INDIVIDUALISM OR COLLECTIVISM? CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS IN CHINESE TV COMMERCIALS AND ANALYSIS OF SOME MODERATING FACTORS

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Are traditionally collectivist cultures shifting to individualism due to economic and cultural globalization? This study addresses the question from a media message perspective by analyzing manifest individualism and collectivism in Chinese advertising. Drawing on the cross-cultural theory of Individualism-Collectivism, the study develops a measurement instrument and applies it in a content analysis of 523 TV commercials aired in 2003 in China. Results show that the predominant cultural orientation reflected in local-product Chinese TV commercials is still collectivism, but not in foreign-product commercials.

Cross-cultural research has identified individualism (IND) and collectivism (COL) as key dimensions of cultural difference.[1] Individualism, a "world view...that centralizes the personal and peripheralizes the social," is assumed to be rooted in Western cultures.[2] Collectivism, often conceptualized as the opposite of individualism, is believed to be prevalent in East Asian cultures.[3] Although cultural changes occur gradually, cultural values and orientations do shift as a result of social, structural, and historical flux. For example, industrialization and modernization may contribute to a shift from collectivism to individualism.[4] Indeed, differences in IND and COL at the individual level have been shrinking between Westerners and East Asians (e.g., Japanese and Koreans).[5]

Given China's recent history of rapid economic growth and unprecedented opening to the outside world, could it be undergoing similar cultural shifts? With the emergence of an ever-expanding middle class and the so-called "me-generation,"[6] a move toward individualism seems plausible. This possibility has political implications, as individualistic values are believed to be related to preferences for participatory democracy.[7] As China plays an increasingly important role in international affairs, the impact of any potential cultural and political reconfiguration will likely reach beyond its borders.

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One entry point to examining a society's predominant (and shifting) cultural values and orientations is mass media. In particular, advertising as a form of social communication is said to reflect cultural values, generating a stream of research that examines manifest values in advertising content.[8] Much evidence has been presented showing the prevalence of IND in Western and COL in non-Western advertising,[9] as well as their congruence with consumer values and orientations in Western and non-Western cultures.[10] However, recent scholarship has documented increasing levels of manifest individualism in Japanese, Korean, and Chinese advertising.[11] The question then becomes whether individualism has overtaken collectivism to become the more prevalent cultural orientation reflected in advertising content from a traditionally collectivist society such as China, thereby signaling possible cultural changes. What factors influence the manifestation of IND and COL in advertising content?

This study developed a measurement instrument to facilitate the empirical investigation of manifest IND and COL in Chinese TV commercials. The ways in which two within-culture factors (advertised product origin and product type) affect manifest IND and COL in advertising content were also explored. Results may help reconcile conflicting findings in existing research by specifying the conditions under which IND and COL manifest in varying degrees in advertising content. They may also shed light on the complex cultural dynamics in today's China at the juncture of social transformation and globalization.

Literature Review

The following review considers the cross-cultural IND-COL framework and the concept of cultural values and orientations in advertising as theoretical underpinnings for examining and measuring manifest IND and COL in advertising content, beginning with the implications of IND and COL for orientations in self-concept, relationality, motivation, and affect, and how these orientations manifest in advertising content as IND and COL values and appeals.

Self-concept. For individualists, the self is a unique and independent person with identity based on personal experiences, accomplishments, and dispositional traits (vs. social descriptors) relevant for distinguishing the self from others (e.g., independence, individuality, non-conformity, high self-esteem or self-enhancement bias, competitiveness, etc.). Conversely, collectivists view the self as part of larger social groups and endeavors, with identity based on group memberships, social roles, and the traits and abilities relevant for maintaining these (e.g., interdependence, commonality, conformity, modesty or self-reduction bias, non-competitiveness, etc.).[12]

Relationality. Individualistic relationships tend to be chosen and voluntary, based on equity norms and cost-benefit analyses, resulting in fluid social relationships. Collectivist relationships tend to be fixed, and viewed as facts of life to which people must accommodate based on equality and generosity principles.[13]

Motivation. Individualism implies that personal needs, interests, preferences, and achievement goals take priority over group ones.

Collectivism implies that collective needs, interests, preferences, and goals to maintain group well-being figure more prominently.[14]

Affect. Emotions of individualists tend to be "ego-focused" (having one's internal state as the primary referent), e.g., pleasure or anger. Those of collectivists tend to be "other-focused" (having others as the primary referent), e.g., empathy or shame.[15]

Manifest Individualism and Collectivism in Advertising Content. Advertising is said to carry cultural values at its core as a mechanism to connect commodities and consumption experiences with commonly held values and preferences.[16] Based on cultural insights gained through consumer research, advertisers routinely endorse and glamourize values in advertisements to help move merchandise.[17] Among the many values in ads identified by researchers, IND and COL have been shown to manifest in Western and non-Western advertising in considerably different ways. Moreover, consumer response research has found that they often reflect Western and non-Western consumers' values respectively and affect their attitudes accordingly.[18]

For example, more IND values and appeals such as *independence/personal autonomy or choice, personal achievement, uniqueness/individuality, non-conformity,* and *competitiveness/competition* have been found in Western advertising. Conversely, non-Western advertising contains more COL values and appeals such as *interdependence/group consensus or choice, group affiliation, family, community, patriotism, belongingness, popularity,* and *conformity.*[19] Based on the conceptualization of the IND-COL framework, these items reflect individualistic and collectivistic self-concepts respectively.

