# Parents' Values on Child Socialization and Changes toward Modernization in Vietnam

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Abstract: This article presents a comparison of data in two surveys in 2003 and 2015 on Vietnam Family Change (N=3192) about the traits or qualities Vietnamese parents want to teach their children and how it changes towards modernization since Doi Moi in 1986. The findings show that majority of Vietnam parents ranked 'obedience', 'to work hard', and 'to be responsible' while over one third ranked 'to think for oneself' as very important qualities. There is slight change of parents' values on desired traits toward modernization during this period. Vietnam parents' values on child socialization emphasized on obedience or conformity rather than autonomy or self-direction. The factors significantly impacted on changes of parents' values which are competing forces explained for the little change on Vietnamese parental values on child socialization and raise the issues for context change in interrelationship between the family and key institutions on the way towards modernization in Vietnam.

Keywords: Parents' Values, Obedience, Autonomy, Child Socialization, Modernization

## 1. Introduction

Over the last 30 years since Doi Moi in Vietnam the process of economic reform together with international integration resulted in social and family changes towards modernization. The studies on the interactions of the key institutions in this period documented the trend and dynamic of the Vietnam family in relationship with the state and reduced the norms for conformity in family daily life (Kerkvliet, 2005; Magali Barbieri, 2009).

As institutional bases changed under the development and modernization, parental valueson child socialization would change towards preference for independence or autonomy and decreasingly obedience or conformity. Changes of parental values is one important indicator of social changes and family change(InkelesA. 1955).However, there is little known about the changes of parental values child socialization in Vietnam since Doi Moi.

The main goal of this article is to document the nature and extent of changes of parental values on child socialization in Vietnam family based on the surveys designed for this question. The analysis will be focus on the characteristics which parents expected to teach their children and the factors that potentially influence on changes of Vietnam parental values.

## 2. Parental values on child socialization

In the socialization process, the roles of parental generation are both value transmission and formation. It means that parents not only pass norms and values of the family to child, but serve as mediator for formation of new values when they experience social change. For the characteristics or traits that parents expected to teach their children, parents who value conformity emphasize obedience, being well liked or popular, and being thrifty which characterized traditional societies. In contrast, parents who value autonomy or self-direction emphasize thinking for oneself and being responsible which characterized modernized societies (Alwin, 1988).

The studies on changes of parental values on child qualities documented family changes by cultural, political changes and development (Marc et al, 2011; Duncan, 1985; Alwin, 1984; Lieber et al., 2006; Tulviste et al. 2012). The early studies in the United States and Europe have revealed that changes of parents' values concerning child qualities result from development and modernization dating since the earlier Industrial Revolution in the West (Stone, 1977; Alwin, 1988).

Other studies also confirmed that child-rearing orientations had changed from emphasis on obedience or conformity towards autonomy or self-direction of the child (Lynd and Lynd, 1929; Wright and Wright, 1976; Kohn M. L., 1959; Caplow at al, 1982; Alwin, 1988). Studies since mid-1980s showed that the trend of changes in parental values for children has continued. Nevertheless, there were no changes in autonomy and change in obedience slowed while 'to work hard' increased steadily during period 1986-2014 (Alwin, 1989;Lantagne,Caitlin, 2009; Kei Nomaguchi & Melissa A. Milkie, 2016).

In transforming societies toward modernization, parents' values concerning child qualities has changed but at different levels. In Soviet Union under the socialist period, the state and the family had important roles in moral socialization social homogeneity for and childsocializationstressed conformity (Bronfenbrenner, 1970; Subbotskii, 1992). Since Soviet Union collapsed in 1992, there were changes in child socialization both in the state and the family (Sloutsky, 1994). The parents' attitudes toward children somehow involved a contradiction which combined individualistic and conformity values. Changes in parents' values to their children in these transforming societies depended on a process of democratization and liberalization and changes in other institutions (Tulviste, 2007). In developing nations in the process of modernization, parents' values toward children regarding

Volume 7 Issue 11, November 2018 <u>www.ijsr.net</u> Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY independence and obedience was expected to rise over time (Park H.and Lau A. S., 2016).

