Parent-Child Value Transmission Among Chinese Immigrants to North America: The Case of Traditional Mate Preferences

MICHAELA HYNIE
RICHARD N. LALONDE
NAM LEE
York University

Parent-child similarities in traditional mate preferences were examined in Chinese immigrants to North America. Adult children (n = 63) rated their preferred mate characteristics. Children then completed measures of interdependence, family allocentrism, Chinese identity, and Asian values. Their parents (n = 63) also rated their own preferences for their child's spouse and their own Asian values. Parents reported greater preference for traditional mate characteristics than did their children. Parents' preferences were related to parents' own Asian values. Children's traditional mate preferences were predicted by their parents' preferences and their own family allocentrism. Family allocentrism was a marginally significant partial mediator of parent's influence on children's preferences. Family connectedness may, therefore, facilitate intergenerational transmission of values in immigrant Asian families.

Keywords: immigration, acculturation, family relationships, marriage and dating, values

Socialization and enculturation are processes by which individuals internalize and identify with the values and norms of their social groups (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997). Both socialization, the intentional instruction in norms and values, and enculturation, which describes the indirect absorption of norms and values through exposure and observation, occur within all of the major cultural institutions and groups a

● *Michaela Hynie, Richard N. Lalonde, and Nam S. Lee, Department of Psychology, York University, Toronto.*

Nam S. Lee is now at the Department of Philosophy, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Michaela Hynie, Department of Psychology, Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, Canada, M3J 1P3. E-mail: mhynie@yorku.ca

child encounters: family, school, cultural groups, and peer groups. The norms and values that these different institutions and groups espouse are usually closely related to one another and, thus, reinforce one another (Kağitçibaşi, 1998; Schönpflug, 2001). For children of immigrant parents though, this situation may be more complex. For these children, the primary socializing groups may endorse different and even conflicting values and norms (Dinh, Sarason, & Sarason, 1994; Kwak, 2003).

For most children of immigrants, negotiating between the differing cultural beliefs of family, school, and peer group proceeds smoothly and easily (Phinney, 1990). There may be situations, however, in which immigrants' children are required to choose between the values and identities of their family and those of the receiving culture (Kwak, 2003). These situations provide an opportunity for exploring intergenerational transmission of values by contrasting children's values with those of their parents.

One such situation may be the choice of a spouse or romantic partner (Dasgupta, 1998; Hynie, 1996; Sung, 1985). The present study examined children's internalization of their parents' values regarding romantic partner preferences within Chinese immigrant families to North America. This study had two goals. The first was to compare children's and parents' endorsement of "traditional" mate characteristics in a potential partner. The second was to explore possible mediators and moderators of children's internalization of their parents' preferences.

Acculturation and Immigrant Families

It was once believed that a successful move into a new culture required abandoning one's old beliefs and behaviors in exchange for the values and behaviors of the receiving culture. Current research into the psychology of immigration, however, suggests that successful adaptation does not require a loss of one's previous cultural identity. Rather, the process of change is gradual, often taking several generations, and immigrants can and often do adjust to their new cultural environment by embracing both their old and their new cultures' norms and values (Berry, 1997; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993).

While new behaviors do need to be learned in order to adapt to a new social environment, pressure for change is experienced initially and primarily for behaviors that are public: the behaviors required for work or school or for negotiating with people in the public sphere. Traditional behaviors in private realms, those of the family and the home, are often largely retained. Moreover, immigrant parents typically encourage their children to maintain those behaviors and norms that are most closely tied to family traditions, authority, and family honor (Dion & Dion, 2001; Georgas, 1989; Kwak, 2003). At the same time, however, children of immigrants who are raised in a new culture are immersed in the receiving culture's norms, via their school, the media, and their peers. Consistent with this, children of immigrants report and perceive that they endorse the values of the receiving culture more, and the values of the culture of origin less, than do their parents (Georgas, Berry, Shaw, Christakopoulou, & Mylonas, 1996; Knafo & Schwarz, 2001; Rick & Forward, 1992; Rosenthal, Demetrious, & Efklides, 1989).

Many of the behaviors required in the receiving culture need not be inconsistent with the fundamental values of immigrant families and would not result in any sense of conflict (Hynie, 1996). Moreover, children of immigrant parents may be able to endorse two sets of cultural norms and values because environmental cues activate only those beliefs relevant to the particular cultural setting (Hong, Benet-Martinez, Chiu, & Morris, 2003; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000). Immigrant children's behavior may thus be determined by their family's culture when they are with their family and by the receiving culture when they are with peers, in which case potential conflicts between the

different cultural beliefs would not be salient. There may be some areas of immigrant children's lives, however, where the norms and values espoused by the two cultures and the behaviors that they consequently demand are widely divergent and even contradictory. This would be particularly likely with behaviors that fall simultaneously within both the public and the private realm. In these cases, the conflict between the two cultures may become apparent, and children of immigrant families may confront a difficult and painful dilemma: Which set of cultural norms should they follow (Ying, Coombs, & Lee, 1999)?

Culture and Marriage

One area that seems particularly prone to elicit this conflict is that of dating and marriage (Dasgupta, 1998; Hynie, 1996), and the way this conflict is experienced in Chinese immigrant families may reflect competing cultural values (Sung, 1985; Tang & Dion, 1999). Marriage is a public act in that whom one marries is known and acknowledged not only by friends and family, but also by the state and society at large. However, marriage is also an emotionally intense, long-term personal relationship.

