



Cultural Variations in Mothers' Intuitive Theories: a preliminary report on interviewing mothers from five nations about their socialization of children's emotions

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ABSTRACT Parental intuitive theories comprise values, goals, expectations, and cultural beliefs about the nature of parenting and its function for children's development of competence. This article introduces a research design to study mothers' intuitive theories about their socialization of children's emotions, as a means of understanding the cultural meaning of children's emotional development. The intention is not to present a traditional empirical report, but to provide a heuristic for future research. The authors illustrate the basic assumptions, methods, and approach to data analysis used in the research design, using a five-nation cross-cultural study as an example of this methodology. For purposes of illustration, examples of mothers' responses during interviews are included, about their intuitive theories of emotion socialization – that is, their attributions about child behavior, views about their parenting roles and socialization practices, and the salience of particular emotions relative to cultural models of independence and interdependence. This approach provides a more sophisticated sense of cultural similarities and variations within and between nations than has been available in prior research. The importance of parents' intuitive theories for the investigation of the cultural meaning of emotion socialization and future study directions are discussed.

Intuitive 'theories' refer to implicit beliefs and assumptions about causal explanatory relations. 'They organize experience, generate inferences, guide learning, and influence behavior and social interactions' (Gelman & Legare, 2011, p. 380). Though they are tacit and imprecise, they nonetheless influence behavior. We apply the concept of intuitive theories for a better understanding of parental socialization of children's emotions. We assume that one way that emotion socialization occurs in daily life is through parents' and other caregivers' practices, and that these practices are guided by their intuitive theories about child emotional competence, how different emotions are valued, and how they should be managed and expressed. We suggest that an intuitive theory approach can inform theories of emotional development, which have widely ignored the cultural variations in how children's emotions are socialized (Halberstadt & Lozada, 2011).

Emotions are socialized in many contexts but in a child's early life parents are particularly important agents (Morris et al, 2007). From their birth, children are exposed to and slowly acquire culture-specific display rules for emotional expression, i.e. norms about when and where the expression of a specific emotion is socially accepted, through observational learning and modeling

(Saarni et al, 2006). Moreover, in their dyadic interactions with their caregivers, children learn strategies to regulate emotions. In Western cultures, supportive parenting behaviors (e.g. expressive encouragement, problem-focused reactions) are associated with children's skills at regulating negative emotions (Davidov & Grusec, 2006) and children's motivation and ability to follow rules of conduct (Suchodoletz et al, 2011). In contrast, regulation of positive emotions is associated with parental warmth or shared positive effect (Davidov & Grusec, 2006). However, cross-cultural studies challenge the view that these parenting behaviors are universally regarded as necessary for children's emotion socialization (Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008; Trommsdorff & Heikamp, in press).

Parents' emotional reactions to children's behavior are related to parents' beliefs about their children (Mills & Rubin, 1990). Previous studies on emotional development, for instance, revealed that parents react in gender-specific ways to the emotional expressions of sons and daughters (e.g. Chaplin et al, 2005). That is, parents' reactions to children's emotions are guided by gender-role expectations that are culturally transmitted. These contingent reactions reflect parents' implicit beliefs that girls are expected to express emotions that foster ease in relationships, whereas boys should be more assertive or even aggressive, at least in some Western cultures (Chaplin et al, 2005).

We seek to better understand the universal and culturally specific aspects of emotion socialization by focusing on the intuitive theories of mothers from different nations. In this article, we provide a theoretical framework for studying the interaction of cultural belief systems, caretakers' intuitive theories, parenting practices and children's emotional development, asserting that parental intuitive theories translate to caregiver-child interactions that are the contents and contexts of socialization. We then describe a research methodology that illustrates the potential of an intuitive theories approach, using our five-nation cross-cultural study as an example of this research approach.

