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# Parenting and Adolescent Adjustment in Asian-Russian Cultural Contexts: How Different is it from the West?

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## Abstract

The study is based on unique comparative data about the family life of 15-year-olds (n = 1,539) from the Asian region of the Russian Federation. The study asks: what forms do parent-adolescent relations take in the Asian-Russian cultural context, and which of those approaches support adolescent adjustment? The study separates the accounts of urban, ethnic Russian adolescents in the region's largest city, Novosibirsk; their rural, ethnic Russian counterparts in Novosibirsk Oblast; ethnic Russian and Buriiat adolescents in Ulan-Ude, capital city of the Republic of Buriiatia; and ethnic Russian and Altay adolescents in the rural Republic of Altai. Results make allowance for 15 year-olds' differing family make-up and socio-economic circumstances. The study finds parenting patterns are differentiated by location and ethnicity, including a permissive pattern as the norm in urban Novosibirsk, and an indigenous traditional pattern among rural Altay families. Indulgent or democratic parent-adolescent relations – represented by reports of responsive parenting combined with low-to-moderate control – appear to promote adolescent self-worth and psychological health. Authoritarian parenting – reports of unresponsive parenting with high behavioural control – appear detrimental to adolescent mental health. Those findings are more akin to what is found in Western European societies rather than Anglo-Saxon contexts in the United States and United Kingdom. The study also finds no evidence to support the notion that a strict collectivist-hierarchical parenting pattern benefits Asian-Russian adolescents, in the way the latter pattern is reported to benefit East Asian adolescents.

***Keywords****: parent child relations, adolescent adjustment, Siberia, democratic, permissive, traditional and authoritarian parenting; urban rural location, Asian Russian ethnicity.*

## 1. Introduction

This study is based on unique comparative data about the family life of young people from the Asian region of the Russian Federation in Siberia. The social changes of late modernity have seen the individualization of young people's lives in Western societies, even if the effects of their family background remain substantial (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; 2007). In Russia, there was much concern about the 'Westernization' of its youth in the 1990s, in the decade after the disintegration of the Soviet world, especially about the influences of global mass culture undermining Russian youth values (Pilkington, 1994; Pilkington, Umel'chenko, Flynn, et al., 2002).

By the time of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin's election to president for a first term in 2000, the Russian state had already begun to re-assert its cultural difference from the West. And by the time of Putin's return to the president's office for a third term in 2012, the Russian state had rejected any idea of an identity and values shared with Western Europe[1]. It considered the European Union's enlargement agenda – to promote economic integration and trade with its Eastern neighbours along with the establishment of compatible political and social institutions – to be patently anti-Russian (Russia Today, 2014a; b).

The Russian state is clearly not alone in regarding Western institutions, viewpoints and influences as foreign, socially corrosive and conflicting with national culture. China, for example, also asserts its cultural separation from the West. In the particular case of Russia the claim to be different is that Russians

[1] The controversy caused by the decision of Russia's lawmakers in mid-2013 to prohibit the distribution of 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships' among minors was only one example of the divide that exists between the state's assertion of Russian family values and the European Union's institutionalization of individual rights and diversity.

look to the East to combine distinctively Asian and European values[2]. As with national pride elsewhere, the claim to be different extends to Russian family values and young people's socialization.

The argument that Russians are Eurasian in their culture and values is not so straightforward, however, because the Asian half of the Russian Federation is diverse. The region includes both a majority of ethnic Russians and minorities of indigenous Siberian peoples[3]. Instead of accepting claims about the primacy of traditional Eurasian family values as part of re-constructed Russian nationalism, we can reasonably ask if Asian-Russians even share a common culture and values. We can ask:

- What forms do parent-child relations actually take in diverse Asian-Russian cultural contexts; and,
- Which of those approaches to parenting is optimal for adolescent adjustment in diverse Asian-Russian cultural contexts?

The study answers those two questions about parenting in Siberia by examining the accounts of ethnic Russian adolescents from the region's largest city, Novosibirsk, compared with their ethnic Russian counterparts from the surrounding countryside of Novosibirsk Oblast; ethnic Russian and Buriiat adolescents from Ulan-Ude, the capital city of the Republic of Buriiatia; and ethnic Russian and Altay adolescents from the rural Republic of Altai. In Russian research terms, the study separates the accounts of adolescents from Asian-Russian 'ethno-social' groups in different regional locations (Popkov, 2012).

## 2. Models of parent-child relations

We begin with a review of models of parent-child relations, as developed in the West, and the claims made about which approaches to parenting identified in those models is optimal for adolescent adjustment. In brief, such models identify combinations of 'responsiveness-warmth' [parental support] and 'demandingness-strictness' [parental control] as representing distinctive patterns of parenting, where studies report:

- 'authoritative' parenting [high-support × high-control] is optimal among Anglo-American samples; whereas;
- 'indulgent' parenting [high-support × low-control] is optimal among Spanish, Swedish and other European samples; and therefore,
- 'democratic' parenting [high-support × moderate-control] offers a compromise between overly-demanding and overly-permissive approaches; and also,
- authoritarian' parenting [low-support × high-control] is detrimental among Anglo-American and Western European samples; but effective among East Asian samples on particular outcomes, for example Chinese and Japanese samples.