With regard to relationality, collectivist orientations have been found in non-Western advertising in the use of these values and appeals: *veneration of the elderly, filial piety, harmony with others, courtesy,* and *nurturance.*[20] IND and COL motivations have been reflected in advertising content with Western advertising focusing on product benefits to the individual and non-Western advertising emphasizing benefits to the group.[21] Finally, ego-focused emotions prevalent in individualistic cultures have been expressed in Western advertising in the use of values and appeals such as *hedonistic pleasure, enjoyment,* and *fun.*[22]

However, another pattern of results also exists in the literature. For instance, Japanese ads demonstrated more individualistic orientations by using more *individual/independence* appeals, whereas American ads showed more collectivistic orientations by using more *group consensus/conformity* appeals.[23] Similarly, Korean ads used more IND cultural indicators such as *individuality, self-benefit,* and *self-indulgence,* while American ads used more COL cultural indicators of *belonging.*[24] Another cross-cultural study found the manifestation of COL values such as *family integrity, conformity, harmony,* and *group orientations* to be at the same level when comparing American and Korean TV commercials.[25] Moreover, a within-culture study found more IND than COL cultural indicators in Korean newspaper ads.[26]

In the case of Chinese advertising, most between-culture comparisons (usually with American advertising) have supported the cultural

congruence hypothesis (i.e., more COL orientation in Chinese and more IND orientation in American advertising),[27] while within-culture studies have shown discrepancies. For example, Cheng reported an increase of COL values such as *collectivism, patriotism, respect for the elderly,* and *courtesy* in Chinese magazine ads.[28] In contrast, Zhang and Shavitt demonstrated the predominance of an IND orientation in Chinese TV and magazine ads.[29] Similarly, McIntyre and Wei observed an increase of Western (e.g., *competition, individualism*) and a decrease of Eastern values (e.g., *family, respect for the elderly*) in Chinese award-winning ads from 1979 to 1995.[30] On the other hand, Cheng showed an increase of both Western (e.g., *competition, enjoyment)* and Eastern values (e.g., *courtesy, patriotism*) in Chinese TV commercials, and proposed the idea of a melting pot of the East and the West in Chinese advertising.[31]

One explanation for the discrepancies in the literature is that between- and within-culture research addressed different issues, resulting in different conclusions. While between-culture research revealed cultural values more prevalent in ads from one culture than from another, they were not necessarily predominant relative to other manifest values in ads from any given culture. In contrast, within-culture research that examines predominant values and orientations in ads from a single cultural context can shed light on this ambiguity in the literature.

Another possible reason for the conflicting findings is that cultural values and orientations from traditionally collectivist societies (e.g., China, Japan, and Korea) may not be as homogeneous as once assumed. Indeed, recent cross-cultural research has challenged the conventional wisdom that East Asians as a whole are similar to one another and different from Westerners in IND and COL values and orientations. As shown in a meta-analysis of IND-COL research from 1980 to 2000, Japanese valued independence more than European-Americans, whereas the latter showed more collectivist orientations. When compared to Koreans, Americans were only slightly more individualistic and equally collectivistic. In contrast, the differences in both IND and COL between Americans and Chinese have remained unequivocal.[32] These nuances may be reflected in manifest values and orientations in advertising content.

To address these two issues, this study focused on Chinese advertising using a within-cultural analytical approach and raised the following research question:

> **RQ1**: Which cultural orientation manifests more in Chinese TV commercials, individualism or collectivism?

A third possibility behind the inconsistent findings is the effect of natural confounds such as advertised product origin (e.g., products/brands originating from the United States vs. China) and product type (e.g., products for personal use or purchase condition such as perfume vs. products for shared use or purchase condition such as a washing machine). Both factors have been found to affect manifest

cultural orientations in general and individualism and collectivism in particular in advertising content.

With respect to product origin, ads for foreign products have been shown to carry more IND values and appeals, whereas local product ads contain more COL values and appeals. For example, Chinese TV commercials from the early 1990s carried more *individualism* and *enjoyment* appeals in imported and joint-venture product advertising and more *collectivism* and *respect for the elderly* appeals in local product advertising.[33] Indian TV commercials displayed a similar pattern, with Indian product advertising promoting more *maturity/elderly* values than Western multinational corporation advertising.[34] In 2000, Chinese TV commercials contained more traditional values in local and more modern values in imported product advertising.[35] Given the correlations between traditional and COL values and those between modern and IND values in advertising content,[36] manifest IND and COL in Chinese TV commercials may still vary along the line of product origin after the turn of the century. That is, IND orientations in Chinese TV commercials may be more likely to appear in foreign product advertising, while COL orientations may be more likely to manifest in local product advertising.

This study therefore hypothesizes that Western product commercials are more likely to display IND orientations than Chinese product commercials, whereas the latter will reflect more COL orientations comparatively. Additionally, a similar pattern of difference will likely exist between Chinese and non-Chinese East Asian (i.e., Japanese and Korean) product commercials, based on empirical evidence showing shrinking cultural difference between East Asians (Japanese and Koreans in particular) and European Americans in IND and COL values and orientations.

H1a: There are more IND orientations in Western and non-Chinese East Asian (Japanese and Korean) than in Chinese product commercials.

H1b: There are more COL orientations in Chinese than in Western and non-Chinese East Asian product commercials.

The above review suggests that in addition to "the usual suspects" of cultural traditions and cultural change, advertised product origin may also account for variations in manifest cultural orientations in advertising content. This study therefore controlled for its effect by examining commercials of different product origin separately.

RQ2: Which cultural orientation manifests more in Chinese product commercials: individualism or collectivism?

RQ3: Which cultural orientation manifests more in Western product commercials: individualism or collectivism?

RQ4: Which cultural orientation manifests more in non-Chinese East Asian product commercials: individualism or collectivism?

Product type may also influence the manifestation of cultural values and orientations in advertising content. Research has shown that ads for personal use products tend to carry more IND values and appeals, whereas shared use products ads contain more COL values and appeals.[37] This pattern may also exist in Chinese TV commercials.