Attitudes and beliefs about marriage are strongly tied to family related values and beliefs and vary widely as a function of culture. Cultures that are highly collectivist, such as China, tend to view marriage in terms of the maintenance, continuity, and well-being of the family. In these cultures, parents play a significant role in choosing their children's future spouse and arranged marriages are common. In contrast, in cultures that are highly individualist, like Canada and the United States, marriage is an entirely personal decision, and marriage partners are chosen on the basis of love (Dion & Dion, 1996; Doherty, Hatfield, Thompson, & Choo, 1994). Because family relationships are also important to individuals from highly individualistic cultures

(Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002), it may be more accurate to say that young adults in individualist cultures strive to achieve both personal fulfillment and parental approval when seeking a romantic partner. However, parental involvement in and supervision of partner choice is typically much lower than in more collectivist cultures. Thus, children from collectivist families growing up in individualist cultures may be more likely to find themselves caught between the desire to fulfill strong family expectations and maintain family honor and the individualist beliefs that marriage is engaged in for love and that love is the ultimate route to personal fulfillment (Dion & Dion, 1996).

Choosing a partner for different purposes (i.e., to promote family continuity and well-being vs. romantic love) may also result in preferring partners with different traits or characteristics. Indeed, cultural differences have been observed in terms of preferred mate characteristics, and these preferences seem to be consistent with the idea that people from collectivist cultures seek mates who would promote family continuity, whereas those from individualist cultures seek mates who would satisfy love and attachment needs (Toro-Morn & Sprecher, 2003).

For example, in the most extensive cross-cultural study on mate preferences (Buss et al., 1990), participants from China and India placed a much greater emphasis on a cluster of traits that the researchers labeled "traditional values" than did participants from other countries, but especially than those from North America and Europe. Chastity played a large role in this cluster and other values included being a good housekeeper, having strong cultural ties, and wanting children. Thus, cultural differences in how marriage is perceived seem to be related to cultural differences in ideal mate characteristics, and this difference may be particularly large between individuals of Chinese and North American heritage (cf. Toro-Morn & Sprecher, 2003). Chinese immigrant parents may, therefore, have very

different expectations regarding their children's mates than do their adult, North American-raised children. The first goal of this study was, therefore, to compare the mate preferences of children of Chinese-North America immigrants with those of their parents.

Predicting Cultural Differences in Preferences and Conformity to Parents' Values

The second goal of this study was to explore predictors of children's preferences for traditional mate characteristics and possible moderators or mediators of the influence of parents' preferences on children's preferences. Four variables were explored: interdependence, family allocentrism, Asian values, and Chinese identity.

Interdependence

Cultural differences in marriage and mate preferences have typically been assumed to be the consequence of cultural differences in individualism and collectivism. First identified by Hofstede (1980) in a study of employees in a large company across numerous countries, individualism and collectivism are two orthogonal dimensions that are among the most widely used variables applied to the study of cross-cultural differences (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Oyserman, et al., 2002). Although cultures typically have both collectivist and individualist tendencies, some cultures can be described as endorsing one worldview more strongly than the other. Collectivist cultures are those cultures in which the goals of the ingroup are given priority over the goals of the individual. In these cultures, people endorse hierarchical relationships and conformity to ingroup norms. Individuals growing up in collectivist cultures are believed to develop a strong psychological sense of collectivism, which has been labeled interdependence or

allocentrism. In contrast, individualist cultures are those that prioritize autonomy and independence, and where individual goals take precedence over the goals of the ingroup. The psychological variable that corresponds to individualism is independence or idiocentrism (Fiske et al., 1998; Oyserman et al., 2002; Triandis, 2001).

The relative endorsement of traditional mate preferences in collectivist cultures may, therefore, reflect psychological differences in interdependence and independence (cf. Dion & Dion, 1996). Indeed, China and India have been found to be among the most collectivist of the many cultures that have been measured on this dimension, whereas the United States is the most individualist, with Canada close behind (Oyserman et al., 2002). Thus, one might expect interdependence to be related to preferences for traditional mate characteristics. Interestingly, there is also evidence that, in a bicultural setting, parental values regarding collectivist ideals are transmitted more effectively than those that are more individualist and that interdependence may actually promote cultural transmission from parents to children (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Schönpflug, 2001). Interdependence may therefore moderate the influence of parents' endorsement of traditional mate characteristics on children's own traditional mate preferences by facilitating value transmission or mediate transmission to the extent that traditional mate preferences are part of an interdependent self-construal.

Family Allocentrism

Research with the children of immigrants, however, suggests a more proximal mediator of traditional mate preferences than interdependence, that of one's interrelatedness with one's family or family allocentrism (Lay et al., 1998). Lalonde and his colleagues (2004) compared ideal mate preferences of South Asian Canadians and Cana-

dians of European descent. In line with the results of Buss et al. (1990), Lalonde and his colleagues found that South Asian Canadians placed a greater emphasis on traditional mate characteristics than did European Canadians. In a second study, Lalonde and his colleagues found that those South Asian Canadians with the strongest family allocentrism were the ones with the greatest preference for traditional traits, whereas interdependence did not predict this preference. Family allocentrism may therefore mediate the association between Chinese immigrant parents' and children's endorsement of traditional mate characteristics, just as it mediates the influence of culture on South Asian immigrant children's mate preferences.

Asian Values

A preference for traditional mate characteristics may also reflect a general endorsement of traditional Asian values. Although there are significant cultural differences between Chinese populations in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the People's Republic of China, these populations share a cultural history that is strongly influenced by Confucian philosophy and values. This philosophy gives rise to an emphasis on harmony, collectivism, filial piety, and clear hierarchical relationships (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Ho, 1986; Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999), values that Kim and colleagues refer to as traditional Asian values.

