Unpacking the rich tapestry of Chinese culture: the interplay between parental socialization and children's social functioning
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Chapter 1

General Introduction

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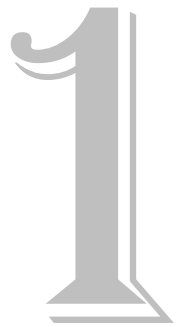
INTRODUCTION

"Chinese parents believe that they know what is best for their children and therefore override all of their children's own desires and preferences. That's why Chinese daughters can't have boyfriends in high school and why Chinese kids can't go to sleep away camp … Don't get me wrong: It's not that Chinese parents don't care about their children. Just the opposite. They would give up anything for their children. It's just an entirely different parenting model."

by Amy Chua in the article "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior" (2011)

Parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's social functioning (Heberle et al., 2020). In recent years, there has been growing research about the relation between parental socialization and child development from a cultural-specific perspective (Lansford et al., 2016). Each culture has its unique values and norms that inform how parents socialize their children. China, as a racially homogenous society with a culture that values interdependence, differs from Western societies in various aspects (Zhou, 2021). However, the majority of theories and research are based on Western samples, making it challenging to apply them to Chinese parental socialization and child social functioning (Jensen, 2012).

As understanding the contextualized effects of parental socialization is crucial for promoting Chinese children's social functioning (Grusec & Davidov, 2010), in this dissertation, I will study two domains of child social development, each corresponding to different aspects of Chinese social changes. The first domain focuses on parenting behaviors in relation to children's general social functioning: emotion regulation and social anxiety. Research has indicated that within the Chinese cultural context, which values interdependence, the effects of certain parenting behaviors such as psychological control and autonomy support may not be as prominent as in independent-oriented Western cultures (Fung & Lau, 2012; Wang et al., 2007). However, with the rapid social changes occurring in

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modern China, the values of interdependence and independence may coexist and receive relatively equal emphasis (Fung et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important to investigate how Chinese parenting behaviors relate to children's social development in contemporary China, considering the evolving cultural values.

The second domain explores parental socialization of Chinese children's intergroup attitudes. This domain is particularly interesting in a racially homogenous society that is experiencing globalization (Cheng et al., 2019). In the past, Chinese people had limited exposure to individuals from other racial groups. However, with increased migration and the influence of worldwide social media, interactions with outgroup members have become more common. Therefore, it is intriguing to examine Chinese children's intergroup attitudes and explore how parents socialize their children's attitudes within the context of an increasingly diverse China. By examining different domains of child social functioning and parental socialization, my research aims to contribute to the well-being of Chinese children and the field of child development.

Theoretical Models

Children's social functioning is associated with many factors, such as the family environment on the micro level and the cultural context on the macro level. Many theories have been developed to explain the underlying mechanisms of children's social functioning. In this section, I will focus on two overarching theories that are relevant to my dissertation: the cultural-ecological perspective and the transactional model. These theoretical perspectives are fundamental for gaining a comprehensive understanding of children's difference aspects of social functioning.

Cultural-Ecological Perspective

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development explains how various environmental systems, including family and culture, interact to influence children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to the model, the child is at the center of the systems and influenced by a set of interconnected circles. These circles, starting from the system closest to child, are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (see Figure 1). The microsystem refers to the immediate environment that a child interacts with on a daily basis, such as family, peers, and school. The mesosystem refers to the interactions between the different elements of the microsystem. The exosystem includes the broader societal systems that indirectly affect an individual, such as government policies and mass media. The macrosystem refers to the cultural values and ideologies of the society. Finally, the chronosystem recognizes the importance of time and history in shaping children's development. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model highlights the significance of understanding the multiple levels of influence on children's development and how they interact with each other. The model also acknowledges that children play an active role in influencing the dynamic systems. That is, children are not passive recipients of their environment but actively engage and interact with the various systems. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model has been widely applied in developmental psychology, which helps better understand the development of children within specific social context (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model has also been adopted by other theories, such as the cultural-ecological perspective, which emphasizes cultural contexts in understanding child development and parental socialization practices (Ogbu, 1981). According to Ogbu, to develop a comprehensive theory of child development, it is necessary to study patterns of child rearing and development across different cultural and social contexts. This perspective

