

Parents' childrearing values and beliefs in the United States and Russia: The impact of culture and social class

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Abstract:

Parents' values for their children and their beliefs about appropriate child-rearing practices contribute to the ways in which they try to shape their children's development. This paper examines the values and beliefs of 71 parents (37 mothers and 34 fathers) from two cities in the United States and Russia. Half of the families were middle class (determined by education and occupation criteria) and half were working class. The results revealed no cross-societal differences in value for self-direction in the children; perhaps reflecting the recent economic and ideological changes in Russia. In contrast, significant social class differences, for both mothers and fathers, were found in child-rearing values and beliefs. Middle class parents in both societies were more likely to value self-direction and believe that children should have freedom in and around the home, whereas working class parents were more likely to believe that children should be expected to conform to rules. The results of this study underscore the role of within-society heterogeneity, as a function of social class, in parents' values and beliefs about child-rearing.

Keywords: beliefs | child-rearing | Russia | SES | USA | values

Article:

The socio-cultural context in which families are situated is frequently cited as an important factor influencing parents' child-rearing values and beliefs (Goodnow and Collins, 1990; Bornstein, 1991; Harkness and Super, 1996). Although parental values and beliefs are themselves partially determined by characteristics of the children themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), in this paper we focus on contextual influences, specifically social class influences, on the values and beliefs of mothers and fathers in the United States and in Russia. We examined parents from a single

city in each of these two societies, chosen because the parents were raised in an era in which they may have been exposed to different ideologies and perspectives. We were interested in the similarities and differences in parental values and beliefs occurring between these societies but also within them. We were interested in the heterogeneity in values and beliefs related to social class. Although these macro-level factors (ideology or social class) are not sufficient to explain parental values and beliefs, it is clear that they play an important role.

A number of scholars have argued that one characteristic of US society as a whole is that independence, autonomy and mastery are highly valued, in contrast to a society such as Russia, where parents have been reared in a system in which, at least in terms of ideology, a value for conformity supersedes a value for independence (Bronfenbrenner, 1970; Tudge, 1991; Searle-White, 1996; Sloutsky, 1996; Schwartz and Bardi, 1997). Although Triandis (1993) has argued that Russia may be shifting toward 'unbridled individualism' (p. 155), there is evidence that Russian parents continue to believe that children should put the group's interests above their own and are also more likely to subscribe to traditional beliefs about parent-child relationships. Specifically, Russian parents emphasize authority by parents, rather than a democratic relationship (Ispa, 1994; Hart *et al.*, 1998), with mothers highly likely to report similar child-rearing practices as those their own mothers used (Olsen *et al.*, 1996).

Cross-societal research has revealed important information about cultural differences in processes of human development. However, cross-societal comparisons, such as those mentioned above, rarely deal with the heterogeneity that is to be found within societies. An exclusive focus on differences across, rather than within, societies implies that society and culture are synonymous, and that societies are internally homogenous. Failure to address within-society variation is particularly problematic when societies are socio-economically, ethnically or racially complex. If we define culture as a web of values, beliefs, meaning systems and practices, then variability in the patterns of values and beliefs that exists within societies such as in the USA and in Russia should not be ignored, and should be treated as evidence of within-society culture. One important level of within-society culture is social class.¹ In the United States, at least, researchers have been finding differences in patterns of child-rearing since the 1940s in the areas of punishment (Sears *et al.*, 1957), infant-training practices (Bronfenbrenner, 1958), values (Duvall, 1957; Gecas and Nye, 1974; Kohn, 1977; Kohn and Schooler, 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski, 1990) and parental beliefs (McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982; Okagaki and Divecha, 1993).

Relations between parents' values and their position in the system of social stratification have been the focus of research by Kohn and his colleagues (Kohn, 1977, 1995; Kohn and Schooler, 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski, 1990). In research conducted in several industrialized countries (including the USA, Italy, Poland and Japan) Kohn and his colleagues have found position in the social stratification system to be more consistently related to parental (primarily fathers') values than race, religion, region and national background combined. Kohn found that parents who were higher in the social stratification system (which we shall refer to as 'middle class') tended to have a higher value for self-directed, autonomous behaviour, while parents lower in the social stratification system ('working class') considered conformity and obedience more important. Value for self-direction is represented by a preference for such characteristics as consideration,

¹ Although class, race, ethnicity, regional variation, and so on, are sometimes referred to as 'sub-cultures' we prefer to avoid the somewhat pejorative implication of this term.

responsibility and self-control, while value for conformity is associated with concerns about obedience, good manners and being a good student. These preferences, according to Kohn, arise from a tendency for middle class parents to emphasize the importance of following internal standards of control, whereas working class parents tend to be more concerned with adherence to external standards for behaviour.