Marriage in traditional Chinese cultures was seen as a means of continuing the family line and was, thus, naturally considered to be a family concern, rather than an individual one (Dion & Dion, 1996; Ebrey, 1990). Parents still play a strong role in the selection of their children's mate in modern China (Xiaohe & Whyte, 1990) and parental approval is reported to be an important factor in determining modern Chinese women's and men's marital satisfaction (Pimentel, 2000). Thus, to the extent that children of Chinese immigrants have internalized traditional Asian values, they should both wish

to have a partner who will help promote family honor and continuity and also desire to honor their parents' wishes regarding their choice of partner. Endorsement of Asian values may, therefore, both predict traditional mate preferences and mediate (by facilitating value transmission) or moderate (by increasing the motivation to conform) parents' influence on their children's mate preferences.

Chinese Identity

Finally, ethnic identity might also play a role in the endorsement of traditional mate preferences and mediate between parents' and children's values. Identification with a specific ethnic group includes endorsement of that group's values (Grolnik et al., 1997; Phinney, 1990). Indeed, Gaines and his colleagues found that strength of ethnic identity may mediate differences between U.S. Anglos, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinas/Latinos ethnic groups on a general measure of cultural value orientation (Gaines et al., 1997). Thus, to the extent that children of Chinese immigrants identify with being Chinese, they should endorse Chinese values, including a preference for traditional mate characteristics.

In sum, in the present study children's mate preferences were compared with those their parents preferred for them, with a special focus on those traits that were identified as traditional mate characteristics. It was hypothesized that children's preferences for traditional traits would be related to their parents' endorsement of these traits, but that these adult children who had been raised in North America would value traditional traits less than their parents did. The extent to which children's traditional preferences were also predicted by interdependence, family allocentrism, Asian values, and Chinese identity was examined, and the role of these variables as mediators or moderators of parents' influence on children's preferences was explored.

Method

Participants

The sample was recruited through a snowball technique, beginning with contacts known to the third author and was comprised of 63 parent–child dyads, 44 of whom were Chinese Canadian and 19 of whom were Chinese American. There were 14 father-son dyads, 10 father-daughter dyads, 21 mother-son dyads, and 18 mother-daughter dyads for a total of 24 fathers and 39 mothers among the parents, aged 40 to 69 ($M = 52.65$, $SD = 5.80$), and 35 sons and 28 daughters among the children, aged 15 to 35 ($M = 20.76$, $SD = 4.28$).[1] All parents were born in China or Hong Kong and arrived in North America between 1958 to 1996, with an average length of residence in North America of 27.68 years ($SD = 8.42$). All but eight of the children were born in North America. These eight all emigrated before the age of five and were, thus, also effectively second generation. Participants were not paid, but a small donation of $5.00 CDN was given to a charity of their choice.

Procedures

A survey was prepared in English and then translated into Chinese by the third author, followed by a back-translation procedure to confirm the accuracy of the translation (cf. Van de Vijver, & Leung, 1997). However, all participants chose to complete the English version. Surveys were mailed to the participants along with a stamped addressed envelope in which to return the completed survey. Parents and children were assigned surveys with matching codes, but codes were anonymous and not linked to the participants' names. Participants were asked to complete the survey in a quiet and private place and mail them back separately and to not share their answers with their family coparticipant until after the surveys were returned. All scales utilized 7-point Likert type scales, where 1 represented *Strongly Dis-*

agree and 7 represented *Strongly Agree*, unless indicated otherwise.

The survey began with a series of demographic questions. These were followed by a series of questions about desired traits or characteristics for the child's mate or spouse. The next page included a list of 26 mate characteristics derived from the work of Fletcher and his colleagues (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999) and additional items associated with traditional mate preferences in other cultures (Buss et al., 1990; Lalonde et al., 2004). The items selected reflected four dimensions: physical attractiveness, social status, warmth/understanding, which are the three dimensions identified by Fletcher et al., (1999), and traditional values. The present scale was constructed by selecting the five items that loaded most highly on each of the three factors in Fletcher et al. (1999) and, for the traditional values, by choosing the items that were rated most highly by participants in collectivist cultures in the Buss et al. (1990) study and/or that loaded consistently on the Traditional Mate factor in the Lalonde et al. (2004) study. Participants rated their own preference using a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 0 indicating that the trait was irrelevant or unimportant and 6 indicating that it was required or indispensable. Note that children were rating how important each trait was to them for their own spouse, whereas parents were rating how important it was to them that their children select a mate with these traits.[2]

Both parents and children were asked to complete the Asian Values Scale, a 17-item measure of traditional Chinese values such as conformity, harmony, and emotional self-con-

---

[1] Unfortunately, children's marital status was not measured. However, an analysis of desired mate characteristics with age, divided at the median of 19 years (an age below which marriage was unlikely), as an independent dichotomous variable showed no significant effects of age.

[2] All participants completed this scale twice, once from their own perspective, and once from the perspective of their family coparticipant. The co-participant perceptions were collected for other purposes and will not be discussed here.

trol. Cronbach's alphas and test–retest reliability for this scale have been found to be in the .80 to .90 range with Asian American students (Kim et al., 1999). Scores on the Asian Values Scale have been found to decrease by generation and to be correlated to behavioral measures of acculturation and other measures of Asian values, such as interdependence. Sample items include "The ability to control one's emotions is a sign of strength" and "Family's reputation is not the primary social concern" (reverse scored). A mean score was calculated across the 17 items. For children the scale was fairly reliable, Cronbach's alpha = .69. For adults the reliability was higher, Cronbach's alpha = .73.