stresses the macrosystem of the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model and challenges the idea of a universal model, which assumes that there are universal laws of adaptive development which can be studied through micro-level analyses of children's experiences within the family setting (Connolly & Bruner, 1974). The cultural-ecological perspective proposes that the origins of human social-emotional competencies lie in the nature of culturally defined adult tasks, such as subsistence tasks, which are considered necessary for individuals to transit from childhood to adulthood within a particular cultural context. For example, in traditional Chinese culture, one culturally defined task is the responsibility of caring for elderly family members (Fang et al., 2020). Chinese children are expected to assist with the care of their grandparents as they age. This involves tasks such as helping with daily activities and providing emotional support. Through these tasks, children develop important social-emotional capabilities such as empathy and a sense of responsibility. The culturally defined tasks help to foster social-emotional capabilities that meet specific cultural and social norms and are perceived as useful by parents.

Figure 1

*Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model*
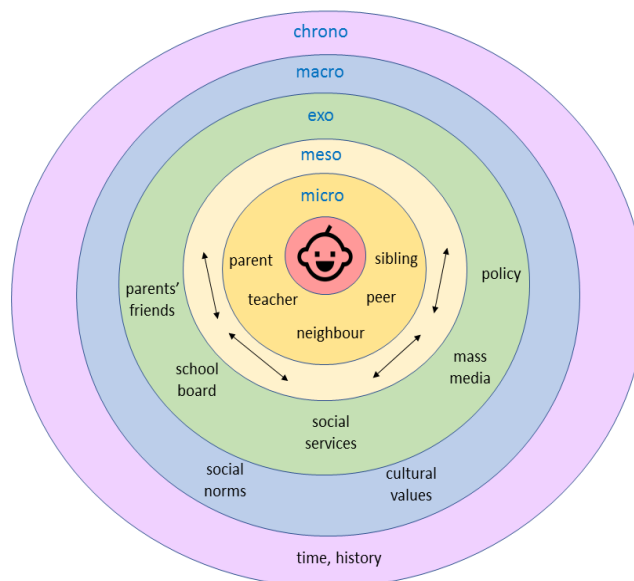
Transactional Model of Socialization

The transactional model suggests that children's development is a complex process that results from the interaction between the child and their environment (Sameroff & Mackenzie, 2003). Similar to the concept of interplay between domains from Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, the transactional model emphasizes the bidirectional nature of children's development. That is, children are not only influenced by their environment but also shape their environment. In the family context, the transactional model refers to the reciprocal relations between the child and their parents, meaning that the child's behavior can influence the way their parents respond, which in turn can influence later the child's behaviors. For example, a Chinese child called Ling plays on the playground, feeling nervous and anxious while trying to interact with other children. Ling's mother notices her discomfort and says, "Why are you so shy compared to the other kids? It makes me feel disappointed and embarrassed. You need to be more outgoing and confident like them." Ling feels ashamed by her mother's comment, causing her to further withdraw. The Chinese mother's response is an example of psychological control; manipulating the child's thoughts and feelings through criticism and shame. Psychological control is on average more often used by Chinese parents than Western parents (Fang et al., 2022). The interaction between Ling and her mother exemplifies the transactional model of parenting, where the child's behavior and the mother's response influence each other in a reciprocal manner. This negative feedback loop corresponds to social coercion theory, which also provides insights into the bidirectional pathways between parenting behaviors and children's characteristics (Patterson, 1982). As suggested by the social coercion theory, the negative feedback loop is a process of mutual reinforcement during which the child's problematic behaviors trigger negative parenting responses, which in turn escalates the child's maladaptive behaviors. By contrast, if a child behaves in an adaptive way, the parent may respond with warmth and praise, which

can reinforce the child's positive behaviors (see Figure 2 for an example). Overall, the

transactional model and the social coercion theory highlight the dynamic nature of parent-

child interactions, where both sides influence each other in a reciprocal way.

