Article

Socialization Goals in Different Contexts[1]

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Abstract: According to evolutionary psychology, socialization goals integrate the parental ethnotheories, requirements that enable the rapid adoption of care and socialization strategies which were functional in the recent past. Aiming to explore this approach, this study compared the goals of two different samples, living in different contexts. A total of 76 Brazilian and 52 Norwegian mothers were interviewed concerning socialization goals. Goal descriptors were selected in order of appearance and analyzed using the software *Analyse d'évocations*. Approximately half of the descriptors that reached minimum frequency were shared between the two samples, indicating that ideals are shared in urban societies, though descriptors were assigned different priorities. The most significant differences were related to individualism/collectivism and are congruent with ecological differences between the two contexts. These results may be related to the cultural contrasts between societies with different trajectories, also related to current socioeconomic conditions, compatible with the evolutionary perspective.

Keywords: Evolutionary Psychology, Goals, Socialization.

Metas de Socialização em Diferentes Contextos

Resumo: Segundo a Psicologia Evolucionista, metas de socialização integram as etnoteorias parentais, prescrições que permitem a rápida adoção de estratégias de cuidado e socialização funcionais em um passado recente. Visando a explorar essa perspectiva, este estudo objetivou comparar metas de duas amostras de diferentes contextos. Setenta e seis mães brasileiras e 52 norueguesas foram entrevistas sobre metas de socialização. Descritores de metas foram selecionados por ordem de apresentação e submetidos ao programa *Analyse d'évocations*. Aproximadamente metade dos descritores que atingiram a frequência mínima foi compartilhada entre as duas amostras, indicando ideais compartilhados em sociedades urbanas, embora ocupando posições de prioridade diferentes. As maiores diferenças estiveram relacionadas aos valores individualismo/coletivismo, e são congruentes com as diferenças ecológicas entre os dois contextos. Esses resultados podem ser relacionados aos contrastes culturais entre sociedades com trajetórias diferentes, mas também às condições socioeconômicas vigentes, sendo compatíveis com a perspectiva evolucionista.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia Evolucionista, Objetivos, Socialização.

Metas de Socialización en Diferentes Contextos

Resumen: Según la Psicología Evolutiva, metas de socialización integran las etnoteorías de los padres, conocimientos que permiten la rápida adopción de estrategias para cuidado y socialización funcionales en el pasado reciente. Con el objetivo de explotar este enfoque, este estudio tuvo como objetivo comparar metas de dos muestras en diferentes contextos. Participaron 76 madres brasileñas y 52 noruegas, entrevistadas sobre metas de socialización. Descriptores fueron seleccionados por orden y tratados en el programa *Analyse d'évocations*. Aproximadamente la mitad de los descriptores fueron compartidos entre las muestras, con indicación de ideales compartidos en las sociedades urbanas, pero en posiciones diferentes de prioridad. Las mayores diferencias fueron relacionadas con valores de colectivismo individualismo, en congruencia con las diferencias ecológicas entre los dos contextos. Resultados pueden estar relacionados a contrastes culturales entre sociedades con diferentes ideales, pero también a condiciones socioeconómicas imperantes, y son compatibles con el punto de vista evolutivo.

Palabras clave: Psicología Evolucionista, Objetivos, Socialización.

Socialization goals have traditionally been a topic of research in Anthropology and have also become important in Psychology, probably due to their supposed impact on the development of the child and developmental outcomes, for the individual and the group, the culture and the society. The interest in the theme also stems from the growing recognition of the role of culture in structuring the development of individuals and in the search to unify the micro perspectives - the trajectories of individuals toward adult life, and macro perspectives - the cultural context in which we live (Super & Harkness, 1996).

While the theme of culture is a significant part of research in Developmental Psychology, its definition and the way in which the concept is used vary greatly. According to Kagitçibasi (2007) definitions, which include characteristics

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such as traditional ideas and associated values, a set of learned behavior transmitted between generations, shared symbols and meanings etc. have been generally accepted in Psychology without reaching a consensus regarding a comprehensive definition. Issues, such as the nature of the phenomenon, the relevance of taking it as an independent variable, and the possibility of separation between culture and behavior, remain in debate.