### 2.1 An optimal approach to parenting in Western contexts

Beginning with the early observational work of Diana Baumrind (1971) on parent-child interactions, child development studies in the United States went on to apply a range of methodologies to reach the general conclusion that among different approaches, authoritative parenting was the optimal one (Baumrind, 1991; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, et al., 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, et al., 1994). Authoritative parenting – characterised as warm and responsive, while providing at the same time firm

[2] 'Our pride and self-importance are European, while our development and actions are Asiatic.' *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860–1904), Complete Works and Letters in Thirty Volumes, Works, Notebook I, vol. 17, p. 87, 'Nauka' (1980).*

[3] It is also important to understand that the state's categorization of Siberia's indigenous peoples – for example, as Buriiat or Altay – rationally, scientifically, ideologically and bureaucratically in the Soviet era, assigned them to fixed locations and nations, itself a reconstruction of ethnicity (Anderson, 2000). Classifications are simplified into four groups of people, including Mongol (Buriiat) and Turkic (Altay) groups, of whom the one-half million Buriiats are most numerous.

behavioural control and appropriate maturity demands – was identified with better outcomes, as well as positive social and psychological adjustment for children and adolescents. A large-scale survey of adolescents aged 13-14 and 15-16 years old in the United Kingdom found that permissive parenting was the norm but similarly positive results for authoritative parenting were seen in respect of adolescents' wellbeing, mental health and school adjustment; importantly, those results were irrespective of each family's make-up and socio-economic circumstances (Shucksmith, Hendry and Glendinning, 1995). In summing up what was known from research about parent-adolescent relations and adolescents' socialization, Steinberg (2001) concluded that: the cross-cultural benefits of authoritative parenting transcended the boundaries of ethnicity; as well as those of family structure and socio-economic status.

2.2 Models of parent-child relations in Western contexts

Baumrind's original work had identified three parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. Unlike an authoritative style, she saw authoritarian parenting as distant, overly-demanding and too strict. On the other hand, permissive parenting lacked necessary boundaries. Maccoby and Martin (2003) developed that early model. They extended Baumrind's three styles to four by differentiating among permissive approaches in terms of parents' responsiveness so as to separate distinguish between those permissive parents who were indulgent and those who were neglectful. Maccoby and Martin saw neglectful parents as unresponsive, in addition to failing to set limits for adolescents; whereas, they saw indulgent parents as warm and responsive, even if they did not set limits. The subsequent empirical work of Lamborn, Steinberg and collaborators (1991; 1994), based on large-scale surveys in the United States, confirmed Maccoby and Martin's two-dimensional model with its four parenting styles[4].

In the Australian context, Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979) analysed instead adults' retrospective accounts of their relations with their parents in childhood, up to age 16 years. Their analysis identified two dimensions, parental 'care' and parental 'over-protection or control', and four approaches, indulgent parenting, characterised as 'high care and low protection', and three others, characterised as: 'affectionate constraint', 'affectionless control' and 'neglect'. Unlike studies in the United States and United Kingdom, Parker and his colleagues identified 'optimal parenting' as the approach that combines high care with fewer constraints; that is, they identified indulgent rather than authoritative parenting as optimal. Studies in Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden confirmed those conclusions with clinical and community samples of adults using the same methods. Later research developed a shortened eight-item 'parental bonding instrument' (PBI-BC) for use with adolescents in a self-completion survey format, to assess current adolescent-parent relations in the previous three months; rather than use adults' retrospective accounts of their childhood experiences up to age 16 years (Klimidis, Minas & Ata, 1992).

2.3 Other optimal approaches in Western contexts

Studies in North America, Western Europe and Australia had in fact been divided about whether authoritative or indulgent parenting was optimal. Conclusions appeared to be dependent on the cultural context. A comparative study of 12 to 16 year-olds from rural Scotland and Sweden provides an illustrative example. Glendinning, Kloep & Hendry (2000) observed considerable cross-cultural differences in adolescents' reports of their relations with parents between those two rural contexts in Northern Europe. Control was a notable feature of rural life in the Scottish context, and authoritative parenting was found to be optimal; and in contrast, control was largely absent from the Swedish rural context, where indulgent parenting was optimal. Studies in the Spanish cultural context in Southern Europe also favoured indulgent over authoritative parenting (Garcia & Garcia, 2009).

Baumrind (1996) re-considered the question of discipline within authoritative and indulgent parenting styles and discerned a pattern that provided a compromise between more demanding (American) and more permissive (European) parenting. She considered the benefits of a responsive, caring approach, combined with moderate control on the part of parents, as representing a 'democratic pattern of more

[4] Barber, Stolz & Olsen (2005) distinguished across three dimensions – support, psychological control and behavioural control – in adolescent reports of their parents' behaviour. Psychological control was unidirectional and hypothesized as harmful. Behavioural control was bidirectional and greater control hypothesized as beneficial.

contentious and engaged commitment to the child' (Baumrind, 1991: 63) instead of parents' assertive demands or unrestricted indulgence. A more democratic approach offered a persuasive alternative that could be applied across different Western societies.

2.4 Optimal approaches in East Asian contexts

Research has also shown that authoritarian parenting has been associated with positive outcomes in East Asian cultural contexts[5]. American and European-American families, for example, demonstrate different educational outcomes in the United States, where Asian children of authoritarian parents obtain better academic results than children of authoritative parents (Chao, 1994; 2001). As another example, in a comparative study between families in China and America, Quoss and Zhao (1995) found that authoritarian but not authoritative parenting predicted satisfaction in the parent-child relationship among Chinese children. Based on research in Asia and the United States, Chao & Tseng (2002) identified three central themes of East Asian parenting: the centrality of the family and family interdependence, as set within collectivist and hierarchical social relations; the distinctive pattern of control and strictness used with children; and fostering educational achievement in children. Nelson, Hart, Yang and colleagues (2006) reviewed and discussed the meanings and benefits that have been attributed to authoritarian parenting in the Chinese cultural context. They argued that where strictness has positive results, Chinese children take strictness to indicate parents' support as well as control. They argue that what is interpreted as an authoritarian pattern, when seen from a Western viewpoint, is understood by Chinese parents and their offspring as strict, but supportive in practice. It is closer to a Western model of authoritative than authoritarian parenting. In other words, Asian authoritarian patterns can be associated with positive adolescent adjustment.

What works in East Asian contexts is different because social relations are structured differently. Parenting patterns are taken-for-granted in social interactions that would be incongruent in other cultures[6]. In terms of parent-child relations and educational outcomes, the school-family fit in East Asian societies is collectivist and hierarchical[7]. Children are therefore able to use family cultural capital to feel 'at home' in school; and to succeed. Where hierarchical relations are emphasized more, parental strictness will be more effective. Strictness does not have the same positive meaning in societies such as Sweden, where egalitarian rather than hierarchical, and individualist rather than collectivist social relations are emphasized[8]. Different patterns of parenting practices in Western and Asian cultural contexts are summarised in Figure 1 in terms of the two dimensions of responsiveness and strictness.