Other scholars have found similar patterns of relations between social class and parental values (Gecas and Nye, 1974; Wright and Wright, 1976; Luster *et al.*, 1989; Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 1995). Luster and his colleagues extended Kohn's ideas to include beliefs about appropriate child-rearing. According to Luster *et al.* (1989), parents' values are manifested in specific ideas about appropriate child-rearing practices. For example, parents who value self-direction emphasize being responsive to their child rather than worrying about creating a spoiled child by being overly attentive. In addition, these parents tend to believe that few restrictions should be placed on children's freedom to explore their environments, and to de-emphasize the importance of discipline and control. By contrast, parents who value conformity are more likely to emphasize providing constraints on children's aversive behaviours. In addition, these parents tend to believe that effective parenting involves discipline, control over their children's behaviours and freedom to explore environments, and that being overly attentive can create a spoiled child.

Although most of Kohn's work had been conducted with fathers, this focus on fathers has been the exception in parenting research rather than the rule. It is possible that the greater focus on mothers derives from the fact that mothers are more likely to spend time with infants and young children (Whiting and Edwards, 1988; Parke, 1995), although there is some evidence that men take more of a role in playing with their children (Russell and Russell, 1987; Riley, 1990). Mothers' values and beliefs may thus have been expected to be of more consequence for child-rearing practices than fathers'. Luster and his colleagues, gathering data only from mothers, supported Kohn's position, finding evidence for these differing patterns of values and beliefs in their sample of US middle and working class mothers.

In this paper we will explore whether social stratification is related to child-rearing values in contemporary Russia in the same manner as that described by Kohn and his colleagues in the USA and other industrialized nations for both mothers and fathers. There are reasons to suppose that Kohn's work may be less relevant in Russia than in many other industrialized countries, partly because of past ideology and partly because of the current transformations taking place. The ideology of the former Soviet Union, while not ignoring social class, attempted to minimize class differences (Kohn, 1993). However, Kohn and Slomczynski (1990) found that position in the social stratification system in Poland, a country where class differences were also minimized, was associated with values about child-rearing that mirrored what had been found in the USA, as well as in Italy and other non-socialist industrialized societies.² On the other hand, the strong link between parents' position in the social stratification system, education, occupation and income found in the USA and many Western European countries was not as strong in the former Soviet Union. Although one could distinguish between members of the *nomenklatura* (those with power), the *intelligentsia* (academics, writers, artists, etc.) and workers only the first group had significantly greater access to valued goods and services. By contrast, the differentiating factors

² Kohn is currently conducting research in the Ukraine, although the most recent reports of the genesis and current status of the project (Kohn, 1993, 1995) do not include discussion of data.

between the latter two groups may have consisted of education and occupation, but not income. Nonetheless, in the former Soviet Union, members of the intelligentsia were likely to adhere to different values and beliefs than workers, and the children of the intelligentsia were raised in such a way that they were likely to complete higher education and themselves work in the professional sphere, whereas the children of workers were likely to become workers in turn.

Very little research has been conducted in Russia on the relationship between social class and child-rearing values and beliefs; however, three recent studies with data collected just prior to the break-up of the Soviet Union (Ispa, 1994, 1995) and 1 year after the break-up (Goodwin and Emelyanova, 1995) suggest that social class may play an important role in contemporary Russian society. Goodwin and Emelyanova (1995), for example, reported that respondents with more education (students and entrepreneurs) were more likely than those with less education (workers) to value 'tutoring' as a parental role and independence, individuality and intellect as goals for child-rearing. Workers, by contrast, were more likely to value 'the collective good' as the goal of child-rearing and 'love and warmth' as the way in which parents treated their children. Ispa (1995), using measures derived from Kohn (1977) and Luster *et al.* (1989), found that mothers' education level (a proxy for social class) was inversely related to a valuation of conformity to external rules for their children. Moreover, contrasting mothers, university students and teachers, Ispa (1995) found that those with less education were more likely than those who were better educated to view 'control and discipline' as an important child-rearing goal. In a related study, Ispa (1994) found that Russian and US mothers were similarly differentiated in terms of value for conformity. Although the two samples did not differ by society, in each society mothers with less education were more likely to value conformity than were mothers with more education.

This study builds on the work of Ispa (1994, 1995) by comparing two groups of Russian and US respondents, differentiated by social class, in terms of their values for self-direction in their children (as opposed to conformity) and their more specific beliefs about child-rearing. It extends the work that has previously been conducted by gathering data on both mothers and fathers.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the work of Kohn and his colleagues, we hypothesized that, across societies, middle class mothers and fathers (i.e. those with higher education and whose jobs were higher in the system of social stratification) would be more likely to value self-direction for their children than would working class parents (those without higher education and who worked in the non-professional sphere). Regarding child-rearing beliefs, we expected that working class mothers and fathers would be more concerned with the probability of spoiling the child by being overattentive, and would place a greater emphasis on control and discipline. We also expected that middle class parents would be more likely to subscribe to the belief that children should be given freedom to explore their environments.