Examining the relationship between parental values and cultural variations, Miguel et al. in their study showed that parents' ideas concerning children were directly influenced by their attitudes re children's and individuals' cultural context and the social construction of knowledge (Miguelet al., 2009). Parental child-rearing values and goals are strongly related to cultural variations, such as individualism versus collectivism and an independent versus an interdependent self (Tulviste & Ahtonen, 2007)

The findings from the studies on parental values on child socialization are linked strongly with social class and occupational structure (Kohn, 1959; Alwin, 1984; Joan Z, 1991; Hong Xiao, 2012). While social class continues to be a source of the valuation of autonomy and conformity, gender and family structure are related to characteristics parents considered as important for child socialization. Women in advantaged social positions value autonomy much more than their male counterparts, and mothers in dual-worker families more likely emphasizeon autonomy than mother in traditional families(Hong Xiao & Nancy Andes, 1999).Comparative studies between US and Russia or US and China, for example, show that there were no cross-societal differences in parents' value for self-direction for achild which is explained by the change of parents' value from conformity to autonomy in the context of transition towards market economy and increase of social heterogeneity (Tudgeet al, 2000; HongXiao, 2012).

Before Doi Moi in 1986, Vietnam was mainly a rural and agriculture society. Cultural and historical studies showed that in the traditional Vietnam family, the Confucian values on filial piety and conformity were moral norms in the family daily life. The traditional values of Vietnamese people reflected the social structure and were maintained through the family. The traits or characteristics such as obedience, being well liked or popular, working hard (diligence), and being thrifty were emphasized in Vietnam traditional family (Huou, Tran Dinh, 1996). However, the influence of Confucian values as filial piety and conformity were strictly maintained in the educated and ruling classes (Babieri, M., and Belanger, D., 2009). In the working family, parents' and grandparents' attitudes and behaviors resulted in 'autonomy' of children (Chi, Truong Huyen, 2009).

Since 1990s when Vietnam was moving towards becoming a market economy, industrialization and modernization, studies on the Vietnam family changes mainly focused on the demographic transition, marriage and gender roles division. Some findings from these studies revealed that characteristics or traits such as working hard and obedience were most important for mate selection in marriage, although these were slightly decreased in youngest cohort (Huy, Vu Tuan, 2003). Although parents taking the lead in their children's marriage decisions declined, seeking parental approval of a marriage partner remained important and the pattern of living with the husband's family after marriage provided evidence that there was no increase of children's autonomy (Jayakody R. & HuyVu Tuan, 2008).

This review documented that parents' values on child qualities have been changing from obedience to autonomy and depended on economic development as well as cultural and political changes. This paper focus on the changes of Vietnam parents' values on qualities of their children. This analysis focuses on how changes in the process of modernization since 'Doi Moi' in Vietnam, and how the parents' attitudes and behaviors in family life as gender equality, attitudes toward modernization influenced the changes of parents' values on child qualities in the Vietnam family.

## 3. Method

The data for this article is from two surveys: the first is "Vietnam Family changes" conducted in 2003 by Institute of Sociology in Vietnam in cooperation with the Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, United States; and the next is "Vietnam family changes towards sustainable development in the context of industrialization and modernization" conducted by the Regional Institute for Sustainable Development, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences in 2015. The sample size for this analysis from both surveys was 3192.

## Dependent variables

In both Surveys, the respondents were asked six questions on desirable qualities of their children: "*Thinking about today, how important do you think parents consider each of the following are to teach a child growing up. Please tell me how important you think each is to be obedient, to be well liked or popular, to think for oneself, to work hard, to be responsible, and to be thrifty*".Possible answers were: 1= Very important, 2=Somewhat important, 3=Not that important, 4=Not at all important, 9=DK. In the Survey in 2003, the same questions were used to ask respondents thinking back to about 15 years ago what did parents think was important to teach achild.