Children alone were asked to complete measures of self-construal, family allocentrism, and social identity. Self-construal was measured using one of the most widely used scales, Singelis' interdependence/independence scale (Singelis, 1994). The 24-item measure contains two 12-item subscales that measure independence, a person's separateness or uniqueness (e.g., "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects"), and interdependence, the strength of an individual's connectedness and relatedness to others (e.g., "My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me"). Singelis reports Cronbach's alphas around .70 for both scales, and found that the scales reliably distinguished between European and Asian Americans, and that interdependence predicted making more attributions to one's social environment. Measures for both independence and interdependence were calculated by averaging the scores on the respective subscales and each achieved acceptable reliability: for independence, α = .78; for interdependence, α = .76.

Children then completed the family allocentrism scale. Family allocentrism is a measure of the degree of connectedness to one's family. The scale was developed primarily with European and Asian Canadians and has been found to have good internal reliability (Cronbach's alphas between .80 and .90), to be associated with greater orientation to ingroup

norms, and to distinguish between connectedness to family versus that to friends (Lay et al., 1998). Sample items include "I am very similar to my parents" and "Knowing that I need to rely on my family makes me happy." Participants rated their agreement with 21 items and their score was the average of these items. The scale achieved reasonable internal reliability in this sample, Cronbach's alpha = .73.

Social identity was measured using the Social Identity Scale (Cameron, 2004). This scale was developed on Canadian and Australian samples and is found to correlate with collective self-esteem, perceived group cohesion, and inclusion of group members in the self-concept. Test-retest reliabilities were almost all between .70 and .90.

Participants completed this 12-item scale for their Chinese identity, rating each item on a 5-point scale. This scale measures strength of identification with a specific cultural group in terms of ingroup ties (e.g., "I feel strong ties to other Chinese"), cognitive centrality (e.g., "I often think about the fact that I am Chinese"), and ingroup affect (e.g., "In general, I'm glad to be Chinese"). The average score for the entire scale was used.[3]

Results

Partner Traits

A principle axis factor analysis was conducted on the combined mate characteristic ratings that parents and children made for their own preferences (N = 126).[4] Items

---

[3] North American identity was also measured for children for comparison purposes. North American identity did not correlate with any variable and is therefore not reported here.

[4] We believed that parents and children would generate the same factors because these factors are assumed be universal (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000) or reflect a traditional mate factor that has been observed in numerous samples around the world (Buss et al., 1990). Factor analyses conducted separately within parents and children yielded the same factors, but, because of relatively small sample sizes, must be treated with caution.

were examined for skewness and those that were significantly skewed for either parents or children were transformed for the entire sample prior to the analysis. Examination of the scree plot of the factor analysis suggested that a four-factor solution was suitable. A four-factor solution was then forced with an oblique rotation. Items that loaded over .35 on each factor were averaged to create four scales, one for each factor.

The first factor explained 27.02% of the variance. Items loading over .35 on this factor included *emotionally stable, supportive, dependent character, kind, good listener, understanding*, and *considerate*. This factor was labeled Understanding. This scale was highly reliable for parents, Cronbach's alpha = .93, and was acceptable for children, α = .76.

The second factor explained 10.19% of the variance and was labeled Traditional. Items loading over .35 on this factor included *similar culture, similar religion, family reputation, parents' approval, chastity, strong cultural ties*, and *desires children*. This scale was highly reliable for both parents, α = .84, and children, α = .82.

The third factor explained 7.95% of the variance. This factor was labeled Attractive. Items loading over .35 on this factor were *good body, romantic, sexy, physically attractive, adventurous*, and *outgoing*. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .79 for both parents and children.

The last factor explained 4.95% of the variance and was labeled Status. Items loading on this factor included *similar education, nice house/apartment, good job, financially stable, independent*, and *intelligent*. This component was labeled Status and was reliable for both parents, α = .85, and children, α = 79.[5]

Comparing Child and Parent Desired Traits

A 4 (Trait: Understanding, Traditional, Status, Attractive) by 2 (Respondent: Parent, Child) by 2 (Child Gender) mixed design analysis of variance was conducted on desired mate characteristic ratings.[6] Because the parent–child ratings came from dyads and, thus, were paired variables, both Trait and Respondent were treated as repeated measures. Greenhouse-Geisser adjustments were applied to degrees of freedom to control for violations of sphericity. Degrees of freedom are reported to the nearest whole number. Tukey's HSD was used for all post hoc comparisons.

There was a main effect of Trait, $F(3, 154) = 114.99$, $p < .001$, $eta^2 = .65$. The characteristic of Understanding was rated as most desirable, followed by Status, with Traditional traits and Attractiveness rated as least desirable. The latter two traits did not differ (see Table 1). There was no effect of gender, $F(1, 61) = 1.57$, $p = .22$, $eta^2 = .02$, and only a marginal effect of respondent, $F(1, 61) = 2.285$, $p = .06$, $eta^2 = .04$, such that children tended to report stronger endorsement of all traits than their parents did.

There was a significant Trait × Gender interaction which essentially reflected a difference in the importance of Status by Gender, $F(3, 154) = 7.84$, $p < .001$, $eta^2 = .12$. Respondents endorsed Status more highly for women's spouses than for men's (see Table 2). For women, Understanding was most important, followed by Status, and then Traditional and Attractiveness, which were rated as equally unimportant. For men, Traditional, Attractiveness, and Status were all equally low and all less important than Understanding.