A Framework for Conceptualizing Parental Intuitive Theories

A useful framework for culturally sensitive work on children's development is the 'developmental niche' (Harkness & Super, 2006). This framework clarifies the interface between child development and culture by focusing on parents' cultural belief systems or intuitive theories. They represent one component of the 'developmental niche,' which includes the setting in which the child lives, the community's customs, and the psychology of caretakers. These components mediate the influence of culture on children's development. In this framework, the child is regarded as an active agent who exerts influence on developmental processes. Thus, the 'developmental niche' is a dynamic interface that organizes reciprocal exchanges between the child and his or her cultural, social, and ecological environment.

Harkness and Super (1996) include parental intuitive theories, which they discuss as ethnotheories that relate to 'cultural beliefs and individual behavior in hierarchical fashion, with more general beliefs subsuming more specific ones that, in turn, entail scripts for action' (p. 9). Intuitive theories include long-term goals for children's development that are instantiated in situation-specific short-term goals that guide parental actions in culturally accepted ways (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). Culture as a system of shared meanings and practices shapes caretakers' intuitive theories in terms of generalized expectations regarding competent behavior and this influences beliefs about children's development and how they become competent. Moreover, intuitive theories are a product of caretakers' individual interpretations of children's behavior and caretakers' own social experiences in a given context and, thus, interact with and shape the socio-cultural context of development (Harkness & Super, 1996). The framework of the 'developmental niche' provides insight into parental goals and the meaning of their practices and thereby culturally specific meanings (see also Bruner, 1990).

Cultures differ in shared belief systems, in preferred parental goals and parenting practices. One basic way that culture influences these goals is the relative emphasis a culture places on an individual's independence and interdependence, particularly in terms of self-construal and agency. In cultures that emphasize the interdependence of selves, the model of agency situates the person in relationships relative to independent cultures that highlight the person's uniqueness and autonomy (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994). When applied to raising competent children, these

cultural models provide priorities that guide parental socialization efforts. For example, families from European-American and Asian cultural backgrounds value independence and interdependence, and related aspects of self-reliance or autonomy and social-connectedness or harmony, differently. Accordingly, these cultural values organize parenting beliefs leading to culturally specific practices regarding child emotional and social development, including emotion regulation (Cole & Tan, 2007; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, 2007; Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011). Cultural values and beliefs therefore should be revealed in parents' intuitive theories about the desirability, adequacy, function, socialization, and development of the child's emotional reactions (Cole & Tan, 2006; Trommsdorff, 2009; Friedlmeier et al, 2011; Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011).

Parents universally strive to achieve positive child development outcomes. However, cultural values appear to influence the *desirability and perceived adequacy* of emotions. For example, more open emotional expression is valued in many Western nations and emotional constraint is more valued in many Asian cultures (Cole & Tan, 2006; Friedlmeier et al, 2011; Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011; Trommsdorff, 2012). Cultures appear to vary in their theories about the *function* of positive and negative emotions for interpersonal relationships. For example, in several Asian nations (e.g. India, Nepal, Korea, Japan), the expression of anger is regarded as endangering the quality of relationships and therefore is inconsistent with highly valued interpersonal harmony. An angry child risks parental disapproval. Similarly, pride in individual achievement is discouraged in a culture that values a communal sense of self more than appreciation of the separateness of selves. A cultural emphasis on interdependence has different implications for the socialization of children's emotions than a cultural emphasis on independence.

Direct assessments of maternal beliefs have not focused on children's emotions but have addressed other aspects of child development, such as self, social skills, and school achievement (e.g. Chao, 1995; Miller et al, 2002; Cheah & Rubin, 2003; Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003; Harkness & Super, 2006; Lieber et al, 2006). The few culture-informed studies that focused on parenting and children's emotions infer parental beliefs from observed behavior (e.g. Keller & Otto, 2009; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 2010). One study, however, assessed cultural beliefs and observed cultural differences in caregivers' behavioral responses to children's emotions (Cole et al, 2006). Elders in two different rural Nepali cultural groups provided insight into why their groups were observed to respond differently to children's anger and shame. The Tamang, an indigenous people in Nepal, shame the angry child but reason with and yield to the child who appears ashamed. In contrast, high-caste Brahmins respond to child anger with reasoning and yielding but ignore shame. Elders from each ethnic group were asked to imagine and describe a competent child. Tamang elders emphasized social grace, including explicit reference to never being angry. In contrast, Brahmins emphasized children's school achievement, consistent with the duties of high-caste status. They did not mention emotion, but well-regulated anger and pride may aid school achievement, whereas shame may not. This study provided a rare empirical assessment of the meaning of culture-specific emotion socialization.

