

Parenting Cultural Models of a Group of Mothers from Rio de Janeiro

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Developmental contexts have been studied in terms of systems of beliefs and practices, treated as part of general cultural models. This paper aims to describe aspects of parenting cultural models of a group of 200 primiparous Brazilian mothers from Rio de Janeiro, who had children less than 44 months old. Mothers answered the Socialization Goals Interview (SGI), and an adapted version of an inventory of beliefs about practices of care, developed by M. Suizzo. Answers to the SGI were coded in five categories and their subcategories: Self-maximization (SM), Self-control (SC), Lovingness (L), Proper demeanor (PD) and Decency (D), and scores in each of them were calculated. A factor analysis indicated three dimensions of mothers' beliefs about practices: Awakening and exposing the child to diverse stimuli (Stimulation), ensuring the Proper presentation of the child and Responding to and bonding to the child. Data was further analyzed in terms of subcategories of SM and D and of the relation to the factors mothers' educational level and sex of their child. Results showed that mothers from Rio de Janeiro share a cultural model of autonomy for their children, but that they also believe in the importance of their relationship to others.

Keywords: parenting cultural models, beliefs and practices, autonomy, interdependence.

Se han estudiado contextos evolutivos en términos de sistemas de creencias y prácticas, tratados como parte de los modelos culturales generales. El objetivo de este trabajo es describir algunos aspectos de los modelos culturales de crianza en un grupo de madres brasileñas de Río de Janeiro, con niños menores de 44 meses de edad. Las madres completaron la Socialization Goals Interview (SGI) y una versión adaptada de un inventario de creencias sobre las prácticas de cuidados, desarrollado por M. Suizzo. Se codificaron las respuestas al SGI en cinco categorías y sus subcategorías: Auto-maximización (SM), Autocontrol (SC), Amorosidad (L), Comportamiento apropiado (PD) y Decencia (D) y se calcularon puntuaciones de cada una. Un análisis factorial reveló tres dimensiones de las creencias de las madres sobre las prácticas de: Despertar y exponer al niño a diversos estímulos (Estimulación), asegurando la adecuada presentación del niño y respondiendo a y estableciendo un vínculo con el niño. Además se analizaron los datos en términos de SM y de D y de la relación con los factores Nivel educacional de la madre y Sexo del niño. Los resultados mostraron que las madres de Río de Janeiro comparten un modelo cultural de autonomía para sus niños, pero que también creen en la importancia de sus relaciones con los demás.

Palabras clave: modelos culturales de crianza, creencias y prácticas, autonomía, interdependencia.

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This paper aims to describe aspects of parenting cultural models of Brazilian mothers from Rio de Janeiro. Data on Brazilian social-cultural contexts of development is still scarce, although efforts have been made in the direction of fulfilling this gap (i.e. Lordelo, Fonseca & Araújo, 2000; Seidl-de-Moura, Lordelo, Vieira, Piccinnini, Siqueira, Magalhães et al., 2008, Vieira, Seidl-de-Moura, Lordelo, Piccinnini, Martins, Macarini et al., submitted).

Human development is considered a biological-cultural process (Cole, 1998; Keller, 2007). Without overlooking the evolutionary aspects, contemporary research focuses on the influence of socio-cultural conditions in development (Cole, 1998; Harkness, Super, Axia, Palacios & Welles-Nyström, 2001; Harkness & Super, 2005; Harkness, Super, Moscardino, Rha, Blom, Huitrón et al., 2007; Keller, 2007). The importance of understanding the variety of contexts in which development is constituted in different cultures is pointed out in several studies (i.e. Dasen & Mishra, 2000).

Developmental contexts have been studied in terms of systems of beliefs and practices, treated as part of general cultural models, or “developmental niches” (Harkness & Super, 1996). These niches are organized systems of beliefs shared by members of a cultural group, generally implicit, taken for granted, related to childrearing practices (Cole, 1998; Harkness et al., 2001; Suizzo, 2002). Both parenting practices of childcare and systems of parenting beliefs are constitutive subsystems of children’s developmental niches. No behavior or practice can be determined or explained only by a specific set of beliefs. Keller, Demuth & Yovsi (2008) consider beliefs as “motivational forces for action”, and point out that behaviors can change faster than beliefs. For this reason, studies on development in context need to consider both aspects.

The literature has been describing and studying the impact on socialization processes and children’s construction of the self of different cultural models: independent or individualistic, interdependent or sociocentric, and autonomous-relational. Each of these models has been identified as characteristic of a group of environments or societies, although a lot of internal variation in those groups is expected (Keller, Lamm, Abels, Yovsi, Borke, Jensen et al., 2006). The independent model has been associated to parents with high levels of education, from pos-industrial societies (Keller, Hentschel, Yovsi, Lamm, Abels & Haas, 2004; Keller, Borke, Yovsi, Lohaus, & Jensen, 2005), and emphasizes the construction of the self as unique and distinct, with individual goals, valuing personal needs and rights. In the interdependent or sociocentric model, the self is constructed as basically connected to other members of the group to which the individual belongs. It is seen as characteristic of parents from rural environments, based on a subsistence economy (Keller et al. 2004; Keller et al, 2005). Finally, the autonomous-relational model has been attributed to groups of parents from urban educated middle-class families in traditionally interdependent societies

(Kagitçibasi 1996, 2005). According to it, the self is autonomous in relation to agency, and relational in terms of the interpersonal proximity. These three cultural orientations represent culturally idealized priorities; other types of orientations or combinations amongst them may also occur (Keller, Demuth & Yovsi, 2008).