[5] Research in other non-Western cultural contexts, such as in Middle Eastern societies, suggests that authoritarian parenting is an adequate parenting strategy, for example, Dwairy et al. (2006) found that in Arab societies, authoritarian parenting did not harm adolescent mental health as it did in Western societies.

[6] Rudy & Grusec (2001) analyse authoritarian parenting and the transmission of values in individualist and collectivist cultural contexts.

[7] Webber (1999) describes the Russian schooling system and implementation of reforms in the 1990s after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Elliott & Tudge (2007) analyzed Western influences on reform. From their perspective, many teachers in Russian schools continued to rely on traditional practices and values.

[8] Nonetheless, we need to be careful about the claims we make when using cultural constructs such as collectivism and individualism in essentialist explanations of ethnic differences in parenting practices and their effects on child development (Sorkhabi, 2005).

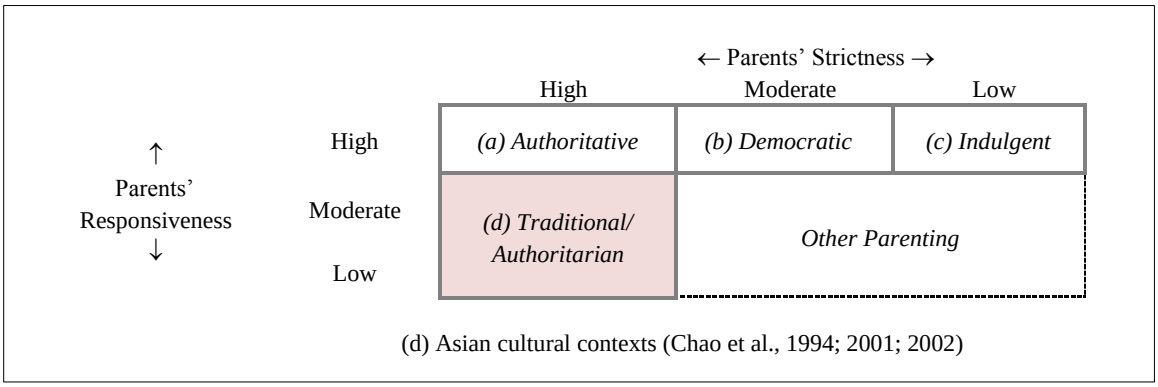


**Figure 1** Model of optimal parenting in Western and Asian cultural contexts

2.5 Parenting in Russia

Soviet-era guidelines for childrearing emphasized parental responsiveness and protectiveness, alongside moderate parental control and use of reason and persuasion. The primary duty of parents was to provide 'love and warmth' for their children, whereas parents' authority was an adjunct to children's socialization at nursery and school (Makarenko, 1954). Soviet education emphasized group-mindedness and acceptance of authority, and importantly, the peer-group was regarded by educators as integral to the regulation of children's behaviour, and the socialization of norms and values for the 'collective good' (Elliot & Tudge, 2007: 100). Traditional Soviet parenting could be characterized as indulgent but also as controlling. First, it can be seen as indulgent because it prioritized parents' love and support of their children rather than control at home. However, when the hierarchical and collective dimension of social relations is emphasized, Soviet parenting can also be seen more as authoritative because it was supportive but also controlling within the state's socialization nexus of family, school and peers. In the latter case, differences between 'authoritative' parenting in Soviet and American society would be about what counted as intrusive, and about the use of either psychological or behavioural control, respectively, as legitimate methods for socializing children within a collectivist or an individualist society. The American social-psychologist Bronfenbrenner (1970) saw the peer group as operating in tandem with the school and family in children's socialization within Soviet society, unlike in American society, where the peer-group appeared to be at odds with the family.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a number of studies of parenting and childrearing values came out of the new Russia in the 1990s. These were undertaken with relatively small samples of mostly ethnic Russian families from cities in Central and Western Russia. An early study in 1992 found that the majority of its participants from St Petersburg and Moscow continued to describe childrearing along Soviet lines, in terms of 'love and warmth' with an emphasis on promoting the 'collective good' (Goodwin & Emelyonova, 1995). Some entrepreneurial families mentioned a different pattern, whereby parents encouraged 'individuality' and acted as 'tutors' but it was not yet clear how parenting would change, if at all. By the end of the decade, an in-depth interview study found social-class differences (Tudge, Hogan, Snezhkova et al., 2000). Working-class parents emphasized conformity to rules, whereas middle-class parents supported children's self-direction. A quantitative study of parenting styles surveyed a more representative sample (Girgorenko & Sternberg, 2000). It also found that less-educated parents were more likely to report higher demands, along with higher acceptance, or continuity with Soviet authoritative parenting. Educated parents were more likely to report moderate acceptance and moderate demands, or more permissive, liberally-oriented and self-directed parenting, rather than continuity with Soviet indulgent parenting. Interestingly, the study found that parenting was unrelated to a family's financial circumstances. A decade of economic disruption meant that most educated professionals who worked for the state in provincial cities, such as nursery and school teachers, experienced economic hardship.

As to outcomes of parenting, an early study in 1992 explored the effects of the family environment on adolescents' adjustment in post-Soviet Moscow (Sheer & Unger, 1998). Non-supportive parenting

without close relations was associated with adolescent depression. The study concluded that in the midst of economic, social and political change the effects of family environment appeared to be the same as in U.S. samples, even when Russian families were under such severe stress. A study in the mid-1990s examined parenting styles in families of nursery-school-age children from a provincial city south of Moscow (Hart, Nelson, Robinson et al., 1998). Parental coercion and lack of responsiveness were the most important contributors to aggression with peers in younger Russian children. Authoritarian, non-supportive parenting that involved psychological control disrupted younger children's relations with their peers and socialization at nursery school. Elliot & Tudge (2007) found that most school teachers continued to use traditional methods with children rather than adopt foreign, Western innovations.