Figure 2

Example of transactional model of parental socialization
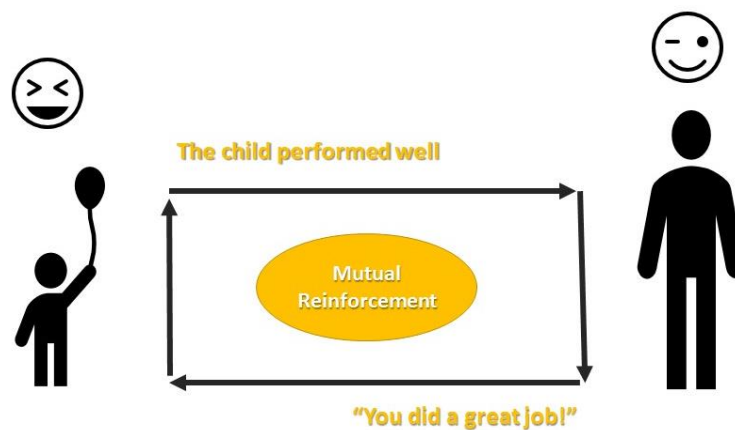
Domain 1: Emotion Regulation and Social Anxiety

Interdependent and Independent Cultural Values

In Chinese culture, there is a strong emphasis on interdependence, which prioritizes

social harmony, obedience, and relationships over individual needs (Bedford & Yeh, 2019).

This is in contrast to independent-oriented Western cultures, where individuals tend to define

themselves as autonomous and prioritize personal desires over their relationships with others

(Benito-Gomez et al., 2020). However, the distinction between independent and

interdependent cultures has received criticism because the dichotomous approach

oversimplifies the concept of cultural differences. The limitations of characterizing cultures

as either independence- or interdependence-oriented lie in that it fails to account for the

heterogeneity in individuals' behaviors in various social situations (Raeff, 2006).

Furthermore, the dichotomous approach assumes that independence and interdependence are conceptualized in the same way across all cultures. Several theoretical approaches argue for the coexistence of independence and interdependence as value orientations, and that may be defined differently within and across cultures (Killen & Wainryb, 2000). In today's globalized world, increasing migration and widespread media have facilitated greater interactions between people from diverse cultures. These interactions have led to changes in cultural values and practices (Jensen, 2012). Considering increasingly interconnected cultures, it is crucial to discern the historical evolution of conceptions of independence and interdependence (Raeff, 2010). My dissertation focuses on parental socialization and children's two interconnected realms of social functioning: emotion regulation and social anxiety, within the Chinese cultural context. Cultural values on interdependence and independence might coexist due to rapid social changes and globalization in contemporary China.

In accordance with traditional interdependent Chinese cultural norms and values, such as discipline and obedience, Chinese parents may employ strict parenting styles to raise their children (Chen-Bouck et al., 2019). Such parenting behaviors are generally associated with negative child outcomes, particularly in Western cultural contexts (Pinquart, 2017). However, the underlying intentions of Chinese "harsh" parenting practices are ultimately for the benefit of their children. For example, psychological control is a common parenting practice used by Chinese parents to socialize their children to conform to cultural norms and values, including obedience and respect for authority (Helwig et al., 2014). This parenting practice is for the benefit of children as it ultimately aims to assist children in adapting to societal expectations and functioning successfully within their communities (Fung & Lau, 2012). Chinese parents may engage in psychological control, such as using guilt induction, love withdrawal, and shaming, to manipulate their children's emotions. The use of psychological control is not

intended to hurt children nor associated with parents' negative thoughts and feelings about their children. Instead, they believe that such parenting practices are necessary for their children's well-being and success in life. Moreover, Chinese parents, who themselves were raised in families with similarly strict parenting styles, consider these practices as a normal and acceptable way to raise their children (Niu et al., 2018). Additionally, Chinese children may perceive these parenting practices as acceptable and interpret them as being for their own good, which may in turn mitigate the adverse effects of such parenting (Chen et al, 2016). For example, a study conducted with Chinese children revealed that psychological control was associated with more depressive symptoms, but this relation was mitigated by children's positive interpretation of such parenting practices (Cheah et al., 2019). Therefore, the meaning of certain parenting practices perceived by children might differ across cultural contexts, which is important for children's mental health.