A limitation of research on socialization is the view of parenting practices as context-independent. Parenting practices, however, vary as a function of many factors such as the child's age, the quality of the parent-child relationship, the child's behavior, and the situational context, suggesting the need for a more nuanced approach (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). Parental intuitive theories also vary depending on the situational context in which a child expresses emotion and on the perceived causes of child emotion (see Dweck, 1999). Thus, cross-cultural research on parental socialization of emotion would benefit from an approach that incorporates situational specificity. Notably, personality research suggests that Asian cultures prefer concrete, situation-specific reasoning, whereas Western cultures prefer generalized, abstract theorizing about principles (Nisbett, 2003). This may explain why Japanese and Indonesian mothers hold situation-specific beliefs about parenting goals, practices and child outcomes (Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003).

In sum, there is a dearth of studies on cultural influences on parental socialization of children's emotion. We advocate for an intuitive theory approach that can explore parental conceptions of child competence and the cultural influences that contextualize parent practices. We next describe a research design that is well suited for studying parents' intuitive theories, using our five-nation study of mothers' intuitive theories about emotion socialization and child competence as an example of this research approach. This description is not presented as part of a traditional

empirical report; rather, it serves a heuristic purpose in highlighting a mixed-method approach in cross-cultural research on emotion socialization.

Five-Nation Study of Maternal Intuitive Theories about Emotion Socialization

Study Design

In order to assess theoretically relevant aspects of mothers' intuitive theories, socialization goals and parenting practices, we interviewed mothers from five nations. Two nations represented cultural values that emphasize interdependence (India and Nepal; Mishra, in press), two nations represented cultural values that emphasize independence (Germany and the USA), and one nation represented a tradition of valuing interdependence which may come into conflict with its rapid modernization (South Korea; Park & Cheah, 2005; Chang, 2010). We do not assume cultural homogeneity within each nation; the cross-cultural design allowed us to optimize variance in mothers' intuitive theories in order to examine both similarities and differences between and within cultural groups.

In each nation, we aimed to interview one hundred mothers of six- or seven-year-old children attending first grade. This age group was selected because it captures an important transition in a child's development in each nation. Moreover, demands on children's emotions and competencies are more similar than they would be for younger children. We determined that kindergartens and preschools vary widely across the five nations, ranging from play to academic readiness. The final sample consisted of 479 mothers interviewed in person.

Interview Components

We aimed to assess theoretically relevant facets of mothers' intuitive theories about socialization methods that would transmit values about emotions and their regulation. We used a multi-method approach including both standardized, quantitative methods (structured questions and rating scales) and open-format, qualitative methods (interviews with open-ended questions that were later coded for quantification). Despite the time-consuming nature of the transcription, translation and back-translation, and coding of the open-ended methods, we chose to include them because they allowed free responses that could reveal nuances of culturally guided values that could contextualize the more forced responses of standardized rating scales.

All measures were adapted from instruments previously used in cross-cultural studies. Project leaders from each of the five nations collaborated on adaptations (e.g. item selection, phrasing) in order to maximize cultural relevance. Furthermore, the translation and back-translation procedure allowed us to preserve measurement equivalence without losing cultural sensitivity.

