers placed similar emphasis on establishing meaningful and positive relationships with others. However, American mothers placed less importance on respecting elders than did Chinese mothers, likely due to the import placed on filial piety in China (Ho, 1996; Wang & Hsueh, 2000). Even in China, however, goals related to respecting elders were not particularly common – they represented 5% of Chinese mothers' goals. It is possible that, similar to the self-improvement emphasis, Chinese mothers' concerns with respecting others was manifest in their outcome goals given that doing well in school is a way to honor one's parents in China (Ho, 1994; Yu, 1996). Surprisingly, Chinese mothers saw children's physical health as far more important than did American mothers. This may reflect threats to physical health encountered by Chinese, but not American, families, such as those posed by poor air quality, problems with food safety, and a lack of access to quality health care (Jacobs & Century, 2012). Religious goals comprised 3% of American mothers' goals, but none of Chinese mothers' goals perhaps due to government regulation and control over religious freedom in China.

The goals held by American and Chinese mothers may contribute to differences in their parenting. American parents tend to be less controlling (i.e., pressuring children or intruding into their thoughts, feelings, and behavior with directives and commands) – than are Chinese parents (for a review, see Ng, Pomerantz, & Deng, in press). American mothers' heightened emphasis on maintaining children's feelings of worth and children pursuing what they enjoy may lead them to refrain from exerting control over children, instead supporting their autonomy by allowing them to take initiative. The focus of Chinese mothers on children's outcomes may underlie their heightened use of control to ensure that children meet expectations for performance; this may also be the case for African American mothers who not only held outcome goals to the same

extent as Chinese mothers, but are also more controlling than are European American mothers (e.g., Dornbusch et al., 1987; Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004; Ng et al., in press). Indeed, when parents have a heightened concern with children's performance, they exert more control over children (e.g., Grolnick, Gurland, DeCoursey, & Jacob, 2002; Renshaw & Gardner, 1990).

### **Transmission of Parents' Goals in the United States and China**

To understand how American and Chinese children are socialized toward culturally valued goals during adolescence, the current research examined children's adoption of mothers' goals – a key aspect of the socialization process largely overlooked by prior research. To this end, we examined the extent to which children and mother similarly prioritized mothers' goals and how autonomous (vs. controlled) children's reasons were for accepting mothers' goals. Across both these approaches, goal transmission from mothers to children was weakest among European Americans. There was less similarity in European American children and mothers' importance rankings of mothers' goals than there was among their Chinese counterparts, with African Americans falling in between. Notably, we ruled out the possibility that this difference was simply due to there being weaker normative goals among European American mothers. European American children also gave fewer autonomous (vs. controlled) reasons for mothers' goals than did Chinese children, with African Americans again falling in the middle. Hence, it appears that European American children are less likely than Chinese children to take parents' goals on as their own, which may be part of a larger trend for them to take on the goals of important adults more generally as their own (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Zhou, Lam, & Chan, 2012). It may be that the relative ethnic and religious diversity in the United States (vs. China) may lead to a diversity of values, which weakens children's adoption of their parents' goals. The differences in the goal transmission process may contribute to the differences in the stability of

culture. Due to the stronger transmission among Chinese mother-child dyads, culture may be more stable over time in China (vs. the United States) although it may be that as Chinese children become adults they shed mothers' goals to pursue their own goals which may reflect more contemporary concerns.

The transmission findings yielded by the current research taken in conjunction with the findings on goal content may underlie differences in how American and Chinese children navigate the adolescent years. There is much evidence that American children are less engaged in school than are Chinese children (for a review, see Pomerantz et al., 2008), with this intensifying over early adolescence as American, but not Chinese, children disengage (Wang & Pomerantz, 2009). The heightened focus among Chinese mothers' on children's achievement outcomes along with Chinese children's heightened adoption of mothers' goals – both in terms of prioritizing and taking them on as their own – may support their engagement in school during adolescence. In contrast, American mothers emphasize enjoying the learning process; thus, when school becomes uninteresting to children, they may disengage. Even when mothers do hold achievement outcome goals for children in the United States, children may not make them as much of a priority as mothers and may be less likely to take them on as their own, which may undermine their engagement.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

The current research has several limitations that point to important directions for future research. First, although it applied a novel approach to measure mothers' goals, the approach assumes that parents are conscious of their goals for children. However, this may not always be the case. Thus, future studies using implicit measures of parents' goals may provide a unique perspective on the socialization process. In addition, we told mothers that children would be seeing the goals they provided. On the one hand, this aspect of the method is a strength because

it is likely to yield goals that mothers attempt to communicate to children on a day-to-day basis. On the other hand, mothers may have some socialization goals that they do not necessarily want to explicitly communicate to children. For example, our approach may have underestimated the extent to which mothers hold self-maximization goals because although they want children to feel good about themselves, this is unlikely to be something they think children should directly pursue.