Based on these variables, the index of parents' attitudes towards child qualities which parents want to teachwas constructed as the dependent variable. Among these, to be obedient, to be well liked or popular, to be work hard, and to be thrifty which are more tradition while to think for oneself, to be responsible are qualities which are more characteristic for modernized societies. The values of two variables which characterized modernizing societies were reversely recoded 4= Very important, 3=Somewhat important, 2=Not that important, 1=Not at all important, and 9=DK be recoded 0. The values of remaining variables were kept the same and added up. The range of values of the dependent variable would be from 0 to 24. Higher score, stronger parental attitudes towards modernization on the qualities for their child.

#### Independent variables

Some independent variables explained for changing of parental attitudes towards modernization on the qualities of their child were measured by year and three sets of variables: demographic, socioeconomic (SES), and parents' attitude and behaviors. The year variable was assigned 0 for Study 2003 and 1 for study 2015. Region was a dichotomous

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variable with North provinces assigned 1 and the South provinces were assigned 0. *Urban-Rural* was a variable with urban assigned 1 and rural assigned 0. For the demographic variables, age of respondent was a dummy variable: cohort1 was assigned 1 included respondents 'age less than 40' and others were assigned 0. Same for cohort2 included respondents' age at 40-54 and cohort3 from 55 and higher. *Gender of respondent* was a dichotomous variable with women assigned 1 and men were assigned 0.*Family type* was a dichotomous variable where couple only (parents not living with their child) were assigned 1 and other (parents' living with their child or extended families) were assign 0.

For the socio-economic variables, *respondent education attainment* was dichotomous variable with 1 as college or higher and non-college as 0. *Occupations* were measured as dummy variables peasant (reference), worker, personal service-trade, social service, army-police, professional-administrative, and others (mainly retires). *Household wellbeing level* was measured in categories: Poor=1, Some what worse off than average=2, About average=3, Somewhat better than average=4, Well off=5.

For the parents' behaviors, three dichotomous variables were formed: *doing housework, child care*, and *household finance management* with husband and wife doing equally was assigned 1 and others was assign 0.

Awareness of educational importance was measured by three categories: less important=1, equally important=2, more important=3. The awareness of Vietnam as more modernized than last 10 years was dichotomous with 'modernizing a lot' was assigned 1 and other (modernized little or not at all) was assigned 0.For modernization is good for Vietnam 'very good' was assigned 1, and 'not at all good' or 'somewhat good' were assigned 0.

The parents' attitudes 'man made most important decision in the family' and 'parents doing best for child' were dichotomous variables with 'disagree' was assigned 1, and 'agree' assigned 0. Husband do more houseworkwas a dichotomous variable with 'agree' assigned 1, and 'disagree' was assigned 0.

## 4. Results

Table 1 shows the ranking of qualities of their child valued as very important by parents for the years 1988, 2003, and 2015. The data revealed an interesting pattern. Highest was to be obedient, followed by to work hard, to be responsible, to be well liked, to be thrifty, and lowest was to think for oneself. Since 1988, there was a slight decline of respondents who valued to be obedient was very important from 90.4% in 1988 to 88.05% in 2003 and to 85.75% in 2015.

 Table 1: Qualities of child valued as very importants by parents and by the year (%)

purches and by the year (70)										
	1988	2003	2015							
to be obedient	90.4	88.05	85.75							
to work hard	84.75	83.15	81.65							
to be responsible	75.25	78.25	82.15							
to be well liked or popular	70.05	71.95	72.0							

be thrifty	68.5	69.35	69.55
to think for oneself	33.4	38.7	42.3

The percentage of respondents who valued 'to be well liked' and 'thrifty' were almost the same during this period. More parents valued 'to be responsible' as very important, rising from 75% in 1988 to 78% in 2004 up to 82% in 2015, and 'to think for oneself' increased from 33.4% in 1988 to 38,7% in 2003 and to 42,3% in 2015. While parents' value 'to work hard' as very important slightly declined from 85% in 2003 down to 83.2% in 2003 and to 81.7% in 2015.