Conceptions of child competence. All mothers desire their children to be healthy, to do well in school, and to get along with other children and with adults. But mothers were expected to vary in whether they mentioned multiple domains of development that comprise child competence, in which domains were emphasized, and in how specifically they describe a given domain. We used the Criteria for Child Competence interview (CCC; adapted from Durbrow et al, 2001), an open-ended interview method to examine the salient domains of development that comprise child competence. Mothers were asked to think of a six- or seven-year-old who was doing well and then to explain the child's characteristics that led them to regard the child as doing well.

Mothers' responses to children's emotions. The Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES; Fabes et al, 2002) was used to assess mothers' beliefs about how they respond to their own children's negative emotions. The CCNES assesses the degree to which a mother believes in encouraging emotion expression and whether she adopts emotion- or problem-focused responses. Moreover, it was assessed whether mothers aimed to control their children's negative emotions (e.g. minimization, punitive reactions) and how likely they were to become distressed themselves. The CCNES yielded acceptable reliability in a cross-cultural study of German and Indian mothers of preschool children (Heikamp et al, 2008). Five vignettes from the original instrument were

selected after checking for cultural appropriateness. In each vignette, children expressed negative emotions (e.g. sadness, anger).

Parenting. The Socialization-Situation instrument (SOSIT; adapted from Kornadt & Trommsdorff, 1990) presented mothers with three hypothetical situations with their children (e.g. the child comes home with a poor grade). Mothers were asked how they would respond to their own children, which emotions they would feel, and why they would react as they did. Parenting behavior was classified as involving power assertion, psychological control, problem-solving, or emotion-focused behavior. Power assertion referred to controlling the child's behavior using discipline, criticism, and verbal or corporal punishment (Kuczynski, 1984). Psychological control was indicated by parents' influence over the child's emotional state (e.g. inducing guilt, withdrawal of love; Barber, 1996; Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008). Problem-solving involved supporting the child's coping by offering solutions (e.g. guidance, instrumental support; Cheah & Rubin, 2003). Emotion-focused behavior included strategies to help the child to feel better (e.g. comforting, distraction; Fabes et al, 2002).

Caregiver sensitivity. Cultural values may lead a parent to anticipate a child's distress and proactively prevent it – which would be consistent with an emphasis on interdependence – or to wait and react only if the child needs adult intervention, which would be consistent with valuing independence in children (Rothbaum et al, 2006). The Caregiver Sensitivity Interview (CSI; adapted from Rothbaum et al, 2006) presents mothers with five everyday vignettes that focused on the role of the mother and of the child when distress could occur. Mothers choose either a proactive (mother anticipates child need) or reactive (mother reacts to child need) strategy.

Approach to Inter- and Intracultural Data Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data in the five-nation study will allow us to examine both within-culture and between-culture variability. In particular, the open-ended format measures can be used to discern whether differences between or within groups in the quantitative data are associated with values that emerge in, for example, mothers' conceptions of child competence or mothers' beliefs about whether they should prevent children's distress or allow children to grapple with distress themselves before intervening.

The open-ended responses are currently being coded. Ongoing inter-rater reliability checks are promising, encouraging us that we will be able to report on these data in the future. Among the ways the open-ended responses can be used, we include examination of the frequency of codes and the relative proportion of codes. With mothers' beliefs about intervening or allowing a child to try to cope with distress (using the CSI), for example, we can evaluate the ways mothers think they respond to children's emotions in different situations and relate these to mothers' conceptions of autonomy (using the CCC). This can then be used to address both between- and within-group variation.

Although we selected measures that have been successful in tapping cultural variations in other studies, the psychometric properties of the quantitative measures (e.g. CCNES) will be assessed for this sample in order to ensure cross-cultural equivalence and validity of these measures. These methods yield measures of both central tendency and variance and allow an examination of within-group as well as between-group variability. Because the coding of qualitative data is not completed, this report is limited to illustrative examples of mothers' intuitive theories, starting with beliefs about child's competence.

