

Previous research has shown that there are cross-cultural differences in the levels of zero-sum thought expressed in both children and adults. Zero-sum thought refers to the tendency to see the world in win-lose terms; a person can only win if another person loses. According to past research, higher levels of zero-sum thought have been found in individuals from individualist cultures than in individuals from collectivist cultures. The current research attempts to investigate whether exposure to cultural narratives that stress uniqueness and autonomy could be one of the underlying mechanisms driving cross-cultural differences in zero-sum thought in preschoolers. In order to look at this question, bestselling children's books from the U.S. and China will be chosen and content analyses will be performed on these texts. We will look at two main variables within the texts – Social Engagement and Autonomous Orientation – using an adaptation of a coding scheme developed by Wang and Leichtman (2000). The coding scheme for Social Engagement looks at stress on interpersonal relationships that appears in the texts while the coding scheme for Autonomous Orientation looks at the emphasis that is placed on the uniqueness of the protagonist and the individual within the narrative. We hypothesize that the American children's books will show higher levels of Autonomous Orientation while the Chinese books will show higher levels of Social Engagement.