Comparison of the means of explanatory variables by the year indicates increase in awareness that Vietnam is more modernized (from 87% to 92%) and being modernized is good for Vietnam (from 68% to 78%). The percentage of nuclear family which included parents only and parents living with their child only increased from 60% in 2003 to 70% in 2015. There was no change in household possession level and respondents' education attainment. For occupations others (mainly retired) and professional-administrative increased.

Table 2 present weighted means for explanatory variables. The parents' modernized attitude to child was slightly increased from 11.77 in 2005 to 12.21 in 2015. There was no change on the percentage of family type 'couple only', which is 5% in 2003 and 2015. There was slight increase of professional-administrative category in occupational structure. The percentage of respondents with college and higher education increased from 9% in 2003 to 12% in 2015, while the social service and household well-off level show no change.

The positive attitudes towards modernization in Vietnam increased, for example, 89% of respondents said that 'Vietnam is more modernized' and 68% considered that 'Modernization is good for Vietnam' in 2003, the percentage increase 92% and 78% respectively in 2015. The attitudes on gender equality in the family such as 'husband do more housework' increased from 59% in 2003 to 69% 2015 and 'husband and wife do housework equally' increased from 13% to 16%. The changes of attitudes and behaviors towards gender role equality linked to less support for traditional values changes as urban, family type and occupational structure may be linked to support for modernization values in Vietnam. The respondents' attitudes toward the traditional attitude such as 'Most important decision in the family made by man' and 'Parents doing their best for child' were slightly increased (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** Weighted means for explanatory variables in the analysis for total sample and by year (N = 3,192)

$_{1}$ analysis for total sample and by year $(11 - 5, 192)$								
	Total	2003	2015					
Parents' modernized attitude to child (Region)	11.85	11.77	12.21					
Region	.49	.50	.40					
Urban	.48	.50	.42					
Age cohort less than 40	.32	.32	.31					
Age cohort 40-54	.42	.41	.47					
Age cohort 55 +	.26	.27	.22					
Women	.50	.50	.52					
Nuclear family (couple only)	.05	.05	.05					
College and higher	.10	.09	.12					
Peasant	.32	.31	.36					

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Worker	.11	.12	.06
Personal service-Trade	.32	.32	.31
Social services	.05	.05	.05
Army-Police	.02	.01	.02
Professional-Administrative	3.9	3.2	6.8
Others	.13	.13	.15
Household well-off level	3.0	3.0	3.0
Vietnam more modernized	.88	.87	.92
Modernization is good for Vietnam	.69	.68	.78
Important of education	2.8	2.8	2.9
H & W do housework equally	.14	.13	.16
H & W do childcare equally	.42	.40	.52
H & W manage finance equally	.15	.14	.23
Disagreed on most important decision made by	.36	.38	.29
man			
Agree on husband do more housework	.61	.59	.69
Disagreed on parents doing their best for child	.06	.06	.05
	(.43)	(.46)	(.41)
Ν	3192	2592	600

Table 3 presents the results from regression models predicting the changes on parents' expectations for modernized qualities of child by year, socioeconomic and behavior variables. Model 1 controlls for year, regional difference, and urbanization. The coefficient for year variable was positive and significant indicating that parents'

modernized attitudes on child qualities increased over time. Parents in the North were less likely to prefer modernized qualities of child than parents in the South. Parents in urban were more likely to socialize their child to modernized qualities than parents in rural areas.

Model 2 controlled for demographic variables. Parents in age cohort 40-54 were less likely to prefer modernized qualities of child than parents in age cohort 55 and older. Couple only is less likely to do so compared to parents' living with their child or extended families. Significant and directions of change in year and regional difference variables were the same orientation towards modernized qualities of children, while the regional differences coefficient slightly decreased.