There was also a significant two-way interaction between Trait and Respondent, with the difference here focusing on the relative importance placed on Attractiveness by children and their parents, $F(3, 176) = 11.85$, $p < .001$, $eta^2 = .32$. Comparing within traits, children placed signifi-

---

[5] *Outgoing* also loaded on the Status factor at .43, the same as its loading on Attractive, but seemed more consistent with the other Attractive items and was therefore included with them.

[6] When parent gender was included in this analysis, it had no main effects and no interactions.

Table 1
Mean Ratings of Adult Children and Parent's Desired Mate Characteristics for the Child

Variable	Child N = 63	Parent N = 63	Overall means
Understanding	5.20[ab]	4.96[cd]	5.08[ef]
SD	.62	.98	.80
Status	4.11[a]	4.24[c]	4.17[ef]
SD	.99	1.08	1.04
Attractive	3.81[b]	2.82[bcd]	3.32[e]
SD	.95	1.07	1.01
Traditional	3.23[a]	3.64[d]	3.43[f]
SD	1.20	1.25	1.22
Overall Mean	4.09	3.91	
SD	.94	1.11	

Note. Means within columns or rows with at least one shared superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

cantly greater emphasis on Attractiveness than did their parents (see Table 1). Within Respondent, children valued Understanding most, followed by Attractiveness and Status, which did not differ, and desired Traditional traits least of all. Parents also rated Understanding as most important, followed by Status, and then Traditional traits. Attractiveness was rated as least important. The interaction between Respondent and Gender was not significant, $F(1, 61) = 1.60$, $p = .21$, $eta^2 = .03$.

There was a significant three-way interaction between Trait, Respondent, and Gender, $F(3, 176) = 4.93$, $p = .003$, $eta^2 =$ .08. Comparing across gender of child, both children and parents thought that women should place more emphasis on Status than men should (see Table 2). Male children emphasized Attractiveness more than did female children, but the parents of sons and daughters did not differ in their preferences as a function of the gender of their child. Comparing children to parents, sons placed a greater emphasis on Attractiveness than did their parents whereas the difference between daughters and their parents was marginal. Finally, comparing traits within each group of respondents, daughters priori-

Table 2
Mean Ratings for Desired Traits by Respondent and Gender of Child

	Son		Daughter			
	Parent N = 35	Child N = 35	Parent N = 28	Child N = 28	Son N = 35	Daughter N = 28
Understanding	4.84[cd]	5.22[ef]	5.08[g]	5.17[hi]	5.03[lmn]	5.12[jk]
SD	1.17	.54	.66	.72	.85	.69
Status	3.75[ac]	3.81[e]	4.73[a]	4.41[hi]	3.78[kl]	4.57[jk]
SD	1.13	1.08	.72	.75	.73	.73
Attractive	2.70[bcd]	4.14[bf]	2.92[g]	3.49[h]	3.42[m]	3.21[k]
SD	1.08	.88	1.05	.93	.98	.99
Traditional	3.66[d]	3.09[ef]	3.60[g]	3.38[i]	3.37[n]	3.50[j]
SD	1.26	1.19	1.25	1.21	1.22	1.23

Note. Means with the same subscript are significantly different $p < .05$.

tized Understanding more than Status and both of those traits more than Traditional and Attractiveness, which did not differ. In contrast, parents of daughters did not differ in the emphasis they placed on Understanding and Status, both of which they valued more than Traditional. Attractiveness was seen as least important. Sons desired Understanding the most in a mate, then Attractiveness and Status, which they desired equally. Traditional traits were desired the least. Sons' parents valued Understanding most, followed by Status and Traditional, which did not differ, and Attractiveness least.

What Predicts Endorsement of Traditional Mate Characteristics?

Means were calculated for parents and children on Asian values and for children alone on family allocentrism, Chinese identity, and interdependence and all variables were centered for the regression analyses. For Asian values, parents' scores ranged from 2.24 to 6.41, with a mean of 4.13 ($SD =$ .84). Children's scores ranged from 2.18 to 4.94, with a mean of 3.90 ($SD = .64$). A paired samples t test indicated that children's endorsement of Asian values was mar-

ginally lower than that of their parents, $t(61) = 1.88$, $p = 06$. Parents' endorsement of Asian values was correlated with their length of residing in North America, $r(62) = -.35$, $p = .006$, and with their endorsement of traditional traits for their children's mates, $r(62) = .46$, $p < .001$. Thus, parents' endorsement of these traits did seem to reflect traditional values.

Children's scores on allocentrism ranged from 3.19 to 5.67, with a mean of 4.46 ($SD = .58$). Chinese sense of identity had a mean of 4.69 ($SD = .59$) and ranged from 3.25 to 6.00. Interdependence ranged from 3.00 to 7.00, with a mean of 4.65 ($SD =$ .72). Independence ranged from 3.00 to 7.00, with a mean of 4.71 ($SD = .79$). Correlations between children's traditional mate preferences, the preferences of their parents, and the potential mediators/moderators are represented in Table 3. The zero-order correlations suggest that children's preferences are correlated only with their parents' preferences, their own family allocentrism, and their own general endorsement of Asian values.

Children's preferences for Traditional traits were regressed onto their parents' preferences for Traditional traits, and on children's Asian values, Chinese identity, in-

Table 3
Correlations Between Children's Preferences for Traditional Mate Values, Parents' Preferences, and Measures of Identity, Values and Self-Concept

	TradC	TradP	AsianVC	Alloc	ChinID	Interdep	Indep	Yrs in NA[a]
TradC	.82	.40***	.28*	.41***	.24†	.24†	.18	−.30*
TradP		.84	.22†	.28*	.21	.19	.05	−.22†
AsianVC			.69	.29*	.01	.19	.08	−.17
Alloc				.73	.24†	.24†	.11	.07
ChinID					.79	.16	.19	.21†
Interdep						.76	.57***	.16
Indep							.78	−.02

Note. Cronbach's alpha for scales presented along the diagonal. TracC = Children's Traditional Mate Preferences; TradP = Parents' Traditional Mate Preferences; AsianVC = Children's Asian Values; Alloc = Family Allocentrism; ChinID = Chinese Sense of Identity; Interrel = Interrelatedness; Interdep = Interdependence; Indep = Independence; Yrs in NA = Children's years in North America.