With the rapid social changes influenced by globalization, however, conflicting values have emerged in Chinese culture, particularly in regards to the balance between interdependence versus autonomy (Chen et al., 2021). These conflicting values have impacted the way that parents socialize their children as well as the way children perceive and interpret their parents' behaviors. Therefore, it is essential to examine the relations between parental socialization and child social-emotional development in the contemporary cultural context. Adopting a cultural-specific perspective helps researchers and practitioners to identify the cultural strengths and challenges in promoting children's social-emotional development. Accordingly, it is important to develop culturally responsive interventions and programs that are sensitive to the specific cultural context, based on empirical insights.

Interconnected Social-Emotional Outcomes

Children's social development is multifaceted, involving various aspects such as emotion regulation and social anxiety. These aspects of development are shaped by a range of factors, including family environment and the broader cultural and social contexts. My dissertation will focus on the two outcomes in Chapter 2 (emotion regulation) and Chapter 3 (social anxiety) respectively. The reason to focus these two outcomes is that they are interconnected and essential to children's overall development. Specifically, children who experience social anxiety may avoid novel social situations, resulting in fewer social interactions opportunities to develop emotion regulation skills (Gross, 2014; Keil et al., 2017). In addition, children who have difficulty regulating their emotions are also more likely to experience social anxiety (Colonnesi et al., 2017). For example, a case–control study found that children with social anxiety disorder used adaptive emotion regulation strategies significantly less often, and recommended that promoting adaptive emotion regulation should be a key component of interventions for children with social anxiety (Sackl-Pammer et al., 2019). Understanding the mutual relations between these aspects of children's social and emotional development can provide insight into effective intervention strategies. Moreover, it is important to note that children's development of emotion regulation and social anxiety are sensitive to cultural context (Hofmann et al., 2010; Hu et al., 2014). In the following sections, I will elaborate on how children's different aspects of social and emotional development relate to parental socialization in the Chinese context.

Emotional Regulation. Emotion regulation refers to the ability to manage one's own emotional state. This can involve a range of behaviors, such as reassessing a difficult situation to decrease anger or anxiety, directing attention towards positive thoughts (Gross, 2015). According to Tripartite Model of the impact of the family on children's emotion regulation (Morris et al., 2007), parenting behaviors are crucial to children's emotional

regulation development. Through various parental socialization practices, such as warmth, autonomy support, and sensitivity, parents can help their children to develop effective emotion regulation strategies (Benoit Allen et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018). In contrast, children who experience negative parenting practices, such as harsh discipline or emotional neglect, are more likely to struggle with emotion regulation (Gruhn & Compas, 2020; Shaw & Starr, 2019). However, the relations between specific parenting behaviors and child emotion regulation can vary across cultures. Parenting behaviors that are considered positive and effective in one culture may not be viewed in the same way in another culture (Barber et al., 2005). For example, when parents use psychological control to manipulate their children's emotions, they prevent children from developing the ability to recognize and manage their own emotions effectively. However, in the Chinese cultural context, some elements of psychological control, such as guilt induction, might be considered as relatively culturally-appropriative and acceptable (Fung & Lau, 2012). A longitudinal study found that maternal guilt induction was associated with less bullying aggressive behaviors in Chinese American children's six months later, while love withdraw predicted more bullying aggressive behaviors (Yu et al., 2019). This finding suggests that within interdependence-oriented cultures, children may interpret parental guilt induction as a form of parental care rather than feeling rejected. Indeed, research has demonstrated that Chinese children tend to evaluate guilt induction more positively compared to other aspects of psychological control, such as love withdrawal and shaming, because it is believed by children to help fostering emotion development (Helwig et al., 2014). Therefore, children's benign interpretations of parental guilt induction may result in the less pronounced detrimental effects of such parenting behaviors (Cheah et al., 2019). In conclusion, while research on relations between parental socialization and child emotion regulation has been extensively conducted in Western societies, it is important to consider cultural differences to advance understanding of how

specific parenting behaviors relate to children's emotion regulation development from the cultural-specific perspective (Lansford, 2016).