H2a: There are more IND orientations in personal than in shared product commercials.

H2b: There are more COL orientations in shared than in personal product commercials.

Methods

Sampling. This study used TV commercials as the sampling universe. TV is the most popular mass medium in China, with a viewership of 1.206 billion.[38] With 95% of the population tuning in every day, it dominates over other media in frequency of use.[39] It also commands the largest share-of-voice in advertising among all media.[40] While other media increasingly target various niche markets, TV is still very much mass-oriented and thus more likely to reflect mainstream cultural values.

The sampling frame included five channels: China Central Television Channel One (CCTV1), Beijing Television Channel One (BTV1), Shanghai Television (STV), Henan Television (HTV), and Shaanxi Television (SXTV).[41] While CCTV1 is the state broadcaster that serves the national audience, BTV1 and STV respectively serve urban audiences in the Beijing and Shanghai metropolitan areas. In contrast, HTV and SXTV serve audiences in the inland provinces of Henan and Shaanxi, both economically less developed than the coastal East. Combined, the five channels provided a representative sampling of contemporary Chinese TV programming targeting national, urban, and rural audiences.

Prime-time programming[42] was recorded off the air in June, September, November, and December 2003. Recording was conducted in a rotating manner using a constructed-week method. Holidays were avoided so that cultural values that potentially manifest in commercials more often during specific holidays were not over-represented in the sample.[43] Duplicate commercials, infomercials, public service announcements, and programming promotions were excluded. These procedures yielded two weeks (seventy hours) of programming that included 584 commercials.[44]

Measures.

Product Origin and Product Type. Product origin was measured on a 1-to-3 nominal scale (1 = Western products, 2 = non-Chinese East Asian products, 3 = Chinese products). Coding was based on coders' brand knowledge and in cases of disagreement, references to advertiser Web sites for corporate definitions of product origin. Product type was

measured on a 1-to-2 nominal scale (1 = personal products, 2 = shared products). Measurement was adopted from prior research (see Appendix 1). A pre-test on a randomly selected 10% (N = 61) of the sample yielded Cohen's kappa of 1 ($p < 0.001$) for product origin and 0.946 ($p < .001$) for product type, indicating high inter-coder agreement while controlling for chance agreement.

IND and COL Orientations in Advertising Content. Although extant research has identified a variety of items measuring manifest individualism and collectivism, there is not a comprehensive and mutually exclusive measurement instrument that incorporates existing measures based on their alignment with various domains of the IND-COL framework. This study developed such an instrument to address this limitation.

First, the IND-COL framework was consulted to identify orientations in four domains (self-concept, relationality, motivation, and affect). Second, advertising research was reviewed to identify items indicating the manifestation of these orientations in advertising content in the form of IND and COL values and appeals.[45] Third, operational definitions for each item were developed based on adaptations to existing measures. Fourth, a collection of 2001 commercials was screened to confirm the applicability and to revise the operational definition of each item in the case of Chinese TV commercials. Fifth, face validity of the instrument was assessed using a back-translation procedure from operationalization to conceptualization.[46] Finally, the instrument was used in a pre-test on 10% (N = 61) of the sample. Pearson's r ranged from 0.717 to 0.954 ($p < 0.01$), all within the range of acceptable inter-coder reliability.

These procedures yielded fifteen items measuring IND and COL values and appeals on 1-to-3 interval scales in terms of the extent of manifestation in advertising content (1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, 3 = very much). Items were randomly ordered (see Appendix 2).

Coding. One limitation of existing research is that most studies measured only one dominant value or appeal in each ad in order to achieve parsimony and coding feasibility. However, advertisers rarely use only one cultural value or appeal in any given ad. Typical ads contain multiple values or appeals representing primary, secondary, or even tertiary themes, with usually one dominant value or appeal representing the primary "selling pitch."[47] Coding only the dominant value potentially misses the layers of cultural meanings embedded in all creative elements. This study therefore coded as many values as manifested in each ad while taking into account the varying degrees of manifestation by using an interval scale.

A Chinese visiting scholar blind to the research hypotheses served as the main coder while the author served as the secondary coder. After extensive training and pre-testing on 10% of the sample, the primary coder coded the rest of the sample (N = 523), while the secondary coder coded 15% (N = 78) of this sample. For the two predictor variables (product origin and product type), Cohen's kappa was 1 and 0.966 ($p < 0.001$) respectively. For all criterion variables, Pearson's r ranged from

TABLE 1

TV Commercial Sample Distribution by Product Origin and Product Type

Western Products		Japanese or Korean Products		Chinese Products	
Personal	Shared	Personal	Shared	Personal	Shared
56	59	11	27	76	294
Totals:	115		38		370

0.699 to 0.898 ($p < 0.01$), all within the conventional range of acceptable inter-coder reliability.

Results

Sample Distribution and Measurement Scales. Table 1 presents the sample distributions. A collectivist orientation scale (CS) was constructed by summing scores across the items of *courtesy, interdependence, nurturance, harmony, conformity, popularity, veneration for the elderly, other-focused emotions,* and *group-oriented motivations.* An item analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.68. An individualistic orientation scale (IS) was constructed by summing scores across the items of *pride, independence, competition, non-conformity, ego-focused emotions,* and *self-oriented motivations.* An item analysis eliminated the *competition* measure, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.69.