A summary of parenting studies in post-Soviet Russia concluded that 'outcomes associated with authoritative and authoritarian dimensions, at least for nursery children, appear consistent with outcomes found across diverse cultures [but] … little is known about how permissive parenting plays out in measures of adjustment for Russian children of any age [and also] … about ways that Russian parenting is associated with other aspects of development [beyond aggressive behaviour with peers]' (Nelson, Hart, Keister et al. 2010: 415-6). In other words, few studies of parenting have been undertaken in general, and little or no research about parenting has been done in rural locations of Asian Russia and among diverse ethno-social groups in particular.

## 3. Hypotheses

In terms of hypotheses:

- Traditional parenting will persist in Asian-Russian cultural contexts: both as parenting that emphasizes high parental support combined with low-to-moderate behavioural control, representing an indulgent traditional Soviet model; and as parenting that emphasizes low-to-moderate parental support combined with high control, representing an authoritarian traditional Asiatic model.
- New parenting patterns will also be evident, such as moderate parental support combined with moderate behavioural control; and permissive parenting that is congruent with social change.
- However, the persistence of traditional parenting and increased presence of new parenting patterns will depend on the family's urban-rural location and its ethnic background, because of the different ways in which circumstances have changed social relations for ethno-social groups from different locations in Asian Russia.[9]
- As to the effects of parenting, previous studies in Russia claim that parenting patterns associated with positive and negative outcomes for children and adolescents are similar to those found in the West; although the evidence base is limited and rural, Asian-Russian families are absent from those studies. Additionally, what has been found in the West is not the same everywhere. Therefore, it is hard to hypothesize about what patterns will be associated with positive adjustment in Asian-Russian cultural contexts.

## 4. Methods

The Siberian 15-year-olds who participated in the study grew up in the Russian Federation after the break-up and final dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Their parents had grown up in the Soviet era. Many families experienced dramatic changes to their lives, and considerable hardship, due to the collapse of livelihoods and social supports (Humphrey, 2002). Study data come from ethnographic fieldwork, individual interviews, focus groups and questionnaire surveys with 15-year-olds from three distinctive locations in Siberia: Novosibirsk Oblast, the Republic of Buriiatia and the Republic of Altai[10].

[9] Popkov (2012) argues globalization promotes local diversity and the values of indigenous ethnic groups in Siberia, rather than Western influences causing uniformity, which is separate from the state's use of Eurasian values as the basis of Russian national identity.

[10] Fieldwork for the study did not extend northwards to Altai Krai.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of locations in terms of ethnicity, religion, urban=rural mix and population sizes.

4.1 Locations

Only the populations of European Russia's two major cities, Moscow and St Petersburg, are greater than the major Siberian city of Novosibirsk. It is the most populous city in Asian Russia. The Siberian city of Ulan-Ude is located some 2,000 km. to the east of Novosibirsk and it is less than one-third the size of Novosibirsk. Ulan-Ude is the capital of the Republic of Buriiatia. The republic shares a southern border with Mongolia. Its indigenous culture and religion have an Asiatic Buddhist-shamanist basis (Humphrey, 1993). However, Buriiats represent a minority of its population and the majority are ethnic Russians. The Republic of Altai lies in Western Siberia, some 1,000 km. south of Novosibirsk. The republic shares a southern border with Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia. Its indigenous culture reveres the homeland as sacred within Buddhist-shamanist traditions. Popular religious movements such as Burkhanism asserted Altay's independence (Halemba, 2006). Nonetheless, only a minority of the population claim to be ethnic Altay; the majority are ethnic Russian families. A far greater proportion of the population live in rural areas of the Republic of Altai compared with the Republic of Buriiatia.[11] The republic's administrative centre, Gorno' Altaisk, has a population of under 60,000.

**Table 1** Ethnic profile of the sample of Siberian 15-year-olds from three locations

| | Regional Location | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Novosibirsk Oblast (n=507) | Ulan-Ude^ (n=322) | Republic of Altai (n=696) |
| *Ethnicity* | | | |
| Ethnic Russian | 86% [93%] | 45% [66%] | 52% [57%] |
| Buriiat | — | 45% [30%] | — |
| Altay | — | — | 30% [34%] |
| Mixed/Others[+] | 14% [ 7%] | 10% [ 4%] | 18% [ 9%] |
| *Religion* | | | |
| Russian-Orthodox | (25%) | (27%) | (28%) |
| Buriiat-Buddhist | — | (20%) | — |
| Altay-Shamanist | — | — | (13%) |
| *Urban—rural* | | | |
| Population × 1,000 | [2,666k] | [973k] | [206k] |
| Capital × 1,000 | [1,474k] | [404k] | [57k] |
| Percentage Urban | [77%] | [58%] | [28%] |

Notes :
Figures in brackets[.] Census, 2010; (.) Atlas of Religion & Nationalities, 2012.
^ Census figures are for the Republic of Buriiatia. The study is restricted to its capital, Ulan-Ude.
[+] This category includes youth of mixed ethnic backgrounds, such as those with Russian and Altay, or Russian and Buriiat parents; and also, youth of other ethnic backgrounds, such as those with two Kazakh parents. National Census figures for ethnicity are broken down by the individual; not as in the study by 15-year-olds' parents.

4.2 Sample

Samples of 15-year-olds were drawn from 78 schools to represent socio-economic diversity within study locations. The overall response rate to the survey, after follow-up, was 95 per cent. In terms of the numbers of schools by location: Novosibirsk City had 12 schools and Chulymskii and Dovolenskii in Novosibirsk Oblast had six schools each; Gorno' Altaisk, Turochaksii, Ongudiaskii and Ust'-Koksinskii in the Republic of Altai had nine, seven, eight and 16 schools respectively; Ulan-Ude City had 14 schools.