Mothers' conceptions of children's competence. An initial review of interview transcripts shows that mothers in all countries tended to emphasize aspects of children's social development when describing a competent child. However, the particular social skills they emphasized may differ among groups. South Asian mothers often refer to politeness, respect for elders, and duty, even in the context of academic achievement. For instance, a Nepalese mother described a child as competent because the child: 'talks nicely and respects her elders.' When queried further, it became clear that talking nicely referred to speaking politely and using proper terms of address. An Indian

mother emphasized a child's sense of duty: 'She understands she must do her homework in a timely manner, she goes to school regularly and has a feeling of responsibility for her work.' Social competence appears to be described differently by German and US mothers. A German mother said a child was competent because 'she knows exactly what she wants.' A US mother emphasized a child's autonomy and intrinsic motivation (not mentioning duty) in learning: 'She washes herself and her clothes now, and she's curious about lots of stuff. She loves school and learning new things.' A Korean mother emphasized social sensitivity and self-control: 'She understands another's emotion, and regulates her behavior to prevent the occurrence of bad situations.'

Although it remains to be seen whether there are significant cultural differences in maternal conceptions of child competence, these illustrations reveal varied views and the potential of this method for contextualizing maternal beliefs about the socialization of their children's emotions. We are intrigued by the nuanced differences in emphases in maternal descriptions of competent children. Some mothers focus on interpersonal sensitivity, others on obedience or cooperation, while others appear to focus on autonomous behavior. These variations may capture cultural priorities that influence parenting goals, including goals for socializing children's emotional competence. If parents pursue different socialization goals, it will be possible to examine in which way and to what extent these are reflected in their ideas about specific parenting behaviors.

Mothers' responses to children's emotions. On the CCNES, Asian mothers often reported minimizing children's negative emotions whereas Western mothers encouraged expressiveness (Fäsche et al, 2011). Asian mothers may discourage negative emotions because of the importance they place on polite interpersonal skills and interpersonal harmony whereas Western mothers may value a child's ability to autonomously express herself (Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 2010; Friedlmeier et al, 2011; Park, 2011). Also, Asian mothers reported feeling uncomfortable when children expressed negative emotions (Heikamp et al, 2008; Raval & Martini, 2009; Fäsche et al, 2011).

The SOSIT revealed that mothers' strategies for responding to situations such as a child's school failure or peer conflict suggested a tendency for Western mothers to respond explicitly to their children's emotions – that is, consoling – in response to situations such as a child's school failures or peer conflict. This pattern also suggests a more egalitarian and less hierarchical mother-child relationship than might be typical in Asian families. Interestingly, research on emotion socialization has rarely discussed possible effects of such structural variables (see Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003). Initial analyses of mothers' explanations of their emotional reactions indicate that Asian mothers focus on the child's needs whereas US and German mothers focus on their parenting goals and efficacy. German and US mothers felt disappointed by children not meeting their expectations, such as not helping a distressed peer, expressing doubt about their parenting efficacy: 'investing much energy without expected result.' A Korean mother felt ashamed, referring to the child rather than herself: 'I think my child is not a kind person.' A Nepali mother was sad 'because my son didn't help even when it was needed.'

The Caregiver Sensitivity Interview data also suggested variability in mothers' responses to children's distress. Western mothers endorsed more reactive than proactive behavior compared to Asian mothers; South Korean mothers chose equal numbers of proactive and reactive responses, but more proactive responses than German and US mothers. Korean mothers' response patterns may reflect intuitive theories that incorporate both traditional and newly westernized values (Cheah & Park, 2006). Asian mothers' preference for proactive anticipation of children's needs may reflect a sense of responsibility to care for the young dependent child whereas Western mothers' preference to be reactive may reflect the goal of fostering children's autonomy and conceiving of children as needing to learn to communicate needs (Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003; Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008).