Addressing Research Questions. Table 2 presents results of one-way within-subjects ANOVA tests. An ANOVA assessing the difference between averaged means[48] on CS (mean = 1.23) and IS (mean = 1.03) for the entire sample yielded a significant result, Wilk's Lambda = 0.83, F (1, 522) = 105.41, $p < 0.001$, indicating that there were more COL than IND orientations in Chinese TV commercials as a whole. Next, three tests were conducted to look into commercials of different product origins separately. An ANOVA assessing the difference between averaged means on CS (mean = 1.26) and IS (mean = 0.97) for Chinese product commercials yielded a significant result, Wilk's Lambda = 0.68, F (1, 369) = 172.52, $p < 0.001$, suggesting more COL than IND orientations in Chinese product commercials. However, two ANOVAs assessing the difference between averaged means on IS (mean = 1.2) and CS (mean = 1.19) for Western product commercials, and difference between averaged means on IS (mean = 1.13) and CS (mean = 1.12) for non-Chinese East Asian product commercials both yielded non-significant results, indicating that in both categories there were similar levels of IND and COL.

Testing Hypotheses. Tables 3 and 4 present the results of hypotheses testing. **H1a** predicted that both Western and non-Chinese East Asian product commercials reflect more IND orientations than

TABLE 2

Averaged Means of Individualism Scale (IS) Scores and Collectivism Scale (CS) Scores within Each Product Origin Category

	Averaged Means of Scale Scores		
Advertised Product Origin	IS	CS	*F*
Overall	1.03	1.23	105.41***
Chinese	0.97	1.26	172.52***
Western	1.20	1.19	*NS*
Japanese or Korean	1.13	1.12	*NS*

*** $p < .001$.

Note: Means are averaged by the number of items on each scale.

Chinese product commercials. **H2a** predicts that there are more IND orientations in personal than in shared product commercials. A two-way ANOVA (3 product origins x 2 product types) using means on IS as the dependent variable yielded a significant main effect for product origin, F (2, 517) = 50.87, $p < 0.001$.[49] Follow-up pair-wise comparisons revealed that both Western and non-Chinese East Asian product commercials reflected more IND orientations than Chinese product commercials, whereas there was no difference between the former two, supporting **H1a**.[50] The ANOVA also produced a significant main effect for product type, F (1, 517) = 180.49, $p < 0.001$, indicating more IND orientations in personal than in shared products commercials, supporting **H2a**. However, no significant interaction between product origin and product type was found, indicating that the effect of product origin on manifest IND existed in both product types.

H1b predicted that Chinese product commercials reflect more COL orientations than both Western and non-Chinese East Asian product commercials. **H2b** predicted that there are more COL orientations in shared than in personal products commercials. A two-way ANOVA using means on CS as the dependent variable yielded a significant main effect for product origin, F (2, 517) = 6.79, $p < 0.01$.[51] Follow-up pair-wise comparisons revealed that Chinese product commercials reflected more COL orientations than both Western and non-Chinese East Asian product commercials, whereas there was no difference between the latter two, supporting **H1b**.[52] The ANOVA also produced a significant main effect for product type, F (1, 517) = 24.71, $p < 0.001$, indicating more COL orientations in shared than in personal product commercials, supporting **H2b**. Again, there was no significant interaction between product origin and product type, indicating that the effect of product origin on manifest COL existed in both product types.

TABLE 3

Means of Individualism Scale Scores and Collectivism Scale Scores by Product Origin

Dependent Variables	Advertising Product Origin: Western	Japanese or Korean	Chinese	*F*
Collectivist Orientation	10.72[a]	10.08[a]	11.33[b]	6.79**
Individualistic Orientation	7.2[a]	6.79[a]	5.82[b]	50.87***

** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

Note: Means in the same row with no common lowercase superscript differ at $p < .05$ using the Dunnet's C test.

Discussion

The objective of this research was to examine the predominant cultural orientation (individualism vs. collectivism) reflected in Chinese TV commercials to infer whether the Chinese culture is shifting from traditional collectivism to Western individualism. Drawing on the IND-COL framework, a measurement instrument was developed and applied in a content analysis of 523 TV commercials aired in 2003 in China nationwide and in select metropolises and provinces. The within-culture factors of advertised product origin and product type were explored to assess their impact on manifest IND and COL in Chinese TV commercials.

Results showed that in general, Chinese TV commercials reflected more COL than IND orientations. However, this was the case only in

TABLE 4

Means of Individualism Scale Scores and Collectivism Scale Scores by Product Type

Dependent Variables	Advertising Product Type: Personal Products	Shared Products	*F*
Collectivist Orientation	10.19	11.45	24.71**
Individualistic Orientation	7.67	5.64	180.49***

** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

commercials for local Chinese products, not in those for Western and non-Chinese East Asian products, both of which reflected similar levels of IND and COL orientations.

Results also confirmed that advertised product origin and product type influenced the manifestation of IND and COL orientations in Chinese TV commercials. Specifically, more IND orientations manifested in Western and non-Chinese East Asian than in Chinese product commercials, whereas more COL orientations manifested in Chinese than in Western and non-Chinese East Asian product commercials. The same pattern of difference was found when comparing personal and shared product commercials. In addition, the effect of advertised product origin was constant regardless of the type of product being advertised.

Implications. While most between-culture studies have found Chinese advertisements more collectivistic than their Western counterparts,[53] this study extends that knowledge into a within-culture context and demonstrates that the cultural content of Chinese TV commercials is more collectivistic than individualistic in and of itself. While prior research has generally reported a mix of manifest Eastern and Western cultural values in Chinese advertising,[54] this study specifies which of the two camps manifests more predominantly, with a focus on two of the most salient dimensions in cultural variation—individualism and collectivism. Future research may shift this focus to other dimensions such as human-nature relations, masculinity vs. femininity, time orientation, and communication style, all of which have been shown to vary in advertising from different cultures.[55] Extending the examination of these dimensions from cross- to within-culture contexts can yield new knowledge about the nuances and dynamics in the cultural content of advertising from a given society, especially those undergoing economic, social, or cultural changes.