Second, we assessed mothers' goals for children, but did not ask children about their own goals. As a consequence, although the current research provided insight into how American and Chinese children prioritized mothers' goals and the reasons they gave for seeing them as important, it did not provide insight into whether children actually hold the same goals as mothers – and when they do differ, the extent to which they prioritize mothers' goals over their own goals. Future research asking both parents and children to list their goals will provide a fuller perspective on the transmission of goals from parents to children.

Third, the current research examined differences not only between the United States and China, but also within the United States. In so doing, the research revealed both within and between country differences in mothers' goals. It would be fruitful for future research to extend this endeavor by examining issues of goal content and transmission in other ethnic groups, such as Latinos, within the United States. The content of parents' goals as well as children's adoption of them may be influenced by unique ethnic traditions. Although ethnic variation is a less salient issue in China, there may be differences between urban and rural families in China. For example, families in the rural areas of China have fewer resources and opportunities than urban families. Thus, doing well in school or having a financially stable job may be prioritized to a greater extent for rural (vs. urban) children.

## **Conclusions**

Despite these limitations, the current research contributes to a growing body of findings suggesting that culture shapes parents' goals, which may ultimately lead American and Chinese parents to convey different messages to children. Focusing on the United States and China, we found that during adolescence, American mothers were more concerned with maintaining children's self-worth and ensuring children enjoy the achievement process, whereas Chinese mothers' major emphasis was on children's achievement outcomes – a concern also at the top of African American mothers' list. Goal transmission from mothers to children was weakest among European Americans. The findings indicate that there is variability in the socialization process in the United States and China, such that the process is less stable among European American mother-child dyads during adolescence than their Chinese counterparts.

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## Appendix

Table 1

### *Demographic Information of Participants*

	European American	African American	Chinese
Number of mother- adolescent dyads	85	65	71
Mean age of adolescents	12.87 years	12.94 years	12.74 years
Percentage of boys	52.38%	58.46%	52.24%
Maternal education	66% college or more	17% college or more	20% college or more
Mothers married or cohabiting	92%	57%	100%
Mean number of siblings	1.57	1.95	0.16

Table 2

*Goal Definitions and Examples*

Category	Type	Definition	Examples
Self	Self-maximization	Strong sense of self-esteem, confidence in abilities, unique, not concerned about what others' think.	"Have high self-esteem." "Be strong and confident in everything."
	Self-improvement	Focus on child improving self or desiring to do so.	"Have a desire to improve." "Learn from mistakes."
	Self-reliance	Focus on child being able to take care of self, being responsible.	"Can rely on himself for living." "Be responsible."
Achievement	Outcome	Achievement in school or in general.	"Get good grades." "Go to college."
	Process	Enjoyment of learning or work. Working hard. Emphasis on challenge and curiosity.	"Love to learn." "Try his hardest."
Well-being	Psychological well-being	General happiness, loving or enjoying life, being positive in general.	"Be happy." "Keep a positive attitude."
	Physical well-being	Physical health, including eating well and exercising.	"Eat healthy and be strong." "Have a healthy lifestyle."
Social	Connectedness	Positive relationships with known others, getting along with known others, sociability.	"Maintain family ties." "Make new friends and still keep old ones."
	Respect	Respect elders, fulfill obligations or responsibilities to others, obedience.	"Be filial to mothers." "Respect teachers."
	Morality and Prosocial	Kind, caring, considerate, thoughtful of others, civic-minded, constructive.	"Involved in community service" "Care about other people"
Religion		Devotion to God, spirituality, or religion.	"To serve God and follow his leading in your life"