Recent studies suggest the presence of different parental beliefs systems across Brazilian contexts, and the influence of the samples’ socio-demographic characteristics in some sets of beliefs (i.e. Lordelo, Fonseca & Araujo, 2000; Piovanotti, 2007; Ruela, 2006; Seidl-de Moura, Ribas, Piccinnini, Bastos, Magalhães, Vieira et al., 2004; Seidl-de-Moura, Lordelo et al., 2008). Changes in childrearing parental beliefs across time have also been described, as products of societal and historical factors (Biasoli-Alves, 1997; Dessen & Torres, 2002). Biasoli-Alves (1997, 2002) describes changes in Brazilian parents’ beliefs about children’s socialization practices at the end of last century, including the valorization of autonomy and the provision of a stimulating environment to children. Stimulation seems to be associated to the belief in the importance of children’s free expression. The idea is that children’s freedom is fundamental for a healthy life and the full development of their potential. Mothers’ discourse during the 70’s and 80’s revealed worries about giving affection and understanding to their children. After that, a great importance started to be given to independence and autonomy. Furthermore, the author considers that parents’ socialization goals in recent years are not much different for boys and girls, and are directed to the development of an adult who is independent, autonomous, competitive, and able to succeed professionally.

Along the same lines, Rocha-Coutinho (2005, 2007), in her studies on Brazilian professional women’s maternity, has observed that, although gender differences still persist, women are educated now in the same way as men regarding their careers. They are led to believe in their capacities and to strive for personal and professional success (in school and in the job market), to compete, to grow professionally, and to value their financial independence. However, the author observed that women are also educated to be their families’ emotional support, as wives and mothers. Early socialization practices continue to promote the development of characteristics important to perform the roles of wife and mother. Although girls are encouraged to succeed in school and to prepare themselves for the job market, it is expected that they later become mothers. Women’s role of mothers can be important in promoting changes in the family. As pointed out by Aizpurúa, Jablonsky and Feres-Carneiro (2007), women are searching for more satisfying and equalitarian affective relationships, and have had significant advances in their education and conquest of the job market. The authors claim that “Curiously we can see that women are changing from housewives (“dueñas de casa”) to promoters (“dueñas”) of contemporary social changes” (p. 195).

These identified trends may be reflected on mothers' expressed socialization goals for their children, conceptualized as desirable childrearing outcomes and valued patterns of adult competence. A study with 350 primiparous Brazilian mothers, from the five geographic regions of the country, aimed to investigate their socialization goals (Seidl-de-Moura, et al., 2008). The Socialization Goals Interview (SGI), adapted from Harwood (1992) was used. The answers were coded in five categories: Self-maximization, Self-control, Lovingness, Proper Demeanor, and Decency. The results showed that Brazilian mothers gave more emphasis to Self-maximization and Proper Demeanor than to the other categories, presenting a pattern that fosters the development of children's autonomous-relational selves. Intracultural variation was found regarding the different cities studied, and the three different cultural models described in the literature were identified, indicating that there is not homogeneity in Brazilian mothers' socialization goals. GLM results showed main effects of both city size and mothers' educational level on their socialization goals. A sample of mothers from Rio de Janeiro (the largest city from the seven studied) participated in this study. The results indicated that mothers in Rio de Janeiro valued most goals of Self-maximization (fostering independence and autonomy).

In a different study, Vieira et al. (submitted) aimed to identify dimensions of beliefs about practices expressed by a group of 350 Brazilian mothers. The participants answered an inventory on their beliefs and ideas about practices of care of 0 to 3 years-old children, originally developed by Suizzo (2002), and a socio-demographic questionnaire. The results indicated three dimensions in mothers' beliefs: "Stimulation", which refers to the importance attributed by mothers to practices aimed to stimulate their children's development; "Proper presentation", which refers to the importance mothers attribute to parental practices oriented by socially accepted daily rules, and "Responsivity", related to the importance attributed by mothers to the immediate responses to children's needs and to a bond of intense proximity and protection. The group studied valued most "Proper presentation", followed by "Stimulation". Less importance was attributed to "Responsiveness and bonding". Mothers' educational level was a predictor of scores in "Stimulation", and fathers' educational level was a predictor of scores in "Proper presentation".

A study on mother-infant interactions (Seidl-de-Moura, Ribas, Seabra, Pessoa, Nogueira, Mendes et al., 2008) with dyads from Rio de Janeiro brings some evidences about practices. Analyzing characteristics of interactional instances observed in two groups of dyads ($N = 56$), the authors reported the prevalence of face-to-face interactions when the babies were one-month old, and of object stimulation when the babies were five-month old. These results are discussed in terms of the parental systems proposed by Keller (2007). The pattern observed is characteristic of a socialization trajectory that emphasizes the development

of autonomy and independence, in contrast to a trajectory in which body contact and body stimulation are prevalent.

Rio de Janeiro is a cosmopolitan city; it was the country's capital for two centuries (until the 1960's), and receives migrants from several states, especially from the northeast of the country. It is the second largest city of Brazil (with a population of 6.094.183 inhabitants, an IDH of .842, and the GNP per capita of 5.114). Besides the studies mentioned above, no investigations on cultural models of Rio de Janeiro's mothers have been identified in the literature. Both Seidl-de-Moura et al. and Vieira et al's studies included a group of mothers from this city. The results reported indicate some aspects of these mothers' parenting cultural models. They seem to value goals of autonomy and "Self-maximization", although they also hold sociocentric goals. They attribute importance to stimulating children up to three years of age. Finally, in interaction with their babies, mothers from Rio de Janeiro present a pattern characteristic of a cultural model of autonomy and independence (Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2008).