The finding that the cultural content of Chinese advertising is more collectivistic than individualistic only in local but not in foreign product commercials shows that product origin matters. Its effect and that of product type were confirmed by comparisons of local and foreign product commercials, and personal and shared product commercials. From a research perspective, these results may help reconcile conflicting findings in existing research by offering alternative explanations. For example, the reason why there was an increase of Western and a decrease of Eastern values in Chinese award-winning ads may be because award-winning ads as a population were overrepresented by foreign product advertising in the early stages of Chinese advertising.[56] Equipped with more advanced production technologies and more sophisticated persuasion techniques, foreign product advertising may have had a competitive edge over local product advertising in winning contests, potentially tipping the scale of manifest values in award-winning ads toward Western individualism.

In a more recent study of Chinese TV and magazine ads, an IND rather than COL orientation was found to be predominant.[57] When comparing TV and magazine ads, more IND values manifested

in ads from lifestyle magazines, including the Chinese version of Western magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Elle*. An argument may be made that, compared to television, which targets the mass market and is also more of a family medium in China, lifestyle magazines target the niche market of urban and affluent consumers and are also more likely to be used by individuals rather than groups. As a result, they may carry more advertisements for foreign and personal products (an example might be L'Oreal's "you are worth it" skin care products campaign), causing the manifestation of more IND values in the overall sample of ads.

Taken as a whole, results from this and previous research underscore the necessity to take advertised product origin and type into account as crucial predictors or control variables when examining and comparing advertising's cultural content in future within- and cross-cultural research.

From a cultural perspective, the findings of this study support recent cross-cultural research that shows shrinking IND and COL differences between European Americans and non-Chinese East Asians, and persistent differences between European Americans and Chinese individuals.[58] By demonstrating that manifest IND and COL orientations were different when comparing Chinese with Western as well as non-Chinese East Asian product commercials, and similar when comparing the latter two, this study provides evidence from a media message standpoint that when it comes to IND and COL, the Chinese culture may be diverging from both the West and its East Asian neighbors, while the latter two may be converging. To obtain more direct evidence of this possibility, future research should gather samples of ads from individual societies directly and compare manifest values and orientations while controlling for the effects of advertised product origin and type. Still, the results of this study provide preliminary evidence that the long-assumed collectivist cultures of China, Japan, and Korea may not be so monolithic after all. Insofar as manifest IND and COL in ads do reflect and affect consumer values and preferences, international advertisers should adjust and localize creative strategy and execution techniques when designing campaigns for these markets.

Finally, although comparatively speaking local Chinese and foreign product commercials displayed differences in IND and COL orientations, such differences did not carry over when commercials of different product origin were examined separately. Despite the manifestation of more COL than IND orientations in local product commercials, the opposite was not found in foreign product commercials as might be expected. Instead, both Western and non-Chinese East Asian product commercials showed similar degrees of IND and COL orientations within themselves. Studies of Chinese advertising from the 1990s have pointed to the possibility that foreign advertising might serve a pace-setting role by promoting Western values.[59] This study from the early 2000s, however, shows that rather than leading local advertising toward the direction of Western individualism, global advertising may actually be moving closer to local advertising in its cultural content. To

fully test this possibility, longitudinal research should be conducted for both global and local advertising.

Limitations and Conclusions. This research assumes that manifest IND and COL in advertising content both reflects and affects consumer values and preferences, as evidenced by extant audience response research. Still, the assumption constitutes a "leap of logic" in attempting a causal link between culture at the macro-level and advertising content at the micro-level, potentially ignoring the many levels of mediating factors such as political and social environment, and press or media systems.[60] One way to remedy this limitation in future research is to incorporate consumer interpretation in content analyses, as suggested by Lerman and Callow,[61] to ascertain the linkage between manifest values in advertising content and those in its target population.

Methodologically, this study offers a measurement instrument of manifest IND and COL in advertising content. Preliminary evidence supports its content, face, and predictive validity. Although statistical adjustments were made to control for Type I error, the unequal sample sizes for different product origin categories as a result of natural occurrence in the sampling process may diminish the power of statistical tests. Future research may use the instrument in other media and cultural contexts while attempting to achieve equal variance among different groups of product origin.

The study asked whether Chinese TV commercials are showing more IND than COL orientations, signaling cultural transformation, Westernization, and erosion of traditional values.[62] The answer is a tentative no, as manifest collectivism was found to predominate over individualism in Chinese TV commercials. Moreover, much of the manifest individualism was attributable to foreign product commercials aired on Chinese TV.

If advertising content does reflect IND and COL values and orientations as shown by some audience response research, then the resurface of Confucian collectivism in the Chinese culture warrants more scholarly attention. After almost a century of cultural self-doubt and identity crises (from "Down with the Confucius and Sons!"[63] in the early twentieth century to a total demolition of Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s), China seems to be rediscovering and returning to its cultural tradition and roots.

This defies common expectations that a free market economy, rising living standards, expansion of the middle class, and unprecedented opening to the outside world (including the restricted but inevitable access gained through the Internet) should all lead to more challenges to traditional collectivism and acceptance of Western individualism.[64] Even the so-called "me-generation," a by-product of China's one-child policy, has shown strong collectivist tendencies, as evidenced by its responses to recent events surrounding the Sichuan earthquake and the Beijing Olympics.[65]

Culturally, is China treading a different path from its East Asian neighbors who have experienced similar economic take-off? How does one disentangle a possible top-down endeavor in encouraging a strong

sense of Chinese to help maintain legitimacy in governance, from a bottom-up movement as a backlash against escalating globalization? Will this reclaiming of traditional culture help propel China to more economic prosperity and in turn more liberalism in political and social arenas, or, as some have warned,[66] will it help authoritarianism grow more resilient to challenges? These questions are beyond the scope of this research but worth further investigation.