[a] Children's age is controlled for correlations with this variable.

†$p < .10$.   *$p < .05$.   **$p < .01$.   ***$p < .001$.

terdependence, independence, and family allocentrism.[7] The interactions between parent preferences and each of the psychological variables were entered in the second step to test potential moderators of the effect of parent preferences on children's preferences. However, the step with the two-way interactions was not significant, nor were any of the individual two-way interaction terms. Thus, there was no evidence that these variables moderated the effect of parent preferences on children's preferences and only the first step is described.

The regression equation explained a significant proportion of the variance in children's preferences for Traditional traits, $R^2_{adj} = .22$, $F(6, 56) = 3.93$, $p = .002$. Children's preferences were significantly and positively associated with their parents' preferences ($\beta = .28$, $t = 2.29$, $p = .03$) and children's family allocentrism ($\beta = .26$, $t = 2.04$, $p = .05$). In contrast, children's Asian values ($\beta = .13$, $t = 1.11$, $p = .27$), Chinese sense of identity ($\beta = .10$, $t < 1$), interdependence ($\beta = .02$, $t < 1$), and independence ($\beta = .10$, $t < 1$) were not related to their preferences for Traditional mate characteristics.

To test whether these variables mediated the relationship between children's and parents' endorsement of Traditional mate characteristics, the zero-order correlations in Table 3 were examined. Family allocentrism was the only variable that met the necessary requirements of being associated with both the dependent variable (children's Traditional trait preferences) and the independent variable (parents' Traditional trait preferences) (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Regressions showed that parents' preferences significantly predicted children's preferences, $\beta = .40$, $t = 3.44$, $p = .001$, and family allocentrism was significantly related to parents' endorsement of Traditional traits, $\beta = .28$, $t = 2.28$, $p = .03$. When allocentrism was added to the equation with parent preferences, family allocentrism significantly predicted children's preferences, $\beta = .32$, $t = 2.77$, $p = .007$, while the beta value for parents' preferences dropped from $\beta = .40$

to $\beta = .31$, $t = 2.70$, $p = .009$. Because parents' preferences were still significant, partial mediation was suggested. A Sobel test indicated that the partial mediation was marginally significant, $Z = 1.75$, $p = .08$.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that there are differences between Chinese immigrants to North America and their adult, North American-raised children regarding preferences for traditional mate characteristics. Although both children and parents emphasized the importance of an understanding partner above and beyond all other characteristics, Chinese immigrant parents rated traits associated with traditional family structure, function, and roles as being of moderate importance relative to other potential characteristics, even though they themselves had resided in North America an average of 30 years and were so well acculturated that they were more comfortable completing the survey in English than in Chinese. In contrast, their North American raised children perceived traditional characteristics as being the least important of the possible traits in an ideal mate.

Parents' preferences for traditional traits were related to their general endorsement of Asian values, which, in turn, were related to their length of residence in North America. For the children, however, the relationship between Asian values and traditional mate preferences did not hold when other variables were taken into consideration. There was also no evidence that children's endorsement of traditional mate characteristics was related to their Chinese identity or to interdependence. Rather, children's en-

---

[7] Child and parent gender were not included given that they had no effect on endorsement of Traditional values. When analyses were run with the inclusion of child and parent gender, gender had no main effect and did not interact with any of the other variables.

dorsement of traditional mate characteristics appeared to be a reflection of their family connectedness. Moreover, family connectedness or allocentrism tended to partially mediate the influence of parents' mate preferences on those of their children. Thus, these children of Chinese immigrants may have been oriented to the maintenance of family specific values rather than traditional cultural values. Indeed, for immigrants, the role of the family in socialization and enculturation may be more distinct than in nonimmigrant families, because their values may be notably different from those of the surrounding culture. While the family may be communicating and endorsing cultural values, these may be experienced as family values and be internalized and endorsed out of a sense of family connectedness rather than cultural identity.

The results of this study replicated those of Fletcher and his colleagues (Fletcher et al., 1999) regarding dimensions of preferred mate characteristics. The factors of warmth-loyalty, vitality-attractiveness, and status-resources identified in Western samples coincided with the dimensions of understanding, attractiveness, and status that we obtained for our sample, supporting claims that these factors reflect universal concerns in mate selection (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000). Evolutionary theory postulates that physical attractiveness is a marker of good health, and thus of a greater likelihood of healthy, viable offspring; status is important in obtaining resources necessary for promoting the survival of one's offspring (Buss & Schmitt, 1993); and warmth and interpersonal skills indicate good parenting skills (Kirkpatrick, 1998). However, our results reinforce findings (e.g., Buss et al., 1990) that other dimensions may matter when partner choice is made in a more collectivist cultural milieu.