Social Anxiety. Social anxiety is characterized by avoidance or distress of novel social situations, and can start earlier during the elementary school years (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Children with social anxiety may excessively worry about being embarrassed or judged by others, resulting in withdraw from social situations and avoid interacting with others. Social anxiety can have significant consequences for children's well-being, such as low self-esteem and depressive symptoms (De Jong et al., 2012; Maldonado et al., 2013); therefore it is important to identify the factors that contribute to children's social anxiety development. Most theoretical models of child social anxiety posit that parents play an important role in the early development of social anxiety (Ollendick et al., 2014; Spence & Rapee, 2016). For example, a four-year longitudinal multi-informant study found that children's social anxiety were associated with higher maternal psychological control and lower maternal autonomy support (Nelemans et al., 2020). Moreover, cultural factors can influence the bidirectional relations between parenting and children's levels of social anxiety. There is growing evidence that social withdrawal and avoidance are more socially accepted in some cultures than in others (Rapee et al., 2011). Parents in East Asian countries such as China, tend to express positivity towards children's inhibition and reticence. This might because that socially withdrawn behaviors are perceived less negatively by peers and have lower life impact in these countries compared to Western countries (Chen & Tse, 2008; Rapee et al., 2011). In turn, children from Eastern countries may experience less anxiety in response to parental control than children from Western countries (Oh et al, 2002). However, the contradictory perspective suggests that social anxiety may be particularly maladaptive when Chinese children withdraw from the collective (Liu et al., 2015). Due to the Chinese cultural norms that emphasize group harmony and affiliation, children's withdrawal from social

situations might be seen as threatening to social cohesion. Research has shown that Chinese mothers reacted with negative emotions to children's social withdrawal (Cheah & Rubin, 2004). According to the aforementioned social coercion theory, this mutual process between child and parent behaviors can create a negative feedback loop, exacerbating children's social anxiety and potentially generalizing to other areas of development (Smith et al., 2014). In contrast, Western-based findings showed that children's social anxiety evoked mothers higher autonomy support and lower psychological control (Nelemans et al., 2020). Given the contextual differences in the relations between parenting and child social anxiety, it is crucial to identify culturally-specific factors that contribute to children's social anxiety and promote their overall well-being.

So far, I have discussed children's general social functioning, including emotion regulation and social anxiety, in relation to parental socialization within the Chinese context. In the following sections, I will focus on a specific aspect of child social functioning: intergroup attitudes. Intergroup attitudes refer to individuals' beliefs and attitudes towards members of other social groups (Baron, 2015), and structures the social functioning of human development (Tran et al., 2017). Specifically, social functioning includes various aspects, such as social anxiety, emotion regulation, and intergroup relationships and attitudes (Brown et al., 2014). The first two aspects, which were introduced above as Domain 1, are focused on general social relationships irrespective of interaction groups. In contrast, the Domain 2 — intergroup relationships and attitudes, is focused on social relationships between groups. Intergroup relationships and attitudes, in particular, are crucial for promoting overall social functioning (Snyder et al., 2023). For example, egalitarian relationships between members from different social groups can facilitate positive social outcomes such as cooperation and social cohesion (Bigler et al., 2016). In addition, social psychologists have devoted considerable attention to exploring the potential for other aspects of social functioning, such

as empathy, to improve intergroup attitudes and relationship. For example, research has found that empathic concern was associated with reduced racial/ethnic prejudice (Bobba & Crocetti, 2022). Therefore, different aspects of social functioning are interconnected.

The reason for examining Chinese children's intergroup attitudes of interest in my dissertation is that China is a racially homogenous society that is undergoing globalization, leading to increased exposure to individuals from diverse racial groups through worldwide social media. Despite these social changes, there has been limited attention given to Chinese children's attitudes towards other racial groups, particularly to how parents socialize these attitudes within an increasingly diverse China. As mentioned earlier, parental socialization plays an important role in children's general social functioning, including emotion regulation and social anxiety. Regarding children's development of intergroup attitudes, parents also serve as their primary source of ethnic–racial socialization, such as influencing how children perceive and feel about other racial/ethnic groups (Hughes et al., 2006). For example, parents' engagement in conversations with their children about racial/ethnic issues, inequality, and discrimination can shape children's feeling and attitudes towards other racial/ethnic groups (Priest et al., 2014). However, little attention has been paid to the role of parental socialization in shaping Chinese children's intergroup attitudes. Therefore, in the next section I will combine Western-based theories with Chinese culture to elaborate on how parental socialization relates to Chinese children's intergroup attitudes development.