Model 3 included SES variables. Not as expected, college variable was not significant. Compared to farmers, social services, professional-administrative, and others were more likely to socialize their child towards modernized qualities. Households in the well-off level were positive and significant indicating that higher well-off level, stronger parents' preference for modernized qualities of children.

Table 3: Coefficients Predicting Changes in Parents' modernized attitudes towards qualities of Child: 2003 – 2015 (N =

				3,192	2)										
Model	Model 1		Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5			
	В	SE	Sig	В	SE	Sig	В		Sig	В	SE	Sig	В	SE	Sig
Year							0.436	0.056	***	0.456	0.057	***	0.151		***
Region	-0.188	0.044	***	-0.176	0.044	***							-0.246	0.048	***
Urban	0.121	0.044	**										0.043		
Age cohort less than 40				-0.077	0.06								-0.072		
Age cohort 40-54				-0.139	0.056	*							-0.125		
Women				-0.049									-0.051		
Nuclear family (couple only)				-0.235	0.103	*							-0.248		
College and higher							0.057	0.084					0.034		
Worker							0.14	0.076					0.074		
Personal service-Trade							0.103	0.055					0.026	0.065	
Social services							0.248	0.11	*				0.213	0.114	
Army-Police							-0.141						-0.134		
Professional-Administrative							0.353		**				0.279		
Other								0.072	*				0.083		
Household well-off level							0.089	0.028	***				0.126		
Vietnam more modernized										-0.123			-0.109		
Modernization is good										-0.105	0.051	*	-0.118		*
Important of education										-0.016			0.007		
Doing housework equally										-0.046			-0.051		
Doing childcare equally										-0.01			-0.005		
Manage finance equally										0.024			0.073		
Disagree on mostImportant decision by men										-0.094			-0.127		
Agree on husband do house work										0.035			-0.002		
Disagree on parents dobest for child										0.465			0.459		
(Constant)	11.803		***	11.976		***	11.398		***	11.983		***	11.726		***
$\mathbb{R}^2$	0.027	***		0.028	***		0.03	***		0.032	***		0.054	***	
N	3192			3192			3192			3192			3192		

\*p < .05; \*\*p .01;\*\*\* p <.001

a. Dependent Variable: Modernize attitudes to child socialization;

Omitted reference variable is: farmer

Model 4 included attitudes and behavioral measures. Not as expected, for those who were higher awareness *on modernization is good for Vietnam* were less likely to prefer modernized qualities of children. For those who disagreed with *man made most important decisions in the family* indicating that they were more oriented towards gender equality, however, were less likely to be oriented towards socializing modernized qualities of their children. Persons

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who disagreed with *parents'* duty is to do their best for their child even at the expense of their own well-beingwere more likely to socialize their child to modernized qualities. Controlled for attitudes and behaviors, the coefficient for year was still positive and statistically significant, and increased from .435 to .456.

Model 5 included all explanatory variables, of which, the coefficient of variables such as 'year', 'professional', 'household well-off level', and 'disagreed parents do best for child' are positive and significant. In contrast, the variables 'region', 'age cohort 40-54', 'couple only', 'disagreed that men made important decisions in household', and 'modernized is good for Vietnam' are still negative and significant and which are likely to decrease the parents' prefer modernized qualities of the child. While urban and other occupation variables are no longer significant, the variables on attitudes and behavior towards gender equality in housework and the role of education, nevertheless, are not significant on parental values are modernizing qualities in the child socialization.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Change on parental values towards autonomy or selfdirection are important in preparing for the next generation. Inparticular, how they relate to the trend of change in parental values towards modernizing qualities in child socialization in Vietnam depends on the dynamic of the role of Vietnam family in relating to the key institutions in the process of Vietnam social change and modernization (Magali Barbieri & Daniele Belanger, 2009).