To pursue these possibilities, we also asked mothers to explain their responses to the vignettes presented in the Caregiver Sensitivity Interview. German and US mothers appeared to prefer reactive choices because they valued a child's development of *independence*, as indicated by their beliefs that six- and seven-year-olds should cope without maternal intervention. For example, these mothers stated that the child 'should have experiences of her own,' or 'should cope with the situation herself to gain independence.' They justified their parental behavior in the following ways: 'If I interfere, I disturb her development.' or 'Because this encourages independence.' In contrast, Indian and Nepalese mothers explained their proactive choices in terms of their values in

interdependence: 'We must teach the child what behavior to learn. This depends on the others.' and 'Children do not know so much what they need and when.' One mother (Nepal) described taking the initiative to regulate a child's needs before the child can: 'By guessing in advance we can fulfill the needs of the child in time. Being a mother I would know her needs before she tells me.' In contrast, a German mother rejected such an approach, referring to the importance of the mother's and child's independence: 'Anticipating the child's needs demands too much from the mother. The child should not be too much indulged.'

Summary

These descriptions of mothers' expectations, preferred parenting behavior, and emotional reactions indicate that their intuitive theories about children's emotions may reflect prevalent cultural values of independence and interdependence. Furthermore, mothers' responses to these situations may indicate different interpretations of what domain of socialization is important here. A mother's intention to console her child or to use power-assertive strategies depends on whether a mother focuses on her child's emotions or rather her own emotions (e.g. disappointment because of her child's failure). Further analyses aim to investigate whether cultural differences in mothers' interpretations of the situation are related to specific socialization goals.

Discussion

We hope to illustrate that the study of maternal intuitive theories about children's emotion socialization may provide insight into the nuances of cultural variations in maternal parenting beliefs and practices. Mothers' intuitive theories, comprised of values, goals, expectations, and cultural beliefs about the nature of parenting, organize their efforts to socialize their children's emotions in accordance with their views of child competence. Their theories are implicit and may not be fully articulated in their minds but they nonetheless reveal their beliefs about what constitutes a *competent child* and why they choose to socialize children's emotions in particular ways. Mothers' responses reflect intuitive theories in that they are both situation-specific and involve implicit causal-explanatory premises (Gelman & Legare, 2011). Analyses of mothers' implicit theories may clarify which values and goals mothers strive to achieve, how mothers perceive their parenting role, which strategies they assume to be most preferable to achieve their socialization goals, and how they conceive of their children's needs and abilities in regulating positive and negative emotions in line with cultural values of socio-emotional competence. Our preliminary report illustrates the potential impact of cultural values in maternal intuitive theories, their goals, expectations, and practices. Examples from the qualitative data further illustrate potential cultural specificities in the meaning of maternal goals and practices which imply a fit to the respective cultural model of independence and interdependence. Understanding the intuitive theories of mothers and the meanings mothers attribute to their socialization goals and practices provides a window into cultural differences in emotion development (e.g. expression of emotion, use of regulation strategies). These appear to be related to cultural priorities in regard to *how* a child should be agentic and to the relative emphasis of each culture on the independence and interdependence of self.

Furthermore, this approach to the study of parenting practices may help us understand how parents foster children's emotion regulation. Research addressing this issue, particularly among early school-age children, is rare as is research on cultural variations (Cole & Tan, 2006; Morris et al, 2011). Our data support the commonly held view that mothers try to guide their children's development in line with implicit cultural values and norms. Even when mothers' preferences and goals seem similar across cultures (e.g. mothers always care about their children's social competence), the precise meaning of a domain of development may differ cross-culturally. Cross-cultural comparisons that are only based on quantitative measures often do not reveal the implicit meanings behind mothers' choices of how to respond to a child's emotions. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods provides a strong foundation for understanding emotion socialization processes in cultural context.