The present study aims to bring further evidence on Brazilian mothers' cultural models, focusing on a larger group of mothers from Rio de Janeiro, and two kinds of beliefs: socialization goals, which involve long-term end goals, and beliefs about the importance of specific practices of care. Based on the studies reported above, it is hypothesized that a model that values autonomy and independence will be identified in the mothers' answers. Self-maximization will probably be the most valued socialization goal, and practices that focus on stimulating the child will be emphasized. Considering previous evidence that mothers' educational level is related to parental knowledge about child development, as well as a relevant variable in the developmental niche (Goodnow, 1988; Miller, Manhal & Mee, 1991; Ribas, Seidl de Moura & Bornstein, 2003; Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2004), we expect to find effects of this variable in the beliefs studied. Although Biasoli-Alves (1997, 2002) indicates tendencies towards more equality in the socialization of boys and girls, based on the observations of Rocha-Coutinho (2005, 2007), we do expect some differences associated with the child's gender. We also aim to explore in more detail mothers' socialization beliefs, searching for specific patterns of the autonomy model (Ciftlak, Leyendecker, Scholmerich, Driessen & Harwood, 2008).

Method

Participants

Primiparous mothers ($N = 200$) from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 16 to 43 years-old ($M = 26.68$, $SD = 6.18$) participated in the study. Most of them (72.5%) had between 21 and 35 years old (18.5% had from 16 to 20 years; 9% were older than 35 years). Their children were 51% girls and 49% boys, aged from less than one to 42 months (M

= 16.2mo, $SD = 11.5$ mo). There is no significant correlation between the age of the mother and the age of the child.

The women who participated lived in different neighborhoods of the city. Most of them lived with the baby's father at the time of the study (83%), and their families were nuclear (mother, father and child).

Mothers were recruited through different sources: daycare centers, nursery schools, pediatrician offices, and acquaintances of the researchers. Participants were also asked to indicate other families they knew ('snowball technique') to take part in the study. They were invited to participate in a study on parental ideas about childrearing.

Instruments

Socialization Goals Interview (SGI)

To provide information about the long-term socialization goals for their children, an abbreviated version of the SGI was administered to the mothers. The SGI was developed by Harwood (1992) and adopted in several studies (Harwood, Schölmerich, Ventura-Cook; Schulze & Wilson, 1996; Harwood, Schölmerich, Schulze & Gonzales, 1999; Leyendecker, Harwood, Lamb, & Sholmerich, 2002; Miller & Harwood, 2001). It is individually administered and includes originally four questions, asking the parents to describe qualities they (1) would like and (2) would not like their children to possess as adults, and to describe toddlers they know who show indications of these (3) positive and (4) negative qualities.

Previous studies (Harwood et al., 1999) indicated that the first two questions were the most informative. We chose to administer only the first question of the instrument, since results from preliminary investigations in Brazil (Ruela, 2006) showed that the second question produced similar results among mothers from different socioeconomic status, and it did not contribute to discriminate these groups. Thus, the open ended question made to all participants was: "What qualities would you like your child to possess as an adult?" Following their answers, a probing question was introduced: "What else would you like for you child?"

A coding manual prepared for a previous study and based on information from R. Harwood (2006) was used. Mothers' responses were coded in terms of individual word and phrase descriptors into the mutually exclusive categories and subcategories based on Leyendecker et al. (2002) and Citlak et al. (2008): (1) *Self-maximization* – concern that the child becomes self-confident and independent, and fully develops his/her talents as individuals. These category includes three subcategories: a) Feeling good about oneself, b) Personal and economic potentials, and c) Psychological independence; (2) *Self-control* – concern that the child learn to control negative impulses towards greed, aggression, and egocentrism; (3) *Lovingness* - concern that the child develops the capacity for emotional intimacy, such as being loving,

generous, sensitive, understanding, and affectionate. This category includes two subcategories: a) Close and loving relationships with family, and b) Warmth toward others; (4) *Proper Demeanor* – concern that the child presents appropriate behavior in order to be part of or getting along with a larger group. This category is divided into: a) Respectful, and b) Family obligations; (5) *Decency* – concern with the development of personal standards of behavior, avoidance of illicit behavior and personal integrity. This category is separated in a) Avoidance of illicit behavior, and b) Personal integrity and religious values. The categories "Self-maximization" and "Self-control" are related to goals of autonomy and independence. Proper Demeanor and Decency reflect sociocentric goals (Harwood et al., 1999). Reliability ranged from .80 to .95 (Cohen's kappa).

For each mother in the sample, the fluency or total number of descriptors - words (e.g. "independent") or phrase ("a good mother") - in their answers was calculated. For example, if the mother said: "That he is a just person, humble and that he has a 'good heart'", we counted three descriptors. The number and proportion of descriptors in each category (Self-maximization, Self-control, Lovingness, Proper Demeanor and Decency) and subcategory related to fluency was also calculated, and used in the following analyses.

Beliefs and ideas about practices of care for infants and young children

An adapted version (Vieira et al., submitted) of the instrument developed by Suizzo (2002), "*Croyances et idées sur les Nourrissons et Petits Enfants (CINPE)*" with 27 items was used. The original instrument has 50 items, 25 related to babies less than one-year old and 25 items related to infants between one and three years-old. For each item, the mother is asked to rate the level of importance attributed to the practice using a 6-point Likert scale (0 = disagree, 1 = without importance, 2 = of little importance, 3 = of average importance, 4 = very important, 5 = extremely important). She is asked to answer according to what she thinks, and not what she does with her child. The adaptation process is reported in Vieira et al. (submitted), and it was conducted by a group of authors from different Brazilian cities, taking into account regional expressions and customs.