At the level of societal differences, we hypothesized that the Greensboro mothers and fathers would place a higher value on self-direction (related to individualism) in their children than their Obninsk counterparts, who were raised in an era in which conformity to the group was valued. We also hypothesized that there would be societal differences in parental beliefs; that parents in Greensboro, being more likely to emphasize internal standards of control, would be less

concerned about spoiling their child, and would be less likely to see control and discipline as a key element of the parenting role, than parents in Obninsk, who we expected to emphasize constraint in the parent–child relationship. In addition, and following the same reasoning, we hypothesized that the Greensboro mothers and fathers would be more likely to believe that children should be given freedom to explore their environments with few restraints, than would those in Obninsk.

PARTICIPANTS

Parents from 40 families, including 37 mothers and 34 fathers, were recruited for this study, part of a wider cross-cultural project involving the observation of children and their families, and interviews with the parents, from the US, Russia, South Korea and Estonia (Tudge *et al.*, 1999). The US children were drawn from Greensboro, NC, a city of approximately 200000 inhabitants, located approximately 250 miles (400 km) south of Washington, DC. From this city, families with 30–48-month-old children were recruited from two communities (one middle class, in which most parents have higher education and tend to work in professional occupations, and one working class, in which parents typically do not have higher education and tend to work in the non-professional sphere).

Participants in Greensboro were located in the following manner. ‘Community’ was defined as an area of town bounded on all sides by relatively clear boundaries (major roads, railway line, etc.), with no major roads cutting through the area, relatively small in size (1.5–2 square miles) and judged to be fairly homogeneous in terms of types of housing and racial background. A list was then generated from the birth records of all children born in that area 2–4 years earlier. Letters were sent to all families who appeared still to be living in the area (information derived from the telephone book and/or city records), and were followed by a screening call. In order to participate, the family still had to be living in the area, and had to fit education and occupation criteria. For the middle class community, at least one parent had to have a minimum of a college degree and have an occupation judged to be professional according to Hollingshead criteria (Hollingshead, 1975); for the working class community, neither custodial parent could have a degree (one non-residential, divorced father had a degree).

Of the 28 families contacted in the middle class community, ten declined to participate, seven were willing to participate but did not meet our requirements and 11 participated. The minimum median family income (families responded to an income range rather than a precise amount) for this group was \$70000 (ranging from \$40000 to more than \$85000), and the median Hollingshead ranking was 8 (administrators, lesser professionals), range 7–9 (excluding the six mothers who worked at home). The mothers’ median educational attainment was a bachelor’s degree (ranging from some college to graduate degrees), and their average years of full-time education after age 14 was 8.1 (S.D. = 1.23). The fathers’ median (and minimum) educational attainment was also a bachelor’s degree, but two had doctoral degrees, and their average length of full-time education after age 14 was 8.9 (S.D. = 1.7). The data on parental values and beliefs were collected approximately 3 years after the observational part of the study, when the children were about 7 years old ($M = 86.3$ months, S.D. = 7.3 months). All the middle class families were willing to continue their involvement in the study.

Of the 18 families contacted in the working class community, four declined to participate, five were willing to participate but did not meet our requirements and nine participated. The minimum median family income for this group was \$25000 (ranging from \$10000 to \$40000), and the median Hollingshead ranking was 4 (skilled manual workers), range 2–5 (all mothers but one worked outside the home). The mothers' median and maximum educational attainment was 'some college' and all had finished high school. The fathers' median educational attainment was completion of high school, and ranged from 'less than high school' to 'some college'. The parental values and beliefs data were collected approximately 2 years later, when the children were around 6 years of age ($M = 75.7$ months, $S.D. = 5.9$ months). At this time, one of the families declined to participate further in the study.

The Russian families lived in Obninsk, a medium sized town (120000 inhabitants) approximately 75 miles (120 km) from Moscow. Obninsk has two institutes of higher education and people who have been trained for working in the professional sphere as well as people who have received less education and are typical workers. Our intention was to locate families that were the closest equivalent to 'middle class' and 'working class' families in US terms. This translated into choosing two groups of families that were distinguishable in terms of education and occupation in the same manner as in the US groups. Thus, half of the Russian families consisted of parents who had the equivalent of a US college education and whose primary occupation was judged to be professional (many parents held more than one job, as a way of supplementing their income). The other half had no more than the equivalent of high school in the US and worked in the non-professional sphere.³ It was not possible to recruit families in the same manner in Obninsk because there was no possibility of identifying families from birth records. We therefore used one of the authors' contacts with one family, followed by a 'snowball' technique.