Appendixes and Notes follow.

APPENDIX 1

Product Type (Personal and Shared Products)

Personal Product	Shared Product
Women's Sanitary Product	Liquor and Wine
Cosmetics	Soft Drink
Skin Care Product	Coffee/Tea
Hair Care Product	Grocery and Food
Lingerie	Baby Product
Gift Wrap	Laundry Product
Perfume	Medicine
Watch	Financial Service
Electric Shaver	Washer/Dryer
Personal Copier/Typewriter	Refrigerator/Kitchen Appliance
Jewelry	Battery
Fashion or Sports Apparel	Camera/Telephone
Jeans	TV/VCR/DVD
Credit Card	Computer Hardware/Software
Sunglasses	Automobile and Service
Book	Travel Service
Cell Phone	Home Furnishing
Weight Loss Product	Industrial Product
Toothbrush and Whitener	Communication Service

Note: Adopted from Han and Shavitt, "Persuasion and Culture"; and Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."

APPENDIX 2

Measurement Instrument of Manifest Individualism and Collectivism in Advertising

Cultural Orientations	Advertising Value and Appeals	Operational Definitions
Individualistic Self-concept	Competition [b, c, f] (r = .699**)	Competitiveness, superiority over others, explicit (by mentioning competing brand or product) or implicit comparison. e.g., "No. 1," "front-runner," "leader," "outstanding," "compare us with X," "most (more) effective," "we set an example for the industry," "get ahead of others." Portrayal of side-by-side comparison. Reference to competitive situations such as contests.
Individualistic Self-concept	Independence [a, e, f] (r = .729**)	Self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-decision or choice. e.g., "judge by yourself," "do it yourself," "make your own choice," "it's all up to you," "X, the product you want." Portrayal of consumers making choices, purchasing, using, or enjoying the product alone.
Individualistic Self-concept	Non-conformity [a, b, c, e, f, h] (r = .743**)	Individuality, originality, distinctiveness, disregard for social norms and conventions, boldness, wildness, impulsive risk-taking, carefree spirit. e.g., "be different," "a style of your own," "setting the trend," "I want what I like," "a free me," "break free from the rules," "go wild with X," "follow your heart." Portrayal of character(s) standing out or being different from the crowd.
Individualistic Self-concept	Pride [a, b] (r = .837**)	Self-confidence, self-esteem, self-enhancement, security. e.g., "be proud of yourself," "you deserve it," "you can do anything."
Collectivistic Self-concept	Conformity [a, b, d, e, f, h] (r = .733**)	Group consensus, adherence to social norms and conventions, having social manners and grace, observation of social rituals. e.g., "do what everyone else does," "follow the style of the season," "be part of the trend," "do it the conventional way," "we all like X," "consumer survey recommends X." Portrayal of characters seeking or giving advice or approval, fitting in or being liked by the group.

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Collectivistic Self-concept	Interdependence [a-g] (r = .737**)	Filial piety (showing love, respect, deference, offering support or gifts to parents), intimate relationships, family integrity, in-group affiliation, belongingness, reciprocity. e.g., "take care of your family," "share with your friends," "family reunion." Portrayal of consumers making choices, purchasing, using, or enjoying the product with family or the in-group. Portrayal of being integral parts of family or in-group. Reference to significant others.
Collectivistic Self-concept	Popularity [a, c, e] (r = .738**)	Universal recognition, wide acceptance. e.g., "nation's best seller," "world renowned," "X is in right now," "enjoying a good name for four hundred years." Depiction of wide usage.
Collectivistic Relationality	Courtesy [a, c, d] (r = .762**)	Modesty, politeness, humility, self-effacement, other-enhancement. e.g., "we are at your service," "devoted to serving you," "helping unobtrusively." Portrayal of bowing, greeting, or using polished language (e.g., the respectful You in Chinese; please use our product, etc.)
Collectivistic Relationality	Harmony [b, d, e, f] (r = .898**)	Solidarity, non-competitiveness, unity, cooperation, tolerance. e.g., "celebrating 20 years' partnership," "the four shores, one big family," "solidarity is power," "connecting people," "we care about our customers," "work together for a better future." Portrayal of characters being together harmoniously and enjoying one another's company.
Collectivistic Relationality	Nurturance [a, c, d] (r = .753**)	Kindness, compassion, benevolence, and sympathy. Giving charity, support, help, protection, and care to the weak, disabled, young, elderly, and/or poor.
Collectivistic Relationality	Veneration for the elderly [a, c, f, g, h] (r = .724**)	Respect for elderly and the associated wisdom, experience, and maturity. e.g., "wisdom comes with age," "the grace of maturity." Portrayal of older models as main char-

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		acters or giving opinions, advice, and recommendations.
Individualistic Emotion	Ego-focused emotions [a, b, c, e, f, g, i] (r = .758**)	Emphasis on hedonist pleasure, enjoyment, thrill, passion, fun, and happiness of the self. e.g., "wild with joy," "two folds of enjoyment."
Collectivistic Emotion	Other-focused emotions [b, d, e, i] (r = .739**)	Emphasis on empathy, gratitude, affection, shame, guilt, embarrassment, being touched, moved or hurt, and happiness of others. e.g., "happiness of the whole family," "Mom's love—baby's happiness."
Individualistic Motivation	Self-oriented Motivations [b, e, f] (r = .766**)	References to personal needs, goals, preferences, ambitions, achievements, self-improvement, and realization. Emphasis on product benefits to the self or individual. e.g., "X is good for your skin," "satisfy your unique needs," "develop your potential," "accomplish yourself."
Collectivistic Motivation	Group-oriented Motivations [b, c, e, f] (r = .718**)	References to group or others' needs, interests, preferences, goals, welfare, and accomplishments. Emphasis on product benefits to others or the group. e.g., "X is perfect for the whole family," "prosperity for all of us."