Suizzo (2002) conducted a factor analysis in the 50 original items and initially proposed four dimensions, which can be related to different domains: 1) Awakening and exposing the child to diverse stimuli; 2) Ensuring the Proper presentation of the child; 3) Responding to and bonding to the child; and 4) Toughening the child through harsh control. This last component had a low reliability, and was discarded by the author.

In the present study, the results of the factor analysis conducted by Vieira and his colleagues were used (Vieira et al., submitted). As mentioned, those authors conducted

a study with 350 Brazilian primiparous mothers from seven cities, all states' capitals from all the country's geographical regions. Using a Main-Components factorial analysis of the 50 items of the scale, the authors' three criteria were used to decide on the number of factors (Dancey & Reidy, 2006; Suizzo, 2002): *eigenvalue* greater than 1; the Catell's Scree plot test, and the theoretical interpretation. Five of the identified factors were suggested by the Scree plot test as the ones that significantly explained the variance, and three of them presented significant theoretical dimensions. A Varimax rotation with principal axis factoring was performed, because correlation between the factors was not high. Items with factorial loadings equal or higher than .3, and related to only one factor were selected (Dancey & Reidy, 2006), leading to the exclusion of 17 of the 50 original items. Another Varimax rotation was performed using the 33 remaining items, to ensure less interference of the excluded items in the internal consistency of the factors. Finally, means and internal consistency (Cronbach's Alphas) of the items grouped in the same factor were calculated and the final set of 27 items was selected.

The three identified factors were considered in the present study. The first one - "Stimulation" - is composed by 12 items ($\alpha = .70$), and refers to the importance attributed by mothers to practices that stimulate their children's development in the physical, cognitive, affective and social realms. The second factor, named "Ensuring the proper presentation of the child" (Proper presentation), is composed by 10 items ($\alpha = .70$), and refers to the importance mothers attribute to parental practices oriented by socially accepted daily rules, such as good behavior and cleanliness. The third factor, "Responsiveness and bonding", includes five items that refer to attending the child's needs ($\alpha = .60$).

Socio-demographic questionnaire

This questionnaire aimed to obtain socio-demographic information about the mothers, including their educational level. This variable was selected for analysis, and three levels were considered: (1) Incomplete and elementary school and incomplete secondary school; (2) Complete secondary school and incomplete university education, and (3) Complete university undergraduate level and graduate school. Mothers' educational level in the present sample varied from incomplete elementary school (1) to complete graduate studies (3): 23% of the mothers had up to incomplete secondary education; 43.5% of them had a complete secondary education or incomplete university education, and 33.5% of them had a complete undergraduate level or graduate level education.

Data Collection

Participants were interviewed individually by trained members of the research team at a convenient place and

time for them. Mothers answered the *Socialization Goals Interview* (SGI), the *Beliefs and ideas about practices of care for infants and young children questionnaire*, and the *Socio-demographic questionnaire*. Interviews were audio-taped with the mothers' authorization and transcribed verbatim for further analyses.

Data Analysis

Mean scores on the different categories and subcategories of the SGI were compared. Univariate analyses of variance were conducted with the scores of some of the subcategories as dependent variables and mothers' educational level and sex of their babies as factors. Correlation analysis of scores on the different categories and mother's and children's age were also calculated.

Regarding the analysis of the inventory on beliefs about practices, scores on the three factors (Stimulation, Proper presentation and Responsivity and bonding) were used as dependent variables in other analyses. Means and standard deviations for each of the factor were calculated to examine the importance attributed to the practices reflected in these factors. Correlation analysis of scores on the two variables was used to decide if Multivariate General Linear Model could be used to test some of the hypotheses of the study related to the factors that explain differences in the dependent variables. Since not all the Pearson correlations were significant, a univariate analysis was performed for each of the variables (Stimulation, Proper presentation and Responsivity and bonding). Paired samples *t* test was also performed to analyze differences between the groups of mothers from each educational level, and correlations were used between scores on the three factors and age of the mother and the baby.

Results

Socialization Goals

Mothers from Rio de Janeiro value in first place Self-maximization ($M=.40$; $SD = .30$) and in second Decency ($M=.34$; $SD = .26$). Maybe because there is a great variability in these scores, a paired sample *t* test did not indicate a significant difference between the means in the two scores ($t_{199} = 1.51$, $p > .05$). This suggests that individualistic and sociocentric goals were present in the mothers' answers to SGI. Proper Demeanor ($M=.11$) and Lovingness' responses ($M=.11$) were less frequent. The correlation analyses between the scores in the SGI categories and mother's and children's ages indicate a positive significant but low correlation between Self-control and mother's age ($r = .17$, $p < .05$). No significant correlations were observed with children's age.

To further explore this pattern of responses, scores on the ten sub-categories were calculated. Figure 1 presents

the general distribution of scores. As it can be observed, the highest mean in the sub-categories of Self-maximization was in the development of the child's personal and economic potential (Self potential). This subcategory includes answers that mention the desire that the child develops his/her talents and fulfill his/her potential, stresses cognitive development, enjoyment of learning, intelligence, learning, success, fair competitiveness, openness to new experiences, and fulfillment in work and career. Mothers seem to attribute less importance to the other two sub-categories of Self-maximization: Emotional and physical well-being and integration and Psychological independence. Correlation analysis of these three scores indicate that they are not significantly correlated, suggesting that they may be independent dimensions of a valorization of autonomy development. Although they value this specific aspect of autonomy, the group of Rio de Janeiro's mothers who participated in this study seems to give most answers related to the sub-category of Decency (Decency personal integrity). This sub-category includes references to honesty, having moral values, and being respectable persons. These mothers want their children to be trustworthy, respectful of others, tolerant, good citizens, and to behave according to religious and cultural values. They seem to give less importance to Self-control and the development of close, loving relationships with family (sub-category of Loving). As mentioned above, there is a tendency to value more Self-control in relation to the age of the mother.