In the middle class group, all the fathers and all but two of the mothers had completed a higher education degree (a 5-year programme including completion of a thesis); in the working class group no one had more than the equivalent of a high school education or 'incomplete secondary education' followed by courses in a technical college. The median Hollingshead ranking for the middle class fathers was 7 (range 5–9), and the mothers' median rank was also 7 (range 5–8). The median Hollingshead ranking for the working class fathers was 4 (range 3–5). With the exception of one working class mother (who worked as a nurse), the mothers' range was from 2 to 5 (median ranking of 4). Some of the Obninsk parents held more than one job, but these data relate to their main occupation.

In other respects these two groups of Russian families were quite similar. For example, they lived in similar apartment complexes in the same areas of town. In terms of total family income, the group of parents with higher education (with a single high-earning exception) earned approximately the same as their counterparts without higher education (median \$225 per month as of autumn 1995, range \$133–\$1200, compared with a median income of \$257, range \$45–

³ It should be noted that the two systems of education are not strictly comparable. In the USA, those with a high school diploma have typically been in school for 11 years, and then choose either to enter college or university if they aspire to professional occupation. By contrast, in Russia, college education that leads to a professional or academic occupation follows 'complete secondary' (10-year) education and entrance to an institution of 'higher education'. For less academically oriented students, the path to a skilled trade is typically to leave school after 8 years ('incomplete secondary' education) and enrol in a polytechnical institute. A further difference is that a college degree in Russia takes 5 years rather than 4 in the USA, and involves the completion of a thesis.

\$445). It is thus clear, that although in terms of education and occupation the two groups in Russia differed from each other in a way similar to those in the US, in terms of income and housing the two groups of Russian families did not differ at all. This was in marked contrast to the two groups of US families. In the Russian city, complete data were collected from all the mothers (20), and from all of the fathers (15) who were living with the mother at the time of the study. The parental values and beliefs data (from both the middle class and working class families) were collected approximately 1 year after the observational part of the study had been completed, when the children were aged almost 5 years of age ($M = 56.5$ months, $S.D. = 9.1$ months).

MEASURES

As has been pointed out by numerous scholars who are interested in cultural issues, one encounters numerous potential pitfalls when collecting data in a culture other than one's own or comparing data across two or more cultural groups (Lonner and Berry, 1986; Berry *et al.*, 1992; Brislin, 1993). One of the central issues concerns the emic–etic distinction (Berry, 1989), or the goal of understanding a cultural group from its own perspective (an emic approach) versus studying a group from a position outside that group (an etic approach). Berry (1989; Berry *et al.*, 1992) has argued that if one derives a measure in one's own culture (an emic measure, at least potentially) and simply applies it in another culture, it is an imposed etic measure, not based on an understanding of the second culture. To the extent to which one comes to understand the second culture, one can arrive at an emic understanding, and when one finds similarities in the two emic positions one can talk appropriately about those similarities (a 'derived etic' approach). Although the distinction is most often applied in the cross-cultural domain, it is just as relevant (though rarely considered) when gathering data in a cultural group other than that of the researcher within the researcher's own society.

In this study we have aimed at a derived etic approach. The research team consists of an American, two Russian ethnographers (one fluent in English who has spent several months living in the US), an Irish researcher who had lived several years in the US, and an English researcher with a good working knowledge of Russian (having lived for 3 years in Russia) currently working in the US. The team thus has good knowledge not only of the society in which they are currently living but in two cases, reasonable knowledge of both societies. We believe that the issues of interest, the values that parents have for their children and the more specific beliefs about how to attain those goals, are functionally equivalent and carry similar meanings.

Although the measures were formulated in the US, they were thoroughly discussed by all members of the research team and were translated into Russian and then back-translated by a professional Russian–English translator. All differences in nuances of meaning in the translations were discussed and all agreed that even when the wording was not precisely the same in the back translation as in the original, the meaning was the same. This helped ensure that the instruments used in the US and Russian cities were conceptually equivalent, and would be understood in similar ways by the participants (Hart *et al.*, 1998).

Parental Value for Self-direction

Kohn's *Q*-sort methodology was used, in which parents were asked to rate the three most and three least important qualities for their child from a list of 13. Kohn (1977; Kohn and Slomczynski, 1990) had identified these as the most commonly valued characteristics that parents had for their children. Of these six, the parent was asked to choose the most valued and least valued. Of the 13 values, five relate to self-direction (for example, 'have self-control', 'have good sense and sound judgement'), four to conformity (for example, 'have good manners', 'obey their parents well'), and four 'filler' items are not related to either (for example, 'gets along well with other children') (Kohn, 1977). A self-direction score was computed by summing the scores for the six values chosen, in the following fashion. All filler items were scored 3. Of the non-filler items, the most-liked value was scored 5, the two liked values scored 4, the two not liked values scored 2, and the least-liked value scored 1. Having been scored in this manner, the conformity items were reverse scored. A higher score on this scale represents a higher value for self-direction compared with conformity, with possible scores ranging from a low of 10 to a high of 26.