Domain 2: Intergroup Attitudes

Western-Based Colorblindness Ideology

In Western societies where social norms regarding racial equality prevails, colorblindness is a popular concept that advocates for not seeing race in interactions with others to appear unbiased (Neville et al., 2013). "I don't see color, everybody's equal" is a

typical saying that represents colorblind ideology. Colorblind ideology suggests that race

does not matter and acknowledging or discussing race only perpetuates racial discrimination.

The problem with colorblindness is that race is real and it impacts people's daily lives (Sue et

al., 2007). Ignoring race facilitates denial of the existence of racism and decrease individuals'

sensitivity to racism (Plaut et al., 2018). According to Neville et al.'s (2013) theory of

colorblindness, colorblindness is a modern form of racism that takes on two dimensions:

color evasion and power evasion. Color evasion refers to the act of claiming to not seeing

race. Power evasion is characterized by denying the existence of racism. These two

dimensions are positively correlated, suggesting that endorsing the avoidance of race is

associated with the denial of racism (Mekawi et al., 2020).

Research has shown that the majority of White adults in the Western societies endorse

colorblind ideology and tend to use colorblind practices to socialize children to ignore race in

their daily lives and to be unprejudiced. For example, sixty-three percent White parents

reported that they did not discuss race-related news with their children (Abaied & Perry,

2021). This parental socialization is part of a culturally organized system that has evolved

over time through social norms. Although colorblindness may indicate parents' intentions to

transmit equality messages to their children, it cannot reduce but will rather foster children's

racial bias. In an example about a child who overhears a racial slur, parents endorsing the

colorblind ideology said, "That is the perfect time to let him process it himself, and come to

me with any questions he might have" (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The problem with

remaining silent and letting children figure out race and racism on their own is that they

might misunderstand some information. From a young age, children are able to categorize

people based on race (Quinn et al., 2016). Talking to children about racial differences from an

early age can prevent them from being misled by their environments, such as social media or

peer interactions. Indeed, children have shown increased distress as their exposure to

traumatic events on social media (Tynes et al., 2019). Therefore, parental socialization plays a crucial role in shaping children's racial attitudes.

While there has been a growing number of research on parental socialization and children's racial attitudes in Western societies, little is known about how parents socialize their children's racial attitudes within the Chinese context. This gap is of significant importance due to the unique societal environment in China. Specifically, China is a racially homogeneous country primarily consists of East Asians. The racially homogeneous environment of China can obscure awareness of issues related to racism against other racial groups (Cheng, 2011). As a result, western colorblindness theory cannot be assumed to be applicable within the Chinese context. In the subsequent section, I will delve into the contemporary Chinese context, connecting it to Chinese children's intergroup attitudes towards other racial groups as well as Chinese parents' socialization practices, particularly in relation to colorblindness ideology.

Intergroup Attitudes

Intergroup attitudes refer to how individuals perceive and evaluate others who belong to different social groups based on such as race and ethnicity (Roth et al., 2018). Research suggests that infants raised in racially homogenous environments show a preference for faces of their own race (Liu et al., 2015). A meta-analysis examining developmental differences in intergroup attitudes revealed a peak in prejudice during early childhood, typically between the ages of 4 and 7 years. Subsequently, there is a gradual decline in prejudice during late childhood and early adolescence (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). Moreover, recent studies showed that Chinese children displayed implicit bias against both White and Black people, and anti-Black bias remained stable over time, whereas anti-White bias showed a decline after the age 10 years (Qian et al., 2019). Based on the developmental intergroup theory of

social stereotypes and prejudice (Bigler & Liben, 2007), there are three cores processes contributing to the formation of prejudice: (a) establishing the psychological salience of different person attributes, (b) categorizing encountered individuals by salient dimensions, and (c) developing stereotypes and prejudices of salient social groups. From an evolutionary perspective, individuals are driven to understand their environment, and the development of a flexible cognitive system enables individuals to learn different categorization criteria within specific contexts (Allidina & Cunningham, 2023). In early childhood, children can categorize stimuli using psychologically salient features such as race and gender to structure their knowledge and reduce cognitive complexity (Bigler & Liben, 2007). The factors that cause perceptual attributes to become psychological salient include the proportional size of the group, explicit labeling, use of social categories, and perceptual discriminability (Pauker et al., 2017). Consequently, The process of categorization leads to the formation of stereotypes and prejudice.