[11] The proportions of urban-dwellers in the Republic of Altai compared with the Republic of Buriiatia are 28 and 58 per cent, respectively.

Cross-checks with external reference statistics show the sample provides good coverage of key socio-economic factors, family make-up, parents' education and employment status, and material circumstances.

4.3 Measures

4.3.1 Parent-adolescent relations: A module of 18 survey questions about parent-child relations was adapted for use in Siberia[12].

**Table 2** Siberian 15-year-olds' responses to a set of questions about family relations: Two-factor solution, representing support and control, derived from data reduction [$]

| Factor loadings for the survey questions[+] | Scoring | Factor 1 Parents' Support | Factor 2 Parents' Control |
|---|---|---|---|
| My parent/s are always on hand to listen to me^ | 1 to 4 | 0.774 | — |
| Are good at helping me with problems^ | 1 to 4 | 0.770 | — |
| Understanding parent/s [PBI] | 1 to 3 | 0.721 | — |
| I get on well with my parent/s^ | 1 to 4 | 0.691 | — |
| Caring parent/s [PBI] | 1 to 3 | 0.682 | — |
| Helpful parent/s [PBI] | 1 to 3 | 0.679 | — |
| Loving parent/s [PBI] | 1 to 3 | 0.677 | — |
| Know when I'm worried or upset^ | 1 to 4 | 0.584 | — |
| Support and encourage my interests and activities^ | 1 to 4 | 0.537 | — |
| Permissive parent/s [PBI] | 1 to 3 | 0.505 | — |
| Are strict about the time I come home in the evening^ | 1 to 4 | — | 0.681 |
| Controlling parent/s [PBI] | 1 to 3 | — | 0.646 |
| Have strong views about my appearance^ | 1 to 4 | — | 0.561 |
| Disapprove of some of my friends^ | 1 to 4 | — | 0.552 |

Notes :
[$] Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation: K-M-O = 0.904. A two-factor solution explains 49% of the total variance. Z-scores for factors are calculated via the regression method.
[+] Four questions are excluded as separate: PBI-BC questions about autonomy and disabling behaviour; and parents' unrealistic expectations and parents' conflict.
^ 1 'Wholly Disagree', 2 'Partially Disagree', 3 'Partially Agree', 4 'Wholly Agree'.
[PBI-BC] 1 'Never', 2 'Sometimes', 3 'Often'.

Table 2 provides details of the questions and an analysis of the Siberian 15-year-olds' replies. The analysis identified two dimensions to the replies – representing dimensions of responsiveness (parents' support) and strictness (parents' behavioural control) – in agreement with theoretical models. Standardized factor scores were calculated for each dimension. The first parenting dimension was skewed to the right, towards higher support scores (gamma = -1.081); whereas the second parenting dimension was more symmetrically distributed about moderate control scores (gamma = -0.270).

Additionally, the two dimensions were used to separate out traditional-authoritarian parenting among other patterns in Asian-Russian Siberia. Scores that were 'not high' in relative terms on the parental responsiveness scale – that is, the lower two-thirds of support scores in the sample – and scores that were relatively 'high' on the parental strictness scale – that is, along with the upper third of control scores in the sample – were separated and then combined. Parental responsiveness that was not high was combined with strictness that was high and classified as 'traditional-authoritarian' as in an Asian parenting style (see, Figure 1). In total, 21 per cent of 15-year-olds described the pattern in their replies to the 14 questions about parent-adolescent relations (321 out of 1,494 complete replies; n = 45 missing data).

[12] Shucksmith et al. (1995); Glendinning et al. (2003) and Klimidis et al. (1992).

4.3.2 Family socio-economic status: Details of a household's composition and parents' education, economic activities and occupations, and the household's material circumstances, were collected[13]. Socio-economic status (SES) is a composite – incorporating occupations, income and education – but there are considerable difficulties in gauging SES in the Russian context. Indeed, the previous Russian national census in 2002 neither asked for household occupations nor attempted a classification using standard schema. Sample numbers of single-parent families and those households whose parents had tertiary-level education were in line with census figures. Few families saw themselves as 'well off', even in Novosibirsk City, where the figure was only one-in-ten. Most young people characterized their circumstances 'as the usual'.

4.3.3 Adolescent wellbeing and mental health: Assessment of adolescent self-worth was based on a 10-item self-report scale, with scores from 0 to 30, modified from Rosenberg's original scale (1965); depressive mood was based on a six-item scale from 10 to 30 (Kandel & Davies, 1982); and psychological distress based on a 12-item scale from 0 to 36 (Goldberg & Williams, 1988). Versions of those scales were modified from ones used with adolescent samples in Western contexts (Glendinning, Nuttall, Kloep et al., 2003).

4.3.4 School adjustment: Reliability analysis of 15-year-olds' replies to a set of five inter-related questions about schooling showed the replies could be combined to make a scale, representing school adjustment (alpha = 0.757, k = 5, n = 1527). The scale had been identified from data reduction of a larger module of 16 questions[14]. The scale was standardized with a mean of zero and a standard deviation one. It was skewed to the right (gamma = -0.556), indicating positive orientations to school.

4.4 Plan of analysis

The multivariate analysis used in the study is designed to address the two questions posed at the outset about: what the forms that parent-adolescent relations take, and the particular patterns of parenting that are associated with positive adolescent adjustment.

4.4.1 For the first question, a repeated measures multivariate design is used to test differences in 15-year-olds' mean scores on the dimensions of parental support and control, separated across the three locations – Novosibirsk Oblast, Ulan-Ude and the Republic of Altai – and family backgrounds – ethnic Russian, Buriiat and Altay – while controlling for effects of gender, family make-up and socio-economic status. Preliminary one-way ANOVAs are also conducted (see, Table 4).

4.4.2 For the second question, separate sets of four multivariate analyses are conducted for each location – Novosibirsk Oblast, Ulan-Ude and the Republic of Altai. Each of the four measures of adolescent adjustment – self-worth, depressive mood, psychological distress and school adjustment – is regressed against the parental support and control scales (see, Table 5). All regression analyses control for the effects of gender, family make-up and socio-economic status (Amato & Fowler, 2002), as well as for urban and rural families, and ethnicity, as appropriate (see, Table 5).