In general, our preliminary findings support the view that the relative emphasis placed on interdependence and independence across groups influences parental beliefs about socializing children's emotions and that these cultural priorities are dynamic, changing over time (Tamis-LeMonda et al, 2008; Raeff, 2010). Indian or Nepalese mothers who value child independence ('he studies easily on his own') in line with a sense of duty ('he should fulfill his duty to the family') may have a different intuitive theory than German or US mothers who share the same value but whose view of independence implies a greater psychological separation between mother and child than may exist in South or East Asian families (Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, 2007). In this context, parents encourage the explicit expression of socially disengaging emotions that highlight individual needs or accomplishments, including pride, distress, frustration, or anger. Interestingly, mothers from South Korea respond in ways that share values with both East and West. This may reflect a shift in their preference for the traditional value of interdependence and a growing need to prepare their children for the autonomous functioning required to traverse the industrialization of South Korea and its relations to the Western world. We expect then that their values will vary by situation, illustrating the bi-cultural nature of the self apparent in acculturation processes. It seems that Korean mothers are partly adapting to changing cultural values, trying to combine values from the traditional Asian culture of interdependence with Western values of independence (Chang, 2010).

We assume that both maternal socialization practices and child emotional development are embedded in the cultural context of certain priorities. Therefore, the cultural models of agency guide mothers' intuitive theories, including mothers' goals and interpretations of their own and their children's behavior. Accordingly, mothers' attempts to have their children express their emotions can have different meanings in different cultures. Even more, it can affect desirable (positive) emotional development in one culture, and undesirable (negative) outcomes in another culture. Thus, emotion competence is defined differently depending on the cultural context. This raises the question of cultural fit of development of emotions and challenges future research for the refinement of culture-informed socialization theories (see Trommsdorff & Heikamp, in press).

One shortcoming of our approach is that we do not measure culture and rely mainly on identifying mothers by the nation in which they live. Psychologists and anthropologists mostly disagree about how to conceptualize culture. We hope future research will not rely solely on national citizenship. Furthermore, we assume that cultures are not homogenous, that they overlap with national borders and are dynamically changing, that they often subsume several cultures, and that they have discourse with distant cultures through technology. A subtle and careful approach however can still reveal the specific ways in which cultures continue to influence the parenting of a child who will be a competent adult (Trommsdorff, 2012). We suggest here that intuitive theories provide valuable information on the cultural meaning of socialization goals and practices. However, this approach requires analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, recognizing the complexity and work entailed. Furthermore, this approach requires continuous collaboration with the teams from the respective cultures.

In our study, we will use qualitative measures, which were intended to seek information with a minimum of bias from the measurement format, to examine values that are implicit in mothers' intuitive theories. This is not the equivalent of measuring culture but it does allow us to test assumptions that certain styles of socializing children's emotions are linked to values, and to predict the values that certain nations are likely to emphasize. Moreover, the linking of qualitative and quantitative responses will allow us to examine variation within groups. We will conduct analyses at the individual level in order to test whether patterns of relations (e.g. between mothers' criteria for child competence and their ways of reacting to children's emotions) are similar or different across groups. Moreover, coding of open-ended questions can give insights to what degree mothers from different cultural backgrounds value independence or interdependence; acknowledging that there may be an emphasis of independence in one social situation and emphasis of interdependence in another at the same time (Tamis-LeMonda et al, 2008). Moreover, the *combined* use of standardized questionnaires, scenarios and open-ended questions to assess parents' intuitive theories has important advantages. Whereas standardized tests are limited to a predefined set of responses, qualitative measures may capture cultural values more accurately.

One important task is to clarify the relations among general and situation-specific parenting practices and values. Another task is to appreciate conceptions of social and emotional competence

and how they develop (Denham, 1998). Culture-specific beliefs of competence influence parenting, such as the way in which a parent is sensitive to a child's distress, e.g. anticipating or reacting to their emotional responses. Parenting, in turn, fosters culture-specific ways of regulating emotions (Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011). Accordingly, research on socialization of emotions has to go beyond the dyadic context of mother-child (and peer) interaction, opening the perspective for the cultural context, thereby providing information on the cultural meaning of parenting goals and behavior, mother-child interaction, and emotion responses. This approach may profit from the study of parents' intuitive theories and practices as reflecting, fostering, and presumably transmitting the predominant cultural models of agency as part of the socialization of children's emotions.

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