These results should be considered cautiously in light of a great dispersion of scores. In each category and sub-category there were mothers with no answers in that sub-category and mothers who had high scores. Hence, although a general pattern can be identified, there is variability of beliefs in this group of mothers, which could be due individual experiences and diverse variables.

Aiming to identify the effect of some of these variables, Univariate Analyses of Variance were conducted with the

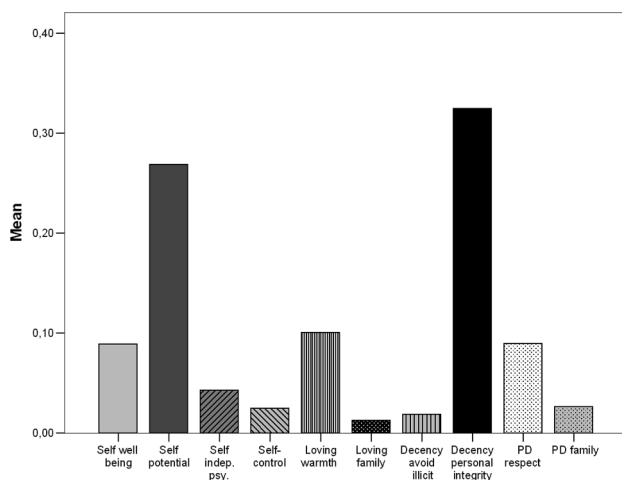


Figure 1. Mothers' mean scores in the sub-categories of the SGI.

scores of some sub-categories as dependent variables. Considering the sub-category of "development of the child's personal and economic potential", a significant effect of mother's educational level was observed $F(2, 197) = 10.85$, $p < .001$. However, the direction of the effect was not initially predicted. Mothers with the highest educational levels mentioned least in their responses the importance of this sub-category ($M = .17$). Mothers with less than high school level of education had a mean of .39 (almost 40% of the instances in their answers were in this category). Once more, this is just a general tendency, since variability intra-group was also high. In order to better understand this pattern of influence of educational level, we calculated mothers' means in each subcategory by educational level. The general patterns were similar to the ones observed for the general sample, but one tendency was identified. Mothers with the highest educational level ($M = .14$) gave significantly more answers to the subcategory of self well-being $t(108.35) = 2.38$, $p < .02$ than mothers with the lowest educational level ($M = .06$). The effect of the sex of the baby was not significant.

In contrast, in the sub-category of Decency involving personal integrity, a significant effect of the sex of the baby was observed $F(1, 198) = 13.56$; $p < .0001$. In this case, mothers of boys had higher means ($M = .39$) in the sub-category than mothers of girls ($M = .26$). No significant effect of educational level was observed.

Beliefs about practices of care of infants and children

The group of mothers from Rio de Janeiro consider very important practices of both Proper presentation ($M = 4.26$) and Stimulation ($M = 4.10$). They attribute less importance to Responsivity and bonding ($M = 3.10$). The GLM analyses indicate a significant effect of educational level for the dimension of Stimulation - $F(2, 194) = 24.60$; $p < .001$; power = 1). This result was also observed for Proper presentation - $F(2, 194) = 7.17$; $p < .001$; power = .93). Both the sex of the baby and the interaction between the two variables were not significant in these two analyses. For Responsivity and bonding, no significant effects of neither educational level or sex of the baby were observed. Figure 2 indicates that mothers with the lowest level of education (Level 1 = up to incomplete secondary education) value less Stimulation than Proper presentation of the child. The same happens at the second level of education (up to incomplete university education). Mothers with the highest educational level (university education or graduate studies) value more Stimulation than Proper presentation, and value more Stimulation than those with less education. Mothers at all educational levels value Responsivity and bonding less than the other two dimensions. Paired samples t tests confirmed the tendencies shown in the figure mentioned. For the lowest educational level, scores on Stimulation ($M = 3.70$) were lower $t(45) = -5.60$; $p < .05$ than scores on

Proper presentation ($M = 4.28$); for the second level, the same was observed $t(86) = -5.13$; $p < .05$, and the observed means were 4.07 for Stimulation and 4.38 for Proper presentation. The group with at least some university education presents a different pattern. They value more $F(66) = 3.22$; $p < .05$ practices of Stimulation ($M = 4.32$) than of Proper presentation ($M = 4.09$) of their children. These results indicate that mothers' educational level influences the pattern of maternal beliefs about practices of childcare. There were no differences related to the sex of the child. The correlation analyses performed with the variables of mothers' and children's age produced two significant results. The first is a significant positive correlation between mothers' age and the score on Stimulation ($r = .32$, $p < .05$). Thus, beside their educational level the age of the mother (probably their greater experience) influence the importance she attributes to providing her child with stimulating experiences. The correlation between age of the child and the Score on Proper

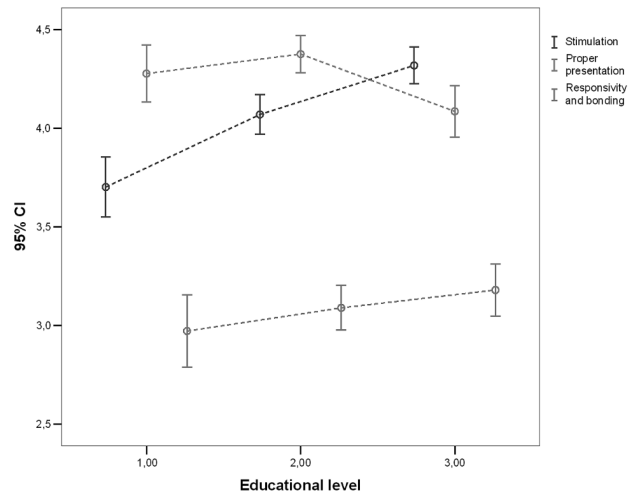


Figure 2. Distribution of scores on Stimulation, Proper presentation and Responsivity and bonding according to mothers' educational level.