The gender differences observed for both status and attractiveness are also consistent with past research and evolutionary theories. Women are generally found to be more concerned with their partner's status than are men, whereas men are more inter-

ested in their partner's physical appearance than are women. This is typically attributed to evolved sex differences in mating strategies (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Interestingly, while both children and their parents in this study preferred a high status spouse for the daughters, parents did not share their son's relative emphasis on a potential spouse's attractiveness. Parents' reluctance to emphasize physical attractiveness may have been a consequence of a general sexual conservatism. Chinese culture is very restrained about expressions of sexuality relative to North American culture (Kaufman, Poston, Hirschl, & Stycos, 1996; Sung, 1985). This traditional reticence may have led parents to resist either acknowledging or reporting physical and sexual attraction as a motivating factor for their children. The difference in preferences for attractive spouses between parents of daughters and sons may, therefore, have been masked by a general reluctance to openly discuss sexual matters.

Moreover, the effect sizes for findings that pertained to gender were considerably smaller than those associated with other differences (ranging from .03 to .12), suggesting that these differences were not as meaningful as other significant differences, such as the interaction between type of trait and generation of respondent (eta^2 = .32). Nonetheless, the observation of only half of the usual gender differences in parents' preferences for their children was intriguing. It suggests that there is social pressure on women to pursue high status partners above and beyond their own status preferences, whereas the same social pressure may not occur for men's preference for attractiveness.

This may be because patriarchal societies judge a family's status primarily by the male members. To the extent that a child's mate becomes a member of the family and, thus, contributes to the family's status, there may be considerable pressure within traditional families for daughters to choose high-status mates. If this is true, one might then expect a relationship between endorsement of traditional values and a preference for one's

daughter to choose a high status mate. Indeed, in the present study, there was a strong positive relationship between parents' preference for their children to choose a high status mate and their endorsement of traditional mate attributes, but this was true for both daughters, $r(28) = .76$, $p < .001$, and sons, $r(35) = .51$, $p = .002$. However, there was also a negative relationship between years of residence in North America and preference for a high status mate for parents of daughters, $r(28) = -.39$, $p = .04$, but not for parents of sons, $r(35) = -.09$, *ns*. Acculturation may, therefore, influence status preferences for spouses of female children and, thus, reflect changes in traditional sex role expectations (cf. Tang & Dion, 1999).

Finally, caution must be taken in generalizing to other samples given both the sample size and sampling procedure used. Snowball sampling can generate samples with relatively similar values and demographic characteristics, since participants are by definition all somewhat acquainted with one another. It is also not clear if similar effects would occur for children of immigrants from other Chinese cultures. There may be substantial differences between Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China. These communities differ widely in terms of living conditions, political and cultural history, and reasons for migrating. Likewise, immigrants to the U.S and Canada may acculturate differently, given the different orientations espoused by these two nations regarding immigration and multiculturalism (Berry, 1997). Subsequent research needs to address these differences with respect to their impact on both endorsement of traditional values and intergenerational value transmission.

Conclusions

Acculturation in immigrant families occurs at varying rates for different values and be- haviors and for different generations; change occurs most slowly for family-related values and for older generations. This sets up a situation of potential conflict. To the extent that one's marital partner becomes a part of one's family, children of immigrants may find themselves at odds with their parents about their choice of partner. However, the results of this study revealed considerable agreement. Parents and children in North American Chinese families agreed on the most important characteristics in an ideal mate: that he or she is warm and understanding. Moreover, the stronger parents' preferences for a traditional mate, the more their children shared these preferences. Thus, although children disagreed with their parents about the relative importance of traditional traits, they were clearly influenced by their parents' values. Moreover, this influence was partially determined by the strength of children's connectedness with their family. The results of this study highlight the importance of strong family relationships, as opposed to more distal influences like cultural identification in the processes of socialization, enculturation, and acculturation in immigrant families.

References

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51,* 1173–1182.

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation and adaptation. *Applied Psychology, 46,* 5–68.

Bond, M. H., & Hwang, K-K. (1986). The social psychology of Chinese people. In M. H. Bond (Ed.). *The psychology of the Chinese people.* (pp. 213–266). London: Oxford University Press.

Buss, D. M., Abbott, M., Angleitner, A., Asherian, A., Biaggio, A., Blanco-Villasenor, A., et al. (1990). International mate preferences in selecting mates. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 21,* 5–47.

Buss, D. M., & Schmitt, D. P. (1993). Sexual

strategies theory: An evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological Review, 100,* 204–232.

Cameron, J. E. (2004). A three-factor model of social identity. *Self and Identity, 3,* 239–262.

Dasgupta, S. D. (1998). Gender roles and cultural continuity in the Asian Indian immigrant community in the US. *Sex Roles, 38,* 953–974.

Dinh, K. T., Sarason, B. R., & Sarason, I. (1994). Parent-child relationships in Vietnamese immigrant families. *Journal of Family Psychology, 8,* 471–488.

Dion, K. K., & Dion, K. L. (1996). Cultural perspectives on romantic love. *Personal Relationships, 3,* 5–17.

Dion, K. K., & Dion, K. L. (2001). Gender and cultural adaptation in immigrant families. *Journal of Social Issues, 57,* 511–521.

Doherty, R. W., Hatfield, E., Thompson, K., & Choo, P. (1994). Cultural and ethnic influences on love and attachment. *Personal Relationships, 1,* 391–398.

Ebrey, P. (1990). Women, marriage and the family in Chinese history. In P. S. Ropp (Ed.), *Heritage of China: Contemporary perspectives on Chinese civilization* (pp. 197–223). Berkeley, CA: University of California.

Fiske, A. P., Kitayama, S., Markus, H. R., & Nisbett, R. E. (1998). The cultural matrix of social psychology. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T., Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology, Vol. 2 (4th ed.).* (pp. 915–981). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fletcher, G. J. O., Simpson, J. A., Thomas, G., & Giles, L. (1999). Ideals in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76,* 72–89.