The findings from this article reveal that during the period between 2003 and 2015, a majority of Vietnamese parents ranked 'obedience', 'to work hard', and two third of them ranked 'to be responsible', 'to be well liked or popular' and to be 'thrifty', and over one third ranked 'to think for oneself'as very important qualities for teaching their children. There was slight diversion between the pairs of consistent values in the past, for example, 'to work hard' slightly decreased and 'be thrifty' was almost the same, 'to be well liked' was not much changed while to 'think for oneself' increased considerably. Parents' values on qualities of children which were decreased in traditional and increased in modernized characteristics. The mean score of parents' modernized attitude to child qualities was slightly increased from 11.77 in 2003 to 12.21 in 2015.

The factors such as demographic, socio-economic (SES), the attitude and behaviors toward equality in family life potentially impact on parental preference to modernized attitude on child socialization. Comparing to peasants, occupational categories such as social services and professional-administrative oriented stronger towards modernizing child qualities. The increase of household well-off levels, change of attitudes of parents in family life and change of parents' attitudes and behaviors directly to the children are likely to increase parents preferred modernizing qualities of children.

Contrary to our expectations, there are some variables which impacted negatively to parents' values on child socialization. Persons in the age cohort 40-54, were less likely to prefer modernizing qualities of children than an older age cohort which may be due to life cycle differences, including processes of aging (Alwin, 1988). The same as family type which was 'only couple'. Parents' attitudes on child socialization in this family type are less likely to prefer modernizing qualities of their children. That may be because they were at an older life cycle and their children's migration to urban areas was because of livelihood issues rather than their life choice (Barbieri, 2009; Truong Huyen Chi, 2009).

The impact of attitudes and behaviors towards gender role equality on parents' values are not supported in this analysis. Although a majority of respondents' favor modernization and equality of gender role in most important decisions in the family, they are less likely to change their attitudes towards modernizing qualities of children. It seemed that this is because there was little change on gender role division in the Vietnam family (Knodelet al, 2005; Tatyana Mestechkina et al, 2014).

For regional differences, parents in the North were less likely to prefer modernized qualities of children than in the South. This trend seems to accelerate when coefficient increased from .188 to .246, while the change in gender role equality in the South is stronger than the North under the impact of modernization and urbanization (Grosse, 2015). Regional differences in parental values on child socialization would be increased.

The meaning of parental values on qualities in this study which is consistent with other studies, except for the meaning of 'to work hard'. In the developed societies, working hard means being self-disciplined, high-achieving individual effort, to rely on themselves and not on others or the state (Kei Nomaguchi& Melissa, 2016). That'work hard' slightly decreased may be the result of change of attitude towards rely on themselves rather than others or state which reflected the situation of Vietnam since Doi Moi. From a country which was characterized by the process of collectivization in economic and social life, Doi Moi marked privatization in economy and this process has been accelerating.

Change in attitudes and values is one of the most essential preconditions for substantial and effective functioning of modern institutions and development (Inkeles A.& David H. S., 1974). The small changes in attitude and behavior on the gender roles in the family and especially on the parents' attitude directly to children were obstacles for the changes of parents' values toward modernizing qualities of children in Vietnam families.

Not only the attitudes towards modernizing traits increased slightly, the attitudes towards the traits characterized for traditional society decreased slightly also. Vietnam parents' values on child socialization are still characterized as obedience or conformity rather than autonomy or selfdirection. As specified by Awin (1988), structural and cultural changes accompanying modernization, including education and urbanization change values on parent re child socialization. From a mainly rural and agricultural society

Volume 7 Issue 11, November 2018 <u>www.ijsr.net</u> Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY before Doi Moi in 1986, economic change towards market and development in Vietnam resulted in increased living standards. In addition, the attitude on modernization is mainly understood having economic meaning (Jayakody R. & Huy VT., 2008). The increase of household material level closely links to change of social stratification and Vietnam only escaped from be classified as a poor country in 2010 (UNDP, 2015). In the context of this change in Vietnam, change of parental attitude directly to children is slightly may be because of their reaction to venerable social change and increased in stability driven by competing forces (Alwin, 1988; John at al, 2005).

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