Table 1

Mean and standard deviations for each of the items of the Inventory of Beliefs about practices of care of infants and children

Item ¹	Mean	SD	Factor
1. Encouraging one's child to play with others of different cultures	3.51	1.22	Stimulation
2. Encouraging one's child to play with others of different social classes	3.66	1.2	Stimulation
3. Having one's baby play with others of his/her same age	4.38	.79	Stimulation
4. Attracting one's baby's attention to objects	4.49	.65	Stimulation
6. Teaching one's child to share his/her toys with others	4.67	.55	Stimulation
7. Encouraging one's child to play in groups	4.49	.67	Stimulation
8. Encouraging one's child to play alone	2.75	1.69	Stimulation
9. Giving toys to one's baby to waken his/her senses	4.75	.63	Stimulation
10. Drawing one's baby's attention to people	4.41	.85	Stimulation
11. Reading stories to one's child	4.40	.86	Stimulation
12. Talking a lot with one's child	4.85	.40	Stimulation
15. Having one's child play with toys for girls and boys	2.51	1.54	Stimulation
16. Massage one's baby	3.81	1.03	PP
17. Preventing one's baby from putting dirty things in his/her mouth	4.20	1.08	PP
18. Not letting one's child see his/her parents quarrel	4.60	.92	PP
19. Changing one's baby diapers before letting him/her fall asleep	4.53	.81	PP
22. Washing one's baby every day	4.89	.37	PP
23. Teaching one's child to say "hello" and "thank-you"	4.70	.56	PP
24. Teaching one's child to be quit (tranquil) in public	4.73	.62	PP
25. Preparing homemade soups for one baby	4.45	.84	PP
26. Intervening to resolve a conflict between one's child and another of the same age	3.08	1.35	PP
41. Putting one's child on the potty as soon as he/she can sit up alone	3.60	1.47	PP
28. Picking up one's baby as soon as he/she starts crying	2.84	1.45	Resp. & bond.
29. Holding one's baby near you a lot	1.87	1.47	Resp. & bond.
31. Establishing a close and intimate bond between baby and his/her mother	4.04	1.20	Resp. & bond.
33. Being indulgent with one's child	3.34	1.41	Resp. & bond.
34. Never hitting one's child	2.57	1.82	Resp. & bond.

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¹ The numbers refer to the original item number in Suizzo's study.

presentation was also significant, but negative ($r = .17$, $p < .05$). It may indicate that mothers are sensitive to the characteristics of children's different age levels, valuing less their appropriate presentation if they are younger.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the mothers' answers in each item. In the Stimulation dimension, the items with the highest scores were: "Talking a lot with one's child" ($M = 4.85$; $SD = .40$), and "Giving toys to one's baby to waken his/her senses" ($M = 4.75$; $SD = .63$). In contrast, the items with the lowest scores were: "Encouraging one's child to play alone" ($M = 2.75$; $SD = 1.69$) and "Having one's child play with toys for girls and boys" ($M = 2.51$; $SD = 1.54$). Mothers seem to value practices related to a cultural model of independence and autonomy. However, the fostering of autonomy is not extreme, and playing alone is not considered important. In addition, the preoccupation with the gender characteristics of toys is not deemed important.

Proper presentation's most valued practices were "Washing one's baby every day" ($M = 4.89$; $SD = .37$), "Teaching one's child to say 'hello' and 'thank-you'" ($M = 4.70$; $SD = .56$), and "Teaching one's child to be quiet (tranquil) in public" ($M = 4.73$; $SD = .62$). Thus, this group of mothers values cleanliness and politeness. In the dimension of Responsivity and bonding, mothers give most importance to "Establishing a close and intimate bond between baby and his/her mother" ($M = 4.10$; $SD = 1.10$).

Discussion and conclusions

This study aimed to present data on cultural models of parenting of Brazilian mothers from Rio de Janeiro, the second largest city in the country. We had several expectations and we will discuss how the results of the present study relate to each of them. In general, based on previous Brazilian studies (Seidl-de-Moura et al, 2008; Seidl-de-Moura, Lordelo et al, 2008; Vieira et al, submitted) it was hypothesized that a model that values autonomy and independence would be identified in the mothers' answers to the two instruments (*SGI* and *CINPE*). Overall, we can say that the goals of the study were reached, and that our expectations were mostly confirmed, as it will be discussed below.

We aimed to confirm the results from the Brazilian literature and to broaden the knowledge about cultural models of parenting of Rio de Janeiro's mothers, analyzing the socio-demographic variables related to them. Expecting to find the valorization of both autonomy and relatedness, we also wanted to identify specific patterns in these mothers' belief systems.

Concerning socialization goals, the expectation was that Self-maximization, a goal related to autonomy and independence would be the most valued. This expectation was partially confirmed. In their answers to the *SGI*, mothers

in the present study indicated the valorization of autonomy and independence as end-products of their socialization efforts. The scores on Self-maximization were indeed the highest. Autonomy, however, is not valued in this group without references to sociocentric preoccupations. The second highest mean score was Decency, and the analyses did not indicate a significant difference between Self-maximization and Decency mean scores. However, the variation in scores may indicate that mothers from this city present diverse profiles regarding what they expect their children to become. They also do not give many answers related to Proper Demeanor and Lovingness.