[a] Adapted from Pollay, "Measuring Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising."
[b] Adapted from Han and Shavitt, "Persuasion and Culture."
[c] Adapted from Cheng and Schweitzer, "Cultural Values reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials."
[d] Adapted from the Chinese Culture Connection, "Chinese Values and the Search for Culture-free Dimensions of Culture."
[e] Adapted from Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."
[f] Adapted from Cho et al., "Cultural Values Reflected in Theme and Execution."
[g] Adapted from Zhang and Harwood, "Modernization and Tradition in an Age of Globalization."
[h] Adapted from Mueller, "Reflections of Culture."
[i] Adapted from Aaker and Maheswaran, "The Effect of Cultural Orientation on Persuasion."

** Correlation (covariance of coder ratings) is significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .01$, 2-tailed).

NOTES

1. Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980); Harry C. Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

2. Daphna Oyserman, Heather M. Coon, and Markus Kemmelmeier, "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism: Evaluation of Theoretical Assumptions and Meta-Analyses," *Psychological Bulletin* 128 (spring 2002): 3-4, 5.

3. Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism," 3; Uichol Kim, Harry C. Triandis, Cigdem Kagitcibasi, Sang-Ching Choi, and Gene Yoon, eds., *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method, and Applications* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994).

4. Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism*, 82.

5. Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism," 3-72. Also see David Matsumoto, "Culture and Self: An Empirical Assessment of Markus and Kitayama's Theory of Independent and Interdependent Self-construals," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 2 (summer 1999): 289-310, and Yohtaro Takano and Eiko Osaka, "An Unsupported Common View: Comparing Japan and US on Individualism/Collectivism," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 2 (summer 1999): 311-41, both of which provided meta-analytical results showing no difference between Japanese and Americans in IND.

6. Simon Elegant, "China's Me Generation," *Time*, July 26, 2007; see http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1647228,00.html

7. Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism*, 139-43.

8. See, for example, Hong Cheng and John C. Schweitzer, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials," *Journal of Advertising Research* 36 (May/June 1996): 27-45; Bongjin Cho, Up Kwon, James W. Gentry, Sunkyu Jun, and Fredric Kropp, "Cultural Values Reflected in Theme and Execution: A Comparative Study of U.S. and Korean Television Commercials," *Journal of Advertising* 28 (winter 1999): 59-73; Katherine T. Frith and David Wesson, "A Comparison of Cultural Values in British and American Print Advertising: A Study of Magazines," *Journalism Quarterly* 68 (spring 1991): 216-23; Morris Kalliny and Lance Gentry, "Cultural Values Reflected in Arab and American Television Advertising," *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising* 29 (spring 2007): 15-32; Young Sook Moon and Kara Chan, "Advertising Appeals and Cultural Values in Television Commercials: A Comparison of Hong Kong and Korea," *International Marketing Review* 22 (spring 2005): 48-67; Richard W. Pollay, "Measuring Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising," *Current Issues & Research in Advertising* 1 (spring 1983): 71-92; Subir Sengupta and Katherine T. Frith, "Multinational Corporation Advertising and Cultural Imperialism: A Content Analysis of Indian Television Commercials," *Asian Journal of Communication* 7 (spring 1997): 1-18.

9. Dana L. Alden, Wayne D. Hoyer, and Chol Lee, "Identifying Global and Culture-specific Dimensions of Humor in Advertising: A

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11. See, for example, Barbara Mueller, "Reflections of Culture: An Analysis of Japanese and American Advertising Appeals," *Journal of Advertising Research* 37 (June/July 1987): 51-59; Hye-jin Paek, Michelle R. Nelson, and Douglas M. McLeod, "Beyond Polarized Cultural Values: A New Approach to the Study of South Korean and US Newspaper Advertisements," *Advances in Consumer Research* 31 (2004): 495-502; Jing Zhang and Sharon Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation: Promoting Modernity and Individualism," *Journal of Advertising* 32 (spring 2003): 23-33.

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14. Michael H. Bond, *The Psychology of the Chinese People* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1986); Markus and Kitayama, "Culture and the Self"; Shalom H. Schwartz, "Individualism-collectivism: Critique and Proposed Refinements," *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology* 21 (June 1990): 139-57.

15. Aaker and Maheswaran, "The Effect of Cultural Orientation on Persuasion"; Markus and Kitayama, "Culture and the Self"; David Matsumoto, "Cultural Differences in the Perception of Emotion," *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology* 20 (March 1989): 92-105.

16. Pollay, "Measuring Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising."

17. Richard W. Pollay and Katherine Gallagher, "Advertising and Cultural Values: Reflections in the Distorted Mirror," *International Journal of Advertising* 9 (winter 1990): 359-72.

18. Unlike most other manifest cultural values in ads which are only assumed to reflect audience values by extant content analyses of advertising, IND and COL have received empirical support from audience response research for their relatively more accurate reflection of consumer values, preferences, and attitudes. This line of research has covered a variety of within- and cross-cultural contexts and accumulated a convincing body of evidence, including those from Mexico (Gregory and Munch, "Cultural Values in International Advertising), comparison of Korean and American ads and respondents (Han and Shavitt, "Persuasion and Culture"), and comparisons of Chinese and American ads and respondents (Wang et al., "Alternative Modes of Self-Construal"; Zhang and Gelb, "Matching Advertising Appeals to Culture"), among other work.

19. Cheng and Schweitzer, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials"; Ji and McNeal, "How Chinese Children's Commercials Differ From Those of the United States"; Mueller, "Reflections of Culture"; Pollay, "Measuring Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising."