Parental Beliefs

Parents were also asked to complete the Parents' Opinion Survey (Hogan and Tudge, 1994), which had been adapted for use with parents of school-age children from the Parental Beliefs Survey (Luster, 1985), and which deals with parental beliefs about appropriate child-rearing. Parents are asked to circle the response that best represents their opinion for each of the 59 items, on a 6-point Likert scale. Responses range from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. There are three relevant sub-scales; beliefs about spoiling the child (for example, 'I worry about spoiling my child by being an over-attentive parent'); beliefs regarding floor freedom (for example, 'as long as the child is safe and the object will not be damaged, he/she should be allowed to play with almost any object in the house that interests him/her'); and beliefs regarding discipline and control (for example, 'The most important task of parenting is disciplining the child'). A high score on 'freedom' indicates greater emphasis on support, while a higher score on 'spoiling' and 'control' reflects a greater emphasis on constraint. Cronbach's alphas for each sub-scale, for the Greensboro and Obninsk participants, respectively, were as follows: 'spoiling' (seven items, 0.77, 0.57); 'freedom' (three items, 0.54, 0.52); 'control' (four items, 0.67, 0.51). As Nunnally (1978) has pointed out, alpha coefficients are partly a function of the number of items in a scale, and with three or four items these coefficients are adequate measures of internal consistency of the scales. Scores were reversed where necessary and averaged within sub-scales so that each sub-scale ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 6, with a high score representing a stronger belief that children could be spoiled, should be allowed freedom in and around the house, and needed to be controlled and disciplined.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Participants were chosen in a deliberate and non-random manner and we did not intend that the four groups would constitute representative samples of the relevant social classes in the US or Russia, or even of regional or ethnic groups within those countries. Although we have no reason to think that our participants were different from those who were not selected, we must be cautious about how far we might be able to generalize these data.

We conducted a 2 (Society: US and Russia) × 2 (Social class) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), with the dependent variables constituting the value for self-direction, and the beliefs about freedom, spoiling and control. Society and social class constituted the independent variables.⁴ Data from mothers and fathers were analysed separately primarily because this strategy ensures independence of units of analysis (potentially a problem because data gathered from both parents within the same family are non-independent). All effects reported are of the variance explained independent of the variance attributed to all other effects in the model.

Table 1. Relations among parental education, occupation, values and beliefs in the US and Russia

	Mean (S.D.)	Occ	Self-direct	Spoil	Free	Control
<i>Greensboro (US) mothers (n = 17)</i>						
Education (Ed)	4.76 (1.25)	0.67***	0.69***	-0.47*	0.32	-0.55*
Occupation (Occ)	6.24 (1.86)		0.36	-0.24	-0.17	0.04
Self-direction (Self-direct)	20.38 (2.55)			-0.64**	0.31	-0.50*
Spoiling (Spoil)	2.37 (0.93)				-0.57*	0.55
Freedom (Free)	3.22 (1.02)					-0.66***
Control (Control)	3.71 (1.09)					
<i>Greensboro (US) fathers (n = 19)</i>						
Education (Ed)	4.61 (1.38)	0.84***	0.53*	-0.26	0.73***	-0.68***
Occupation (Occ)	5.61 (2.15)		0.43+	-0.26	0.59**	-0.68***
Self-direction (Self-direct)	19.94 (2.92)			0.07	0.57**	-0.36
Spoiling (Spoil)	2.63 (0.70)				-0.10	0.27
Freedom (Free)	3.46 (0.60)					-0.45+
Control (Control)	3.39 (0.98)					
<i>Obninsk (Russia) mothers (n = 20)</i>						
Education (Ed)	3.65 (1.18)	0.73***	0.35	0.17	0.00	-0.33
Occupation (Occ)	5.50 (1.93)		0.27	-0.02	0.15	-0.28
Self-direction (Self-direct)	20.05 (3.20)			-0.20	0.19	-0.43+
Spoiling (Spoil)	2.94 (0.80)				-0.11	0.34
Freedom (Free)	2.42 (0.94)					0.00
Control (Control)	3.39 (1.04)					
<i>Obninsk (Russia) fathers (n = 15)</i>						
Education (Ed)	3.87 (1.13)	0.75***	0.24	-0.46+	0.48+	-0.41
Occupation (Occ)	5.13 (2.07)		0.26	-0.42	0.33	-0.47+
Self-direction (Self-direct)	20.80 (2.83)			-0.36	0.35	-0.45+
Spoiling (Spoil)	3.55 (0.80)				-0.65***	0.66***
Freedom (Free)	2.44 (1.25)					-0.78***
Control (Control)	3.72 (1.11)					

+ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.005$.