After further investigation of the subcategories used, we were able to identify specific patterns of beliefs. The highest mean in the Self maximization category is in the subcategory related to the development of the child's talents and potential (including economic). These results are similar to the ones observed by Citlak et al. (2008) for the first and second generations of Turkish mothers living in Germany. Their answers in this subcategory were also the highest in the Self maximization group. German mothers in that study valued most Self control, but in Self maximization they gave virtually the same proportion of answers to the three subcategories.

In the group of mothers from Rio de Janeiro, Emotional and physical well-being or psychological independence are not what they seem to desire most for their children. Mothers report to wish their children's success, especially economic and career-wise. In this sample, these three aspects of autonomy (emotional and physical well-being; psychological independence and economic success) are not correlated. This may be an indication of the complexity of a parenting cultural model oriented toward autonomy. The mothers from the group studied, however, do not want their children to succeed at any price, as it can be seen in their answers in the category of Decency. The highest mean observed was in Personal integrity and religious values, which relates to basic societal standards, such as being hardworking and honest. This evidence complements a pattern: mothers want their children to achieve success and fulfil their potential, but through hard work and with honesty. This set of beliefs can be related also to the social and political conditions of the country that has been riddled by recent corruption scandals, especially in the political scene. This is a theme highly discussed in the media and in daily conversations. In addition, according to the results of the latest Census (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, IBGE, 2000), only 15,5% of the population in Rio de Janeiro claimed to have no religion; this may be related to the importance attributed to religious values by mothers in the present study.

Self control is not an important socialization goal, according to the present results to the *SGI*. Brazilian education in the last decades, as discussed by Biasoli-Alves (2002), is more directed to the child's well being, and discipline is not so important. This is different from the

results observed for German middle-class mothers in Citlak et al. (2008). The correlation analyses between the scores in the *SGI* categories and mothers' age show a positive significant but low correlation between Self control and mother's age. The older the mother, the more she values Self control, but in general, this is not a valued goal.

According to the results in the present study, one of the least valued subcategories is related to the development of close, loving relationships with the family. This result is somewhat contrary to the common sense idea of Brazilians being loving and affectionate. Maybe the transformations in the characteristics of Brazilian families discussed by Aizpurúa et al. (2007) are related to the low scores observed in this subcategory. Family ties may be less strong, but we should consider that in the inventory of practices, the item "Establishing a close and intimate bond between baby and his/her mother" presented a high mean, indicating that mothers attribute importance to this aspect.

Socio-demographic variables were related to the two most valued subcategories of the *SGI*. Educational level is related to the "development of the child's personal and economic potential", but not to the sex of the baby. Mothers seem to wish both their daughters and sons to develop their potential, a result that confirms the tendencies discussed by Biasoli-Alves (1997). Thus, the differences mentioned by Rocha-Coutinho that would persist despite the movement toward equality are not observed in these mothers' wishes about this specific end-goal of their socialization efforts.

Concerning educational level, the effect in parental beliefs is expected and discussed (i.e. Goodnow, 1988; Kagitçibasi, 1996, 2005; Miller et al., 1991; Ribas et al., 2003; Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2004). Data from socio-demographic research shows that in Brazil, between the years of 1991 and 2000 there was an increase of 17.2% in the population older than 25 years-old with university education (undergraduate or graduate level) (IBGE, 2000), whereas from 1940 and 2000 there was an increase of 45% in the population who could read and write (IBGE, 2007). The increase in educational levels is a factor that may exert a great influence in organizing people's daily activities and beliefs. This factor is also considered to have an effect on the way parents raise and educate their children (Biasoli-Alves, 2002).

The present study's results confirm this importance in relation to the valorisation of the "development of the child's personal and economic potential", but show an interesting pattern, that could be related to this increase of educational opportunities in the recent history of the country. Mothers with the highest educational level gave fewer responses in this subcategory than mothers with less than high school education. Maybe mothers who have more education take more for granted the fulfilment of their children's potential than mothers who had fewer opportunities to study. This result is complemented by the observation that mothers who had more education give more answers related to self

well-being as a socialization goal for their children than mothers with less years of formal education. We may hypothesize that since they are secure about the fulfilment of their children's potential related to economical aspects, they focus most their self well-being.

The sex of the baby was a significant variable in regard to the subcategory of Decency involving personal integrity. Mothers of boys gave significantly more answers in this subcategory than mothers of girls. It appears that girls are expected to be more compliant to societal rules and to give fewer reasons to worry their mothers. This seems to go in the same directions of some of Rocha-Coutinho's (2005, 2007) observations of the double expectations in the socialization of girls. Educational level was not significant in this case; there were no differences in the three groups of mothers.

In synthesis: the expectations about some characteristics of the cultural models of mothers from Rio de Janeiro were generally confirmed. They do value autonomy (Self-maximization) for their children, but interdependence (Decency) is also important to them. Their educational level is a significant variable for the pattern presented by the beliefs about the development of autonomy, with mothers with higher levels of education valuing more "self well-being" than the other groups of mothers and the ones with less than high school education valuing most the "development of the child's personal and economic potential". The hypothesis about differences related to the sex of the baby was only general. We could observe that there are no differences in regard to Self-maximization, desired equally for boys and girls, but a specific difference regarding the importance of developing Decency in terms of personal integrity. Other possible variables of influence were mothers' and children's age. The former presented a positive relation only to the valuing of Self-control, and it was not related to the other scores on the *SGI*. The latter was not related to the aspects considered.