4.4.3 Another scale was introduced into the regression models for the second question to test whether a more moderate level of parental control – characteristic of more democratic parent-adolescent relations – was associated with positive adolescent adjustment (see, Table 5). Lower scores on the scale correspond to reports of moderate control, whereas higher scores correspond to reports of both high and low control[15]. The scale tests for what is called a curvilinear effect, whereby moderate, rather than too much or too little, control by parents is positive (Barber, Stolz & Olsen, 2005: 31).

[13] Material circumstances were assessed using a measure developed for use in the WHO-HBSC study, which included some 8,000 11 to 15 year-olds from across the Russian Federation (Currie et al., 2004).

[14] The five statements were: I like my school and studies; I feel part of the my school; the rules at my school are fair; my teachers help me; and I find what I study at school interesting and useful; with the replies coded as 1, Wholly disagree; 2, Partially disagree; 3, Partially agree; and 4, Wholly agree. Questions about schooling were adapted from Shucksmith et al. (1995) and Glendinning et al. (2003).

[15] The scale is introduced into the final multivariate regression analysis as a quadratic term [Control × Control] derived as the square of the linear parents' control scale [Control].

4.4.4 Finally, for the second question additional comparisons were made of self-worth, mental health and school adjustment scores of 15-year-olds who reported traditional-authoritarian patterns of parenting in each of the three locations with their contemporaries from other families. The aim was to test the hypothesis that traditional-authoritarian, collectivist-hierarchical social relations – most often associated in the literature with an East Asian parenting style – can also be beneficial in the Asian-Russian cultural context.

## 5. Results

The results reported in Table 3 are intended to provide a brief non-technical summary of the much more detailed results about the two dimensions of parenting reported in Table 2. Results show that more than 60 per cent of the sample said their parents were responsive (and always on hand to listen), whereas 50 per cent of the sample said that their parents were strict (in setting a night-time curfew). In brief, study results characterize 15-year-olds' reports of the Siberian family as supportive with moderate parental control as the norm. Those general results are consistent with the traditional Soviet model of parenting but differentiation is evident when parenting is broken down by locality and ethnicity.

**Table 3** Siberian 15-year-olds' responses to the survey question with the greatest loading on each of the two factors used to characterize parent-child relations (n=1,527)

| Column %-ages | Factor 1 – Parents' Support<br>My parent/s are always on hand to listen to me. | Factor 2 – Parents' Control<br>My parent/s are strict about the time that I come home in the evening. |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Wholly Disagree | 5% | 12½% |
| 2. Partially Disagree | 10% | 12½% |
| 3. Partially Agree | 23% | 25% |
| 4. Wholly Agree | 62% | 50% |
| | 100% | 100% |

The results reported in Table 4 illustrate the mean differences among ethno-social groups from the three locations[16] on the parental responsiveness and strictness scales (as set out in Table 2, both jointly and separately for each parenting dimension). Different combinations of perceived support and control can be seen among the city and rural samples in Novosibirsk Oblast, the sample as a whole in Ulan-Ude, and the ethnic Russian and Altay samples in the rural Republic of Altai. Importantly, results make allowances for gender, family make-up and family socio-economic status. One of five patterns of parenting is the norm among each ethno-social group in the three locations: firstly, permissive parenting among ethnic Russian families in Novosibirsk City; secondly, democratic parenting among ethnic Russian families in the rural Oblast; thirdly, indulgent parenting among ethnic Russian and Buriiat families in urban Ulan-Ude; fourthly, authoritarian parenting among ethnic Russian families in the rural Republic of Altai; and lastly, a non-Western indigenous pattern of moderate parental support combined with very strict control among Altay families.

[16] As described by the 'Location & Ethnicity' variable in Table 4.

**Table 4** Siberian 15-year-olds' accounts of parenting by location and ethnicity[$]

| Mean (S.D.) | Location & Ethnicity[^] | | | | | | One-way ANOVA p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Novosibirsk Oblast | | Ulan-Ude | | Republic of Altai | | |
| | Big City Russian | Rural Russian | City Russian | City Buriiat | Russian | Altay | |
| Parents' Support | 0.059[a] | 0.157[b] | 0.173[b] | 0.231[b] | -0.199[c] | -0.018[a] | F=6.381 |
| | (0.939) | (0.970) | (0.921) | (0.906) | (1.030) | (0.988) | p<.001** |
| Parents' Control | -0.166[d] | 0.034[e] | -0.107[d] | -0.317[d] | 0.106[f] | 0.232[f] | F=8.023 |
| | (0.943) | (1.022) | (1.017) | (1.003) | (0.964) | (0.951) | p<.001** |
| n = | 276 | 146 | 146 | 144 | 365 | 204 | |
| Parenting Approaches[+] Support×Control | 'Perm-issive' [Md×Lo] | 'Demo-cratic' [Hi×Md] | 'Indul-gent' [Hi×Lo] | 'Indul-gent' [Hi×Lo] | 'Author-itarian' [Lo×Hi] | 'Trad-itional' [Md×Hi] | |

Notes :

[$] Reports of ethnic Russian youth from the major regional city of Novosibirsk and their rural ethnic Russian counterparts from surrounding Novosibirsk Oblast; of ethnic Russian and Buriiat youth from the regional city of Ulan-Ude, capital of the Republic of Buriiatia; and of ethnic Russian and Altay youth from settlements across the rural Republic of Altai.

[^] Multivariate analysis of accounts of parenting, controlling for gender, family make-up, education and socio-economic circumstances: Parenting × Location & Ethnicity, p <0 .001**

[+] Differing combinations of lower, moderate and higher level of parental support and control.

'Neglectful' parenting [low support and control combined, Lo×Lo] is not the predominant approach reported by ethnic Russian, Buriiat or Alay youth in any of the locations.