20. Hong Cheng, "Reflections of Cultural Values: A Content Analysis of Chinese Magazine Advertisements from 1982 and 1992," *International Journal of Advertising* 13 (summer 1994): 167-83; Cho et al., "Cultural Values Reflected in Theme and Execution"; Mueller, "Reflections of Culture"; Paek, Nelson, and McLeod, "Beyond Polarized Cultural Values"; Ying B. Zhang and Jake Harwood, "Modernization and Tradition in an Age of Globalization: Cultural Values in Chinese Television Advertising," *Journal of Communication* 54 (March 2004): 156-72.

21. Cho et al., "Cultural Values Reflected in Theme and Execution"; Han and Shavitt, "Persuasion and Culture."

22. Cheng and Schweitzer, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials"; Ji and McNeal, "How Chinese Children's Commercials Differ From Those of the United States"; Kalliny and Gentry, "Cultural Values Reflected in Arab and American Television Advertising."

23. Mueller, "Reflections of Culture."

24. Paek, Nelson, and McLeod, "Beyond Polarized Cultural Values."

25. Cho et al., "Cultural Values Reflected in Theme and Execution."

26. Paek, Nelson, and McLeod, "Beyond Polarized Cultural Values."

27. See, for example, Cheng and Schweitzer, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials"; Ji and McNeal, "How Chinese Children's Commercials Differ From Those of the United States"; Lin, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and American Television Advertising."

28. Cheng, "Reflections of Cultural Values."

29. Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."

30. Bryce T. McIntyre and Ran Wei, "Value Changes in Chinese Advertisements from 1979 to 1995: A Longitudinal Study," *Asian Journal of Communication* 8 (summer 1998): 18-40.

31. Hong Cheng, "Toward an Understanding of Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising: A Content Analysis of Chinese Television Commercials in 1990 and 1995," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 74 (winter 1997): 773-96.

32. Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism."

33. Cheng and Schweitzer, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials"; Cheng, "Toward an Understanding of Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising."

34. Sengupta and Frith, "Multinational Corporation Advertising and Cultural Imperialism."

35. Zhang and Harwood, "Modernization and Tradition in an Age of Globalization."

36. Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."

37. Han and Shavitt, "Persuasion and Culture"; Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."

38. "2007 Survey of Chinese TV Viewers," *Sohu News*, December 19, 2007, see http://news.sohu.com/20071219/n254176971.shtml.

39. "2007 Survey of Chinese TV Viewers."

40. Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."

41. These are all state-owned networks funded by both government subsidies and advertising revenues.

42. 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

43. For example, commercials aired during a traditional Chinese holiday such as the Chongyang Festival in September may emphasize the collectivistic value of respect for the elderly. On the other hand, commercials aired on a Western holiday such as Christmas may extol Western individualistic values.

44. A sample used for training was taped from CCTV1 and BTV1 in February 2001 using the same method.

45. These two steps combined constituted an attempt to achieve content validity, that is, the extent to which measures reflect the full domains of the concepts being measured. See Kimberly A. Neuendorf,

The Content Analysis Guidebook (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 116.

46. In this study, three individuals, two American males and one Chinese female, independently reviewed the instrument and indicated what constructs were being measured. All three individuals correctly identified the constructs as manifest individualism and collectivism, confirming face validity. See Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, 115.

47. Pollay, "Measuring Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising," 85.

48. Averaged means were used because the number of items on the two scales was different (CS: nine items; IS: five items).

49. To take into account the unequal cell sizes, all between-subjects ANOVA tests used the model based on Type I sum of square.

50. To control for Type I error, all pair-wise comparisons following the between-subjects ANOVA tests used the Dunnet's C procedure which does not assume equal variance.

51. This ANOVA also used the model based on Type I sums of squares.

52. Dunnet's C procedure was also used here.

53. See, for example, Ji and McNeal, "How Chinese Children's Commercials Differ From Those of the United States"; Lin, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and American Television Advertising."

54. See, for example, Cheng, "Toward an Understanding of Cultural Values Manifest in Advertising"; McIntyre and Wei, "Value Changes in Chinese Advertisements from 1979 to 1995"; Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."

55. Cho et al., "Cultural Values Reflected in Theme and Execution"; Kalliny and Gentry, "Cultural Values Reflected in Arab and American Television Advertising."

56. See McIntyre and Wei, "Value Changes in Chinese Advertisements from 1979 to 1995."

57. See Zhang and Shavitt, "Cultural Values in Advertisements to the Chinese X-Generation."

58. Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism."

59. See Cheng and Schweitzer, "Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials."

60. Tsan-Kuo Chang, Jisu Huh, Kristine McKinney, Sela Sar, Wei Wei, and Adina Schneeweis, "Culture and its Influence on Advertising? Misguided Framework, Inadequate Comparative Design and Dubious Knowledge Claim," *International Communication Gazette* (forthcoming).

61. Dawn Lerman and Michael Callow, "Content Analysis in Cross-cultural Advertising Research: Insightful or Superficial?" *International Journal of Advertising* 23 (winter 2004): 507-21.

62. Zhongdang Pan, Steven H. Chaffee, Godwin C. Chu, and Yanan Ju, *To See Ourselves: Comparing Traditional Chinese And American Cultural Values* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994).

63. This is a popular slogan used by student demonstrators during the May 4th Patriotic Movement in China in 1919, which marked the beginning of China's quest for modernization and national dignity. See

Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1999).

64. Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism*, 82.

65. Evan Osnos, "Angry Youth: The New Generation's Neocon Nationalists," *New Yorker*, July 28, 2008, see http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/07/28/080728fa_fact_osnos.

66. David Brooks, "Harmony and the Dream," *New York Times*, August 12, 2008, see http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/12/opinion/12brooks.html.