RESULTS

Initially, we analysed the relations between the variables of interest—parental level of education, occupational ranking, parents' value for self-direction (the Q -sort measure) and the three child-rearing beliefs taken from the Parents' Opinion Survey ('spoiling,' 'freedom' and 'control'). In cases in which we did not have complete values and beliefs data, participants were dropped from

⁴ When we included the children's age as a covariate in this analysis it was not a significant factor, either as a main effect or in interaction with the main independent variables of interest, and so was not used in the analyses reported here. However, it is important to recognize that there is a confounding of society and children's age in this study, given that the children in Greensboro were older than their counterparts in Obninsk.

the analyses.⁵ Table 1 provides the correlations for each of these variables, examined separately for the United States and Russia, and separately for mothers and fathers. From this table, it is evident that the correlations were almost all in the expected direction, and often significant, despite the small numbers of participants. As hypothesized, the higher the level of education attained and the higher the occupational ranking, the more likely parents were to value self-direction for their children and to believe that it was important to give their children freedom to explore their environments, and the less likely they were to be concerned about spoiling their children by giving them too much attention and the less likely they were to believe in firm discipline as a major goal of child-rearing. However, the correlations were consistently higher in Greensboro than in Obninsk, and higher for fathers than for mothers. In the case of the Russian mothers only the correlation between education and occupation was significant and the other correlations low and non-significant. The Obninsk fathers' correlations between both education and occupation and values and beliefs were also non-significant, but were much higher than those for Obninsk mothers and suggest a strong trend in the hypothesized direction.

The pattern of correlations between the three beliefs was also as expected in all cases, except Russian mothers, for whom the beliefs in freedom and control were not negatively correlated. These analyses revealed that in all groups except Russian mothers a concern with spoiling and valuing of control and discipline were positively correlated, and these were negatively correlated with preference for freedom and a positive evaluation for self direction.

Mothers

The multivariate tests revealed a significant effect for society (Wilks lambda (4, 30) = 2.80, $p < 0.05$) and for social class (Wilks lambda (4, 30) = 2.82, $p < 0.05$), but not for the interaction of society and class (Wilks lambda (4, 30) = 1.28, $p > 0.3$). Consequently, it is appropriate to report the separate univariate statistics for society and social class.

Table 2. Child-rearing values and beliefs by society, parental gender and social class

	Self-direct <i>M</i> (S.D.)	Spoiling <i>M</i> (S.D.)	Freedom <i>M</i> (S.D.)	Control <i>M</i> (S.D.)	<i>n</i>
<i>Greensboro (US) mothers</i>					
Middle class	21.6 (1.8)	1.9 (0.6)	3.2 (1.1)	3.4 (1.3)	10
Working class	18.7 (2.6)	3.0 (0.9)	3.2 (1.0)	4.1 (0.6)	7
Total	20.3 (2.5)	2.4 (0.9)	3.2 (1.0)	3.7 (1.1)	17
<i>Greensboro (US) fathers</i>					
Middle class	20.7 (2.8)	2.4 (0.8)	3.7 (0.5)	3.0 (0.9)	11
Working class	19.1 (2.8)	3.1 (0.2)	3.1 (0.4)	4.0 (0.7)	8
Total	20.0 (2.9)	2.7 (0.7)	3.4 (0.6)	3.4 (1.0)	19
<i>Obninsk (Russia) mothers</i>					
Middle class	21.4 (2.4)	2.9 (0.7)	2.6 (1.0)	3.1 (1.1)	10
Working class	18.7 (3.4)	3.0 (0.9)	2.2 (0.8)	3.7 (0.9)	10
Total	20.0 (3.2)	2.9 (0.8)	2.4 (0.9)	3.4 (1.0)	20
<i>Obninsk (Russia) fathers</i>					
Middle class	21.9 (1.8)	3.1 (0.8)	3.1 (1.3)	3.2 (1.1)	7
Working class	19.9 (3.4)	3.9 (0.6)	1.9 (0.9)	4.2 (1.0)	8
Total	20.8 (2.8)	3.6 (0.8)	2.4 (1.3)	3.7 (1.1)	15

⁵ For the six Greensboro mothers and three Obninsk parents (two mothers and one father) who did not have full-time occupation outside of the home, we used the occupational rank of their spouse.

In terms of social class differences (means and S.D. are shown in Table 2), the results in three of the four cases were as hypothesized. Middle class mothers in Greensboro and Obninsk were clearly more likely than their working class counterparts to value self-direction for their children, $F(1, 33) = 9.96, p < 0.005$, and were also significantly less concerned with the issue of spoiling their children, $F(1, 33) = 5.28, p < 0.05$. In terms of beliefs about child-rearing, the middle class mothers also tended to be less interested in control and discipline than the working class mothers, $F(1, 33) = 3.28, p < 0.08$. No differences were found in terms of children's freedom, however, $F(1, 33) = 0.52, p > 0.4$. (It should be stressed that the variance attributable to social class was independent of any variance attributable to societal differences.)