Developing positive intergroup attitudes is important to promote social harmony and personal growth. It involves understanding the importance of respecting and valuing diversity (Rullo et al., 2022). In the contemporary world, globalization and migration have increased diversity in societies, which brings the issue of inclusivity (Cerna et al., 2021). One essential factor in fostering inclusivity is reducing people's negative attitudes towards other racial/ethnic groups. In Western societies, people are becoming more and more aware of racial equality and social justice. Movements such as Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate in Western countries demonstrate societies' pronounced concern about racism. In China, while racial diversity is emerging due to more people migrating into the country, awareness of racial equality has not yet been as prevailing as in other societies (Lan et al., 2022). For example, racist comments have been prevalent in Chinese social media platforms, and explicit racism behaviors are observed in daily life (Cai, 2023). This raises concerns about the

social environment in which Chinese children grow up and how it shapes their racial attitudes.

Chinese children have limited direct contact with diverse racial groups compared to children in Western societies. However, with increased globalization and the Open Door Policy since 1978 (Sung, 1992), which aimed to open the door to foreign businesses interested in establishing in China, Chinese children have more indirect opportunities to be exposed to other racial groups through social media. Due to the prevalence of racist comments on social media, Chinese children are likely to be affected and develop prejudices and stereotypes. In this context, parents play a crucial role in guiding children towards a correct path to foster positive intergroup attitudes. Indeed, it has been recommended that parents should engage with their children actively on the topic of social media information (Lin et al., 2019). However, little attention has been given to how Chinese parents socialize their children's racial attitudes. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct research on intergroup attitudes in China to gain insights into how Chinese children develop their racial attitudes in relation to parental socialization.

Aim and Outline of the Dissertation

The overall goal of my dissertation is to provide insight into relations between parental socialization and children's social development through a cultural-specific lens. By considering the cultural context, this thesis aims to deepen understanding of how parental socialization interplays with child development and the implications for interventions and policy initiatives. In **Chapter 2**, Chinese children's emotion regulation is the outcome of interest. I contextualized the concept of maternal psychological control to better fit the Chinese cultural context, by breaking it down into three dimensions: love withdrawal, guilt induction, and shaming. Furthermore, I conducted cross-lagged analyses to examine the

bidirectional relations between the three dimensions of maternal psychological control and children's emotion regulation over a period of two years. In **Chapter 3**, I focused on child social anxiety as the outcome of interest. To fill the gap in research on the role of Chinese fathers' psychological control and autonomy support in child social anxiety, I examined the different roles of fathers' and mothers' parenting. Further, I employed multi-informant designs to examine reporter discrepancies, which have been overlooked in the field of child social anxiety. Overall, my study examined the bidirectional relations between parent- and child-reported maternal and paternal parenting and child social anxiety within the context of Chinese culture. In **Chapter 4**, my focus shifted towards children's intergroup attitudes. Given the ongoing prevalence of racism and colorism in contemporary China, I examined Chinese children's attitudes towards different groups based on variations in race and skin tone, including light-skinned East Asians, tan-skinned East Asians, and Whites. Additionally, I explored categorization performance of Chinese children and their justifications to study whether they tend to avoid mentioning racial and/or skin tone differences, as observed in children growing up in Western societies. In **Chapter 5**, I investigated the relations between observed maternal color-evasive socialization practices and Chinese children's intergroup attitudes. I also identified three distinct aspects of Chinese mothers' color evasion through the lens of cultural context, namely racial appearance evasion, cultural background evasion, and grouping evasion. Furthermore, I used a person-centered analysis to reveal individual differences in underlying ideologies of maternal color-evasive socialization practices. Finally, in **Chapter 6**, I present a general discussion of the primary findings, limitations, implications, and future directions of the research in this dissertation.