[a, b, c; d, e, f] Homogeneous subsets from post-hoc multiple comparisons of means, Tukey's HSD-test.

The results reported in Table 5 demonstrate that parental support was positively associated with all four measures of adolescent adjustment across the three locations, consistent with a traditional Soviet model. However, the effects of parental control varied among locations. Self-worth and psychological wellbeing were consistently associated with moderate control in Ulan-Ude, where a democratic approach was optimal in the context of indulgent parenting norms. Positive self-worth was associated with low-to-moderate control and depressive mood scores were associated with high control in Novosibirsk Oblast. Thus, an indulgent or democratic approach was optimal in the context of permissive or democratic parenting norms. There was a negative association between high control and self-worth and psychological wellbeing in the Republic of Altai. Thus, an indulgent approach was optimal in the context of authoritarian parenting norms. School adjustment was unrelated to levels of parental control in Altai. Indeed, parental strictness was unrelated to school adjustment in all three locations.

**Table 5** Multivariate regression analyses of Siberian 15-year-olds' social wellbeing and mental health against accounts of parenting from three locations

| β-weights^ p-value | Wellbeing and mental health[$] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Self-worth | Depressive mood | Psychological distress | School adjustment |
| *Novosibirsk, n=414* | | | | |
| Parents' Support | 0.204 .001** | -0.179 .001** | -0.214 .001** | 0.322 .001** |
| Parents' Control | -0.158 .001** | 0.181 .001** | 0.030 .546 | -0.070 .154 |
| Control×Control[+] | -0.123 .012* | -0.007 .885 | -0.047 .347 | -0.011 .825 |
| Multiple R = | 0.396 | 0.413 | 0.344 | 0.362 |
| *Ulan-Ude, n=290* | | | | |
| Parents' Support | 0.150 .009** | -0.151 .010* | -0.129 .030* | 0.218 .001** |
| Parents' Control | 0.019 .753 | 0.070 .263 | 0.008 .895 | 0.046 .488 |
| Control×Control[+] | -0.123 .048* | 0.178 .005** | 0.132 .046* | -0.071 .295 |
| Multiple R = | 0.291 | 0.284 | 0.232 | 0.267 |
| *Altai Republic, n=563* | | | | |
| Parents' Support | 0.169 .001** | -0.144 .001** | -0.232 .001** | 0.323 .001** |
| Parents' Control | -0.090 .045* | 0.251 .001** | 0.115 .005* | 0.057 .152 |
| Control×Control[+] | -0.047 .269 | 0.018 .651 | 0.006 .899 | 0.078 .055 |
| Multiple R = | 0.261 | 0.384 | 0.336 | 0.362 |

Notes

[$] Of ethnic Russian youth from Novosibirsk City and surrounding rural Oblast; ethnic Russian and Buriiat youth from Ulan-Ude City; and ethnic Russian and Altay youth from across the rural Republic of Altai.

^ Adjusted β-weights, after allowing for the effects of gender, family make-up, education, socio-economic circumstances and ethnicity on 15-year-olds' wellbeing and mental health.

[+] Lower scores on this scale correspond to 15-year-olds' reports of moderate parental control, whereas higher scores correspond to reports of high or low levels of control.

Figure 2 illustrate the results of detailed multivariate regression analyses with a particular example that compares the traditional-authoritarian Asian pattern with other families[17]. The figure compares the mean scores of the two groups of adolescents on three measures, low self-worth, depressed mood and psychological distress. In Novosibirsk Oblast, higher scores on the low self-worth and depressed mood scales were more likely to be associated with the traditional-authoritarian pattern compared with other families ($p = 0.002$ and $p = 0.003$) but differences were statistically insignificant for psychological distress scores ($p = .245$). In the Republic of Altai, higher scores were more likely to be associated with the traditional-authoritarian pattern compared with other patterns on all three measures ($p = 0.019$, $p < 0.001$ and $p = 0.003$). Ulan-Ude had few reports of a traditional-authoritarian pattern to make comparisons (1-in-8, n = 35) but there were almost no differences between mental health scores using the available data. It is clear that reports of a traditional-authoritarian pattern of parenting were not associated with better adolescent adjustment scores, unlike results for East Asian adolescent samples.

[17] Unlike the results of the detailed multivariate regression analyses, the illustrative results of the illustrative presented in Figure 2 do not allow for any effects of socio-economic status.

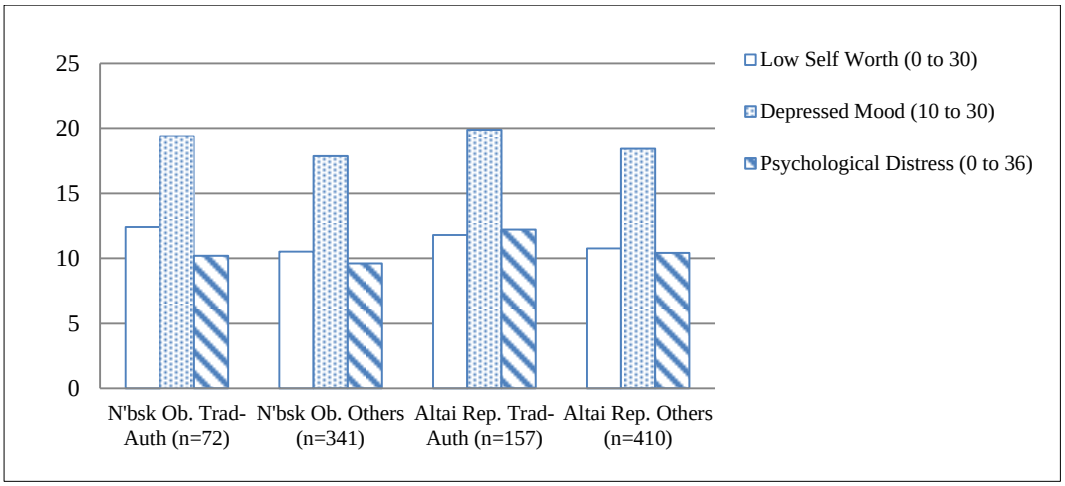


**Figure 2** Siberian 15-year-olds' wellbeing and mental health, comparing traditional-authoritarian parenting with other patterns in Novosibirsk Oblast and Republic of Altai