In terms of society differences, contrary to our hypotheses, mothers in Greensboro and Obninsk were not distinguished in terms of their values for self-direction, $F(1, 33) = 0.01, p > 0.9$, or in the child-rearing belief about controlling and disciplining their children, $F(1, 33) = 1.19, p > 0.2$. However, as hypothesized, there was a difference in other beliefs as mothers in Greensboro were significantly more interested in fostering their children's freedom to explore their environments than were mothers in Obninsk, $F(1, 33) = 5.83, p < 0.05$, and tended to be less concerned about spoiling their children, $F(1, 33) = 3.20, p < 0.09$. However, as the Greensboro children were somewhat older than those in Obninsk means that we cannot rule out that apparent society differences are simply age differences.

Fathers

As was true for the mothers, the multivariate tests revealed significant effects for society (Wilks lambda (4, 27) = 5.30, $p < 0.005$) and for social class (Wilks lambda (4, 27) = 4.31, $p < 0.01$), but not for the interaction of society and class ($p > 0.8$).

In terms of social class differences, all results were as hypothesized. Regarding self-direction, middle class parents tended to value this for their children more than did their working class counterparts, $F(1, 30) = 3.55, p < 0.07$. Parental beliefs also varied between these groups of fathers. Middle class fathers in Greensboro and Obninsk were significantly more likely than their working class counterparts to be interested in allowing their children freedom to explore, $F(1, 30) = 10.52, p < 0.005$. By contrast, middle class fathers were significantly less likely than those in the working class to believe it is important to control and discipline their children, $F(1, 30) = 9.77, p < 0.005$ and were significantly less likely to be concerned with issues of spoiling, $F(1, 30) = 10.28, p < 0.005$.

At the societal level, the fathers in the two countries were indistinguishable in terms of their values for self-direction, $F(1, 30) = 1.01, p > 0.3$. Their beliefs about control and discipline were also similar, $F(1, 30) = 0.32, p > 0.5$. These results were similar to those reported for the mothers, and were not as hypothesized. However, other child-rearing beliefs differed, as fathers in Greensboro were significantly less likely than their counterparts in Obninsk to be concerned about issues of spoiling, $F(1, 30) = 12.29, p = 0.001$, and significantly more interested in promoting their children's freedom, $F(1, 30) = 10.25, p < 0.005$. These findings, however, could also be attributable to the children's age differences.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although some differences were found between the Greensboro and Obninsk parents in terms of value for self-direction in their children and their beliefs about child-rearing, these were much less striking than the social class data, which revealed very similar patterns of within-society differences as a function of social class. This was most clearly seen in terms of the parents' value for self-direction, but was also found with regard to the three beliefs, although Russian mothers tended to differ less by social class than did the fathers.

The fact that no overall differences were found in value for self-direction from parents from the two societies is somewhat surprising given that the former Soviet Union and the US have highly dissimilar histories, traditions and ideologies. The lack of difference in values is all the more noteworthy given that parents differed with respect to their more specific child-rearing beliefs. What might account for this similarity between parents in Obninsk and Greensboro with regard to this particular value even though the parents' beliefs differed? One possible explanation is that as the Russian economy has changed in recent years, so too have parental values. A stronger emphasis on conformity may have been found in Russia a decade or so ago, prior to the beginnings of the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the transition towards a market economy. In Poland, for example, where socialism came under attack earlier than in the Soviet Union, there has been some evidence of a switch from collective to individualistic values (Reykowski, 1994). It is possible that, as Russian parents have observed such changes, away from conformity and towards an economy based on individualism and competition, they have revised their views about the characteristics needed to succeed in Russia. Where once the ability to compromise and conform may have been the characteristics most conducive to a successful work-life, now initiative and independence in thought and action may be perceived to be more important. An ideological change of this kind in the views of Russian educators has been noted by Ispa (1994). Moving away from the traditional Soviet philosophy of priority for the group, Russian teachers are increasingly endorsing the encouragement of initiative and independent problem-solving in children, and respect for children's individual differences. However, despite this apparent change in values, there are data from parents that indicate continuity in child-rearing practices (Olsen *et al.*, 1996) and Sloutsky (1996) reported that 'the collectivist [values] of the Russian participants have not eroded during the period of rapid social transformation' (p. 15).