Table 3

*Average Percentage of American and Chinese Mothers' Goals*

Category	Type	European American	African American	Chinese
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Self	Self-maximization	10.00 (14.89) <sub>a</sub>	6.74 (13.02) <sub>a</sub>	1.51 (5.10) <sub>b</sub>
	Self-improvement	0.70 (3.72) <sub>a</sub>	0.25 (2.06) <sub>a</sub>	2.15 (5.50) <sub>b</sub>
	Self-reliance	7.22 (14.89) <sub>a</sub>	9.26 (15.82) <sub>a</sub>	7.17 (14.54) <sub>a</sub>
Achievement	Outcome	19.11 (18.97) <sub>a</sub>	32.03 (26.71) <sub>b</sub>	36.24 (27.82) <sub>b</sub>
	Process	24.40 (19.77) <sub>a</sub>	15.98 (17.64) <sub>a</sub>	7.66 (11.23) <sub>b</sub>
Social	Connectedness	8.11 (11.57) <sub>a</sub>	6.34 (9.92) <sub>a</sub>	6.68 (9.30) <sub>a</sub>
	Respect	1.57 (6.19) <sub>a</sub>	3.39 (7.32) <sub>a</sub>	5.44 (8.06) <sub>b</sub>
	Morality and Prosocial	9.31 (13.86) <sub>a</sub>	6.84 (12.09) <sub>a</sub>	9.59 (11.99) <sub>a</sub>
Well-being	Psychological well-being	8.26 (10.71) <sub>a</sub>	3.30 (7.15) <sub>b</sub>	6.96 (10.13) <sub>a</sub>
	Physical well-being	2.99 (7.04) <sub>a</sub>	1.08 (4.33) <sub>a</sub>	10.41 (9.15) <sub>b</sub>
Religion		2.94 (7.03) <sub>a</sub>	3.46 (8.01) <sub>a</sub>	0.00 (0.00) <sub>b</sub>

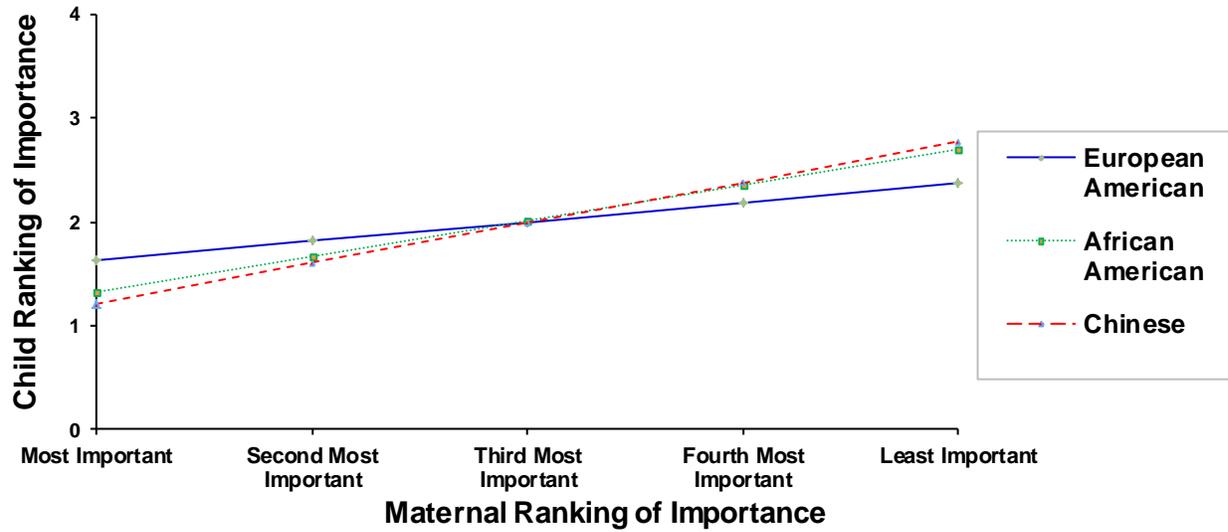
*Note.* Numbers are the average proportion of the goal type out of all the goals listed. For each goal type, different letter subscripts indicate significant ( $ps < .05$ ) differences between ethnicities in the proportion of the goal type.