Gaines, S. O. Jr., Marelich, W. D., Bledsoe, K. L., Steers, W. N., Henderson, M. C., Granrose, C. S., et al., (1997). Links between race/ethnicity and cultural values as mediated by racial/ethnic identity and moderated by gender. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72,* 1460–1476.

Gangestad, S. W., & Simpson, J. A. (2000). The evolution of human mating: Trade-offs and strategic pluralism. *Behaviour and Brain Sciences, 23,* 573–644.

Georgas, J. (1989). Changing family values in Greece: From collectivist to individualist. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 20,* 80–91.

Georgas, J., Berry, J. W., Shaw, A., Christakopoulou, S., & Mylonas, K. (1996). Acculturation of Greek family values. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 27,* 329–338.

Grolnick, W. S., Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1997). Internalization within the family: The self-determination theory perspective. In J. E. Grusec & L. Kuczynski (Eds.), *Parenting and children's internalization of values: A handbook of contemporary theory* (pp. 135–161). New York: Wiley.

Ho, D. Y. F. (1986). Chinese patterns of socialization: A critical review. In M. H. Bond (Ed.). *The psychology of the Chinese people* (pp. 1–37). London: Oxford University Press.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values.* Sage: Beverly Hills, CA.

Hong, Y-Y., Benet-Martinez, V., Chiu, C-Y., & Morris, M. W. (2003). Boundaries of cultural influence: Construct activation as a mechanism for cultural differences in social perception. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 34,* 453–464.

Hynie, M. (1996). From conflict to compromise: Immigrant families and the processes of acculturation. In D. M. Taylor (Ed.) *Diversity with justice and harmony: A social psychological analysis.* (pp. 97–123) Ottawa, Canada: Department of Citizenship and Immigration,.

Kağitçibaşi, C. (1998). Human development: Cross-cultural perspectives. In J. G. Adair, D. Belanger, & K. L. Dion (Eds.), *Advances in psychological science, Vol. 1: Social, personal, and cultural aspects.* (pp. 475–494). Hove, England: Psychology Press/Erlbaum.

Kaufman, G., Poston, D. L. Jr., Hirschl, T. A., & Stycos, J. M. (1996). Teenage sexual attitudes in China. *Social Biology, 43,* 141–154.

Kim, B. S. K., Atkinson, D. R., & Yang, P. H. (1999). The Asian Values Scale: Development, factor analysis, validation and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46,* 342–352.

Kirkpatrick, L. A. (1998). Evolution, pair-bonding, and reproductive strategies: A reconceptualization of adult attachment. In J. A. Simpson & W. S. Rholes (Eds.), *Attachment theory and close relationships* (pp. 353–393). New York: Guilford Press.

Knafo, A., & Schwartz, S. H. (2001). Value social-

ization in families of Israeli-born and Soviet-born adolescents in Israel. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 32,* 213–228.

Kwak, K. (2003). Adolescents and their parents: A review of intergenerational family relations for immigrant and non-immigrant families. *Human Development, 46,* 115–136.

LaFromboise, T., Coleman, H. K., & Gerton, J. (1993). Psychological impact of biculturalism: Evidence and theory. *Psychological Bulletin, 114,* 395–412.

Lalonde, R. N., Hynie, M., Pannu, M., & Tatla, S. (2004). The role of culture in interpersonal relationships: Do second generation South Asian Canadians want a traditional partner? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 35,* 503–524.

Lay, C., Fairlie, P., Jackson, S., Ricci, T., Eisenberg, J., Sato, T., Teeäär, A., & Melamud, A. (1998). Domain-specific allocentrism-idiocentrism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 29,* 434–460.

Oyserman, D., Coon, H. M., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin, 128,* 3–72.

Phalet, K., & Schönpflug, U. (2001). Intergenerational transmission of collectivism and achievement values in two acculturation contexts. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 32,* 186–201.

Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin, 108,* 499–514.

Pimentel, E. E. (2000). Just how do I love thee? Marital relations in urban China. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62,* 32–47.

Rick, K., & Forward, J. (1992). Acculturation and perceived intergenerational differences among Hmong youth. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 23,* 85–94.

Rosenthal, D. A., Demetrious, A., & Efklides, A.

(1989). A cross-national study of the influence of culture on conflict between parents and adolescents. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 12,* 207–217.

Schönpflug, U. (2001). Intergenerational transmission of values. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 32,* 174–185.

Singelis, W. F. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20,* 580–591.

Sung, B. L. (1985). Bicultural conflicts in Chinese immigrant children. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 16,* 255–269.

Tang, T. N., & Dion, K. L. (1999). Gender and acculturation in relation to traditionalism: Perceptions of self and parents among Chinese students. *Sex Roles, 41,* 17–29.

Toro-Morn, M., & Sprecher, S. (2003). A cross-cultural comparison of mate preferences among university students: The United States vs. The People's Republic of China (PRC). *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 34,* 151–170.

Triandis, H. C. (2001). Individualism-collectivism and personality. *Journal of Personality, 69,* 907–924.

Tsai, J. L., Ying, Y. W., & Lee, P. A. (2000). The meaning of "being Chinese" and "being American." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 31,* 302–332.

Van de Vijver, F., & Leung, K. (1997). *Methods and data analysis for cross-cultural research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Xiaohe, X., & Whyte, M. K. (1990). Love matches and arranged marriages: A Chinese replication. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52,* 709–722.

Ying, Y-W., Coombs, M., & Lee, P. A. (1999). Family intergenerational relationships of Asian American adolescents. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology, 5,* 350–363.