## 6. Discussion

The study has well-rehearsed limitations. Two considerations, in particular, need to be taken into account. First, although the study results may have been influenced by having 15-year-olds report on their mothers' and fathers' behaviour in a self-completion questionnaire survey format, some adolescents also participated in focus-group discussions and one-to-one interviews about life in Siberia, including family life. Results were triangulated. In addition, adolescent self-reports have already contributed much to our understanding of family processes (Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1994), and also, similar results have been obtained on the effects of different approaches to parenting in spite of different methods of data collection, including adolescents' self-reports (Baumrind, 1991; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994). Second, the study was cross-sectional and causal relationships and issues of directionality cannot be tested. The first consideration relates to answers to the first question in the study. The second relates to answers to the second question.

As to first question, no general Russian parenting style as the norm was found across the region. The study finds instead that one of five patterns of parent-adolescent relations appears to represent the norm among different ethno-social groups from the three locations in Siberia. The first and third patterns relate to urban contexts, that is: relatively permissive parenting in the major regional capital of Novosibirsk; and indulgent parenting in the Buriiat capital of Ulan-Ude. The second of the five local patterns is more democratic, combining parents' support with more moderate control, which is the norm in rural Novosibirsk (Glendinning et al., 2004). That rural pattern, and the urban pattern in Ulan-Ude, can be read as variants of the traditional Soviet model emphasizing support, whereas the moderate support reported by adolescents from urban Novosibirsk indicates change rather than continuity (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 2000). All three patterns are unlike a traditional-authoritarian Asian pattern. However, the fourth pattern suggests that strict, non-supportive authoritarian parenting is the norm among ethnic Russian families in the rural Republic of Altai (Glendinning et al., 2004: 46). The fifth and final pattern, which is the norm among ethnic Altay families, seems distinctively Asiatic. It combines moderate support with high levels of control in parenting through training (Chao, 1994).

As to our second question – about the effects of different parenting patterns on adolescent adjustment – the benefits of parental support were ubiquitous among all ethno-social groups across the three locations. However, the effects of parents' control varied among locations. In Novosibirsk Oblast, an indulgent or democratic pattern was optimal for wellbeing and positive mood in a context of relatively permissive or democratic parenting norms. In Ulan-Ude, a more democratic approach was optimal for adolescent wellbeing and mental health in a context of relatively indulgent parenting norms. In the Republic of Altai, an indulgent approach was again optimal for adolescent wellbeing and mental health in a cultural

context of traditional-authoritarian parenting norms. Thus, indulgent or democratic patterns were associated with positive social-psychological adjustment across groups and locations. School adjustment was unrelated to reports of parental control in the Republic of Altai where a connection between family strictness and school success in the Asian-Russian context might have most been expected. Studies of parenting in other Asian cultural contexts have found that authoritarian patterns had particular benefits for school adjustment (Chao, 2001; Chao & Tseng, 2002), though apparently not in Siberia. Parental strictness was unrelated to school adjustment in all three locations.

The finding that permissive parenting was the norm in the major regional centre of Novosibirsk is consistent with the liberalization of social relations, with moderate rather than high parental support, and emphasis on self-direction. Urban and rural diversity across the other study locations is consistent with the persistence of the traditional Soviet parenting model (high support) or a traditional Asian parenting model (high control). In that way the study shows that Westernization, or global cultural influences, where those were evident, has not led to the same patterns of social relations everywhere. In the case of the indigenous Altaic parenting pattern identified in the study, globalization may well support, rather than undermine, the maintenance of ethno-social cultural differences locally, such as among indigenous Altay families in remote rural locations (Popkov, 2012)[18]. Nonetheless, irrespective of regional diversity, the study found that adolescent adjustment throughout the region was associated with reports of more indulgent or democratic parenting. Notably, that was instead of Anglo-Saxon authoritative or Asian authoritarian parenting. Indulgent or democratic parenting that includes high parental support combined with low to moderate control is also found to be most effective in Western European societies rather than the United Kingdom and United States.

## 7. Conclusion

The study contains no historical data for direct comparison with parenting practices and their effects on adolescent socialization and adjustment in the Soviet or immediate post-Soviet era. Nonetheless, it finds that less controlling and more responsive parent-adolescent relations are associated with positive feelings of self-worth and psychological adjustment, compared with permissive, authoritative or authoritarian patterns, irrespective of location and ethnicity. Research says that indulgent or democratic patterns are also beneficial in Western Europe but less in Anglo-Saxon contexts of the United Kingdom or United States. To conclude, the study finds no evidence to suggest that strict parenting would benefit Asian-Russian adolescents – whether in the form of American authoritative or Asian authoritarian parenting. Importantly, the study's design and results have made allowances for the differing make-up and socio-economic circumstances of young people's families in post-Soviet Siberia.

The study could be adapted to undertake research with adolescents from urban and rural families in other Asian cultural contexts, such as in Thailand[19]. Arguments are current there about the influences of global 'mass' culture and children's lack of knowledge of traditional Thai Buddhist values. It would be interesting to know whether Thai (and Asian) family values have benefits over Western parenting patterns for adolescent adjustment and schooling in the Thai cultural context.

## 8. Acknowledgements

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[18] Global movements may also act to promote local identity and support ethnic nationalism among indigenous peoples in Siberia, such as Altay, as opposed to the state's version of Russian cultural identity and values, with which local versions may or may not agree (Popkov, 2012). The situation is complex in Siberia because local identity and ethnicity were re-constructed by the Soviet state (Anderson, 2000).

[19] Weisz, McCarty, Eastman et al. (1997) and Weisz, Weiss, Suwanlert et al. (2006) discuss issues of researching childrearing, development and problems of adjustment in Thailand.

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