Table 4

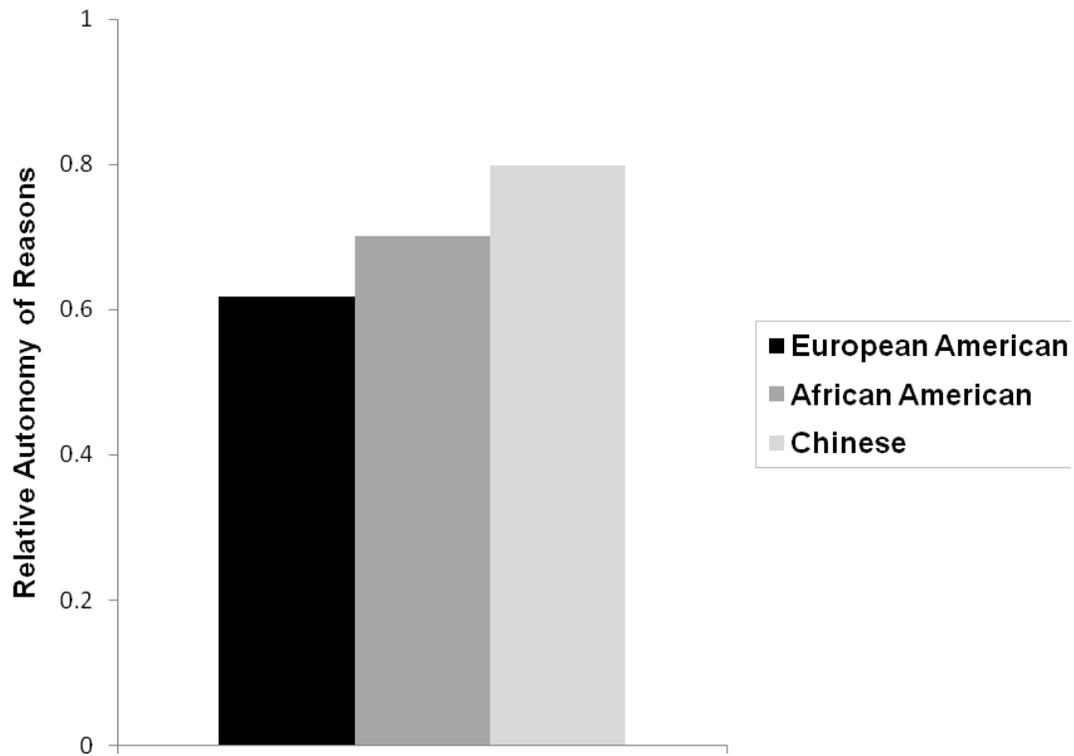
*Average Rankings of American and Chinese Mothers' Goals*

Category	Type	European American	African American	Chinese
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Self	Self-maximization	1.55 (2.15) <sub>a</sub>	1.05 (1.85) <sub>a</sub>	0.24 (0.90) <sub>b</sub>
	Self-improvement	0.07 (0.46) <sub>a</sub>	0.02 (0.13) <sub>a</sub>	0.31 (0.86) <sub>b</sub>
	Self-reliance	0.90 (1.62) <sub>a</sub>	0.91 (1.56) <sub>a</sub>	0.79 (1.47) <sub>a</sub>
Achievement	Outcome	1.96 (1.82) <sub>a</sub>	3.02 (2.03) <sub>b</sub>	3.42 (1.59) <sub>b</sub>
	Process	2.38 (1.86) <sub>a</sub>	1.69 (1.97) <sub>a</sub>	1.15 (1.84) <sub>b</sub>
Social	Connectedness	0.99 (1.51) <sub>a</sub>	0.66 (1.26) <sub>a</sub>	1.16 (1.62) <sub>a</sub>
	Respect	0.20 (0.82) <sub>a</sub>	0.62 (1.45) <sub>a</sub>	0.84 (1.46) <sub>b</sub>
	Morality and Prosocial	1.35 (1.95) <sub>a</sub>	0.67 (1.37) <sub>b</sub>	1.34 (1.76) <sub>a</sub>
Well-being	Psychological well-being	1.71 (2.19) <sub>a</sub>	0.45 (1.17) <sub>b</sub>	1.40 (2.04) <sub>a</sub>
	Physical well-being	0.49 (1.27) <sub>a</sub>	0.19 (.83) <sub>a</sub>	2.52 (2.35) <sub>b</sub>
Religion		0.71 (1.70) <sub>a</sub>	0.59 (1.50) <sub>a</sub>	0.00 (0.00) <sub>b</sub>

*Note.* Higher numbers indicate higher importance (1 = least important, 5 = most important). For each goal type, different letter subscripts indicate significant ( $ps < .05$ ) differences between ethnicities in the ranking of the goal type.



*Figure 1.* Ethnic differences in the within-dyad association between mothers and children's rankings of mothers' goals. *Note.* The slopes are estimated from the HLM equations.



*Figure 2.* Ethnic differences in the relative autonomy (vs. control) of children's reasons for mothers' goals.