In terms of child-rearing beliefs, it is worth noting that the Obninsk parents, both mothers and fathers, were far less interested than their Greensboro counterparts in allowing their children freedom around the home and were more concerned with spoiling their children. Although we predicted that this difference would exist we believed it would be related to different values for self-direction in the two societies. Given that these value differences were not supported, these findings may be attributable to the fact that the children in Obninsk were somewhat younger than their Greensboro counterparts when the parents were asked about their values and beliefs.

The children's age differences were not the only thing that distinguished between the families in the two societies, however. The families also differed in terms of conditions in the homes. All the Obninsk families, as is typical for people living in the former Soviet Union, lived in apartments that would be considered very small by standards in the US—with a single bedroom, for the child or children, a living room that doubled as a bedroom for the parents, kitchen and

bathroom. The amount of free space for children is clearly limited, strikingly so by comparison with the homes of the middle class parents in Greensboro, where each child had a room of his or her own as well as far more space in the house and garden or yard. In addition to these societal differences, social class differences were also apparent; for example, there was also variation within Obninsk itself; the working class fathers in that city being clearly far less interested than those from the middle class in giving their children freedom around the home, despite no differences in age between their children and no differences in their living conditions (Tudge *et al.*, 1999).

Although the Obninsk mothers were distinguished, in terms of social class, in their value for self-direction just as much as were the other groups of parents, they differed less in terms of their specific beliefs about child-rearing. At present we can only speculate about reasons for this, but it is possible that parents' beliefs about how to raise their children (as opposed to their more general goals for their children) are more affected by the exigencies of the situation. Given the current uncertainties of life in Russia, parents, particularly mothers, may feel a greater need to do whatever works at the moment. Fathers, in both societies, are typically less involved than mothers in raising their children (Mace and Mace, 1963; Whiting and Edwards, 1988; Attwood, 1990; Kerig *et al.*, 1993; Maddock and Kon, 1994; Olson and Matskovsky, 1994; Goodwin and Emelyanova, 1995; Parke, 1995). Observational data on the Greensboro parents described here also revealed that fathers were far less involved than mothers with their children, particularly among the middle class families (Tudge *et al.*, 1994). Fathers from both societies were not differentiated by social class as much as were the mothers in terms of their value for self-direction in their children. However, this was not the case for the more specific beliefs about child-rearing. Fathers in both societies (particularly working class fathers) were more likely to be concerned about spoiling their children than were mothers, and Russian fathers were more interested than mothers in their children being controlled and disciplined. Middle class fathers, in both societies, were more likely to be interested in allowing children freedom in and around the home than were mothers. Irrespective of the fact that fathers may be less involved in day-to-day parenting than mothers, their values and beliefs about how their children should be raised are likely to play an important role in the ways in which their children are treated—by both fathers and mothers. Although some scholars have examined fathers who have the primary role in child-rearing (see the discussion in Parke, 1995), these are relatively rare cases, and more attention needs to be paid to the values, beliefs and practices of fathers in more common family structures, in which the mother takes the primary responsibility for child-rearing.

These results should of course be treated with some caution. The 71 parents who took part in this study were chosen in a deliberate and non-random manner from two medium-sized cities in two societies with huge ranges of ethnicity, geography, conditions of life, and so on. Despite this reason for caution, it is worth stressing that the data on parental value for self-direction are similar to those obtained by Ispa (using similar measures) from mothers and teachers in Moscow just before the break-up of the Soviet Union (Ispa, 1994, 1995).

At the outset of this paper we argued that scholars interested in cross-cultural variation in child-rearing should not only focus on cross-society comparisons but pay greater attention to within-society heterogeneity. That view is supported by this study. Despite the huge changes currently taking place in Russia, parents' values for self-direction were very similar in these two cities in

the US and Russia, and the differences found were primarily linked with social class differences within them. Although some differences in child-rearing beliefs were found across these two cities, the most striking findings were those stemming from social class differences, differences that were mirrored in each city.

It is important to stress that we do not have longitudinal data on these parents. We are, therefore, not able to determine whether those with particular values and beliefs were more likely to pursue higher education or to enter certain types of occupations or, as Kohn (1995) believes, whether experiences related to certain types of occupations had an additional impact on their values and beliefs. What we are able to say is that parental values and beliefs do appear to be linked to social class, as represented by education and occupation, in these cities from the US and Russia. While membership in one or other social class group does not *determine* the values and beliefs that parents have, it is clear there is a link. It seems clear that future cross-cultural studies, particularly those comparing industrialized societies, must pay greater attention to within-societal heterogeneity rather than focus almost exclusively on cross-societal variation. We do not wish to imply that social class is the sole source of such heterogeneity, although we have focused on class. Rather, if we define culture, as we did at the start of this paper, as a web of values, beliefs, meaning systems and practices, within-societal cultural variation is also likely to be found as a function of race, ethnicity, region and urbanicity. Such sources of heterogeneity need to be studied more by those who engage in cross-societal research.

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