So far, the expectations and results related to beliefs about long-term goals (qualities expected when their children become adults) are being discussed. A second set of beliefs concerns with what to do with their children, the beliefs about practices of care. The hypothesis regarding this aspect was that practices that focus on stimulating the child would be emphasized (Vieira et al., submitted). In a previous study, practices of care that foster development in several areas, were identified as the most valued by Brazilian mothers, including the group of Rio de Janeiro (Vieira et al., submitted). This could indicate a model of development of autonomy. In the same direction, results from the study of Seidl-de-Moura et al., (2008) that focused on mother-infant interactions showed that the two prevalent parental systems were face-to-face and object stimulation. As discussed in Keller (2007), they are part of a cultural model that fosters autonomy and independence, characteristic of urban western mothers.

This pattern of mothers' beliefs about desired outcomes for their children discussed above is complemented by their ideas about the relative importance of different practices of care. Both sets of practices of Proper presentation and of Stimulation are considered very important, and mean scores higher than 4 were observed in these dimensions. Less importance is attributed to Responsivity and bonding. These results are consistent with their socialization goals reported. Mothers in the present study indicate that they want their children to develop their potential as adults and to conform in some ways to societal norms. This is related to the future. In the present, they report to value practices of stimulating them and of fostering their adequate behavior in public.

As expected, there was an effect of educational level of the mother. This variable was a significant factor in the value attributed to practices of stimulation. Mothers with higher educational levels value more stimulation than mothers with lower levels of education. This could be explained by the former having more access to information regarding child development than the latter, as suggested by Vieira et al. (submitted), and indicated by the results of Seidl-de-Moura et al (2004), who verified a significant effect of mothers' educational level on knowledge about child development.

The stimulation valued is not exclusively cognitive, as it can be observed by the items with the highest scores (all considered "very important"): Having one's baby play with others of his/her same age; Attracting one's baby's attention to objects; Teaching one's child to share his/her toys with others; Encouraging one's child to play in groups; Giving toys to one's baby to waken his/her senses; Drawing one's baby's attention to people; Reading stories to one's child; Talking a lot with one's child. Mothers also give importance to their children relating to people, playing with others, and sharing their toys. In other words, they seem to value their social development.

Talking a lot with one's child was the item with the highest score in the dimension "stimulation". The same importance attributed to this practice was observed by Suizzo (2002) in her study with Parisian parents. According to the author, this practice can foster both an emotional bond between mother and child and the child's cognitive development. This practice can also be related to a parental system (face-to-face interactions) that Keller (2007) associates to a socialization trajectory that fosters the development of an autonomous self. Autonomy, however, is not equal to extreme individualism for these mothers. To play alone, for instance, was a practice considered not important by Rio de Janeiro's mothers, and several items cited above are related to the interaction with others.

Proper presentation of the child is also a dimension of practice considered very important. As observed with the first dimension, educational level was a significant factor affecting the value attributed to this practice. The direction,

however, was the opposite than for Stimulation. Mothers with more years of education placed less emphasis on this set of practices. Examining the practices considered very important in this dimension, we can identify aspects of cleanliness and politeness, but also of calmness in public. Mothers also considered important to preserve their children from conflicts between the parents. They are also expected to show a "good behavior".

Finally, Responsivity and bonding was in average considered less important than the other two dimensions, but "Establishing a close and intimate bond between baby and his/her mother" was evaluated as very important. "Picking up one's baby as soon as he/she starts crying" and "Holding one's baby near you a lot" were considered not important, suggesting a pattern of less body contact and body stimulation, two parental systems that Keller (2007) associates to the development of relatedness. No significant effects of the sex of the baby were identified for the three dimensions. This is a evidence that mothers seem to think that what is important for boys is equally important for girls, confirming the tendencies reported by Biasoli-Alves (1997). Other variables considered such as age of both the mothers and the babies presented some significant correlations. Age of the mother is significantly correlated to the importance attributed to stimulation and age of the baby is negatively correlated to the importance attributed to Proper presentation.

Going back to the aims of the study, as presented again at the beginning of this session we think they were attained. We were able to offer some evidence about a cultural model of this group of mothers from Rio de Janeiro that encompass valuing autonomy and independence as identified in their answers to the two instruments (*SGI* and Beliefs about practices). It seems that mothers studied share a cultural model of autonomy for their children, but that they also believe in the importance of their relationship to others. This model also includes a preoccupation with the stimulation of the children's potential in several areas and with the way children are presented to others and behave in public. Socio-demographic variables such as educational level and age of the mother seem to affect this model in specific ways, and the same happens with the sex of the children.

Although reaching the general proposed aims, the present results should be considered in the light of this study's limitations. The group of participants is not a representative sample of women who are mothers of small children in Rio de Janeiro. The sample is somewhat biased, because the proportion of mothers with university education is higher than in the general population. In addition, their actual practices of care were not observed. We used an adaptation of an instrument developed originally to investigate cultural models of Parisian parents, and one open-ended question to study the participants' beliefs.

Despite acknowledging these limitations, we think that the study contributes to the understanding of the complexity

of cultural models held by mothers in Rio de Janeiro. They share some beliefs and valorization of dimensions of practices with other groups of mothers reported in the literature (i.e. Turkish immigrants, German, Parisian). However, the configuration of their beliefs is specific and different from all those groups in subtle and interesting ways. New investigations need to be conducted to bring more light to the patterns found in this study. Observational studies about actual practices of care need to be conducted and mothers' spontaneous discourse during them should be analyzed, and other instruments could be employed to study mothers' beliefs, including interviews about family routines, descriptions of ideal children, etc. Finally, the relationship between parental cultural models and children's development should be focused. New efforts are already being made by the authors in these directions.

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