This study takes the concept of culture of Keller (2007), as the set of practices and meanings shared by a group, reflecting the demands of a particular ecological environment, including physical, social structure, population parameters and types of communities. From this perspective, socialization goals are a component of the parental ethnotheories, the set of implicit beliefs that organize the ideas and practices of caring for the children and that give meaning to everyday actions (Harkness & Super, 1996, 2005), in congruence to the local ecological conditions.

The evaluation of parental ethnotheories has grown under the theoretical framework of the individualism-collectivism construct, used as a tool to explain the majority of variation, with regard to social behavior, between the cultures of the world (Kagitçibasi, 2007; Triandis, 1994, 2002). The concept of individualism emphasizes the individual as an autonomous entity relevant for survival, with groups being less important, thus, the family, ancestors and the actual parents are less considered. An orientation toward individualism means a strong motivation for personal success and valorization of one's own intimacy, being common in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and parts of Western Europe, such as Germany and England. Conversely, the concept of collectivism describes the culture in which the group is the unit of survival relevance; in this situation, the existence of the individual is limited by the group to which they belong and the personal identity is defined in close connection with the identity of the group; collectivism is more present in traditional cultures, mostly Asian and Latin American. The relationships between the group members are intense and they share interests, resources and activities (Triandis, 1994, 2002).

Studies in Developmental Psychology take into account not only the cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism, but also the models of orientation of the self, which cover the dimensions (Kagitçibasi, 2007; Keller, 2007; Keller et al., 2006). Three models have been proposed, interdependence, independent and autonomous-relational. The first of these would be present in collectivist cultures, in rural environments with subsistence economies; in this model the concept of self is directly linked to the group in which the individual is part, the socialization goals are geared to conformity to the social standards, obedience and acceptance of the social roles and hierarchies. Some societies may be cited as prototypical of the interdependent model,

such as the Nso of Cameroon and the Gujarati of Indian, two rural societies with little schooling, groups studied by Keller et al. (2006).

These same authors highlight Germans, Greeks and Euro-Americans as groups representing prototypical societies of the independent model, being urbanized, industrialized and with high levels of schooling. These groups would be characterized by the valorization of the autonomous self, with socialization goals focused on self-maximization, personal fulfillment and independence. A third model, called autonomous-relational, would combine characteristics of both the previous models and would be more present in societies in transition between collectivism and individualism. This model would be seen in developing countries, with increasing education and more recent industrialization, having autonomous socialization goals while focusing on close interpersonal relationships; societies prototypical of this model would be developing countries such as Brazil and others of Latin American, China and India (Kagitçibasi, 2007; Keller et al., 2006). This transitional condition may be illustrated by the study of Weber, Selig, Bernardi and Salvador (2006), who found a change in parenting styles between the first and third generations of Brazilian families with respect to the exercise of authority.

Studies on parental ethnotheories with Brazilian samples draw attention to the cultural diversity in such a large country with so many historical differences between the regions (Seidl-de-Moura et al., 2008), which makes it difficult to generalize a so-called "Brazilian culture". Seidl-de-Moura et al., in a study with mothers of seven Brazilian state capital cities, found socialization goals focused on self-maximization and appropriate behavior to have the highest means of the whole sample, however, there were intra-cultural differences between the cities studied. This fact draws attention to the peculiarities that can coexist in different contexts in the same country. The intracultural differences were mainly marked by the socioeconomic level, the maternal education level and the size, in terms of population, of the city of residence, being that mothers with higher socioeconomic and educational levels, living in the more populous cities, prioritized goals related to autonomy, while mothers of lower socioeconomic and educational levels prioritized goals more linked to interdependence.

Effects due to the gender of the child were also found in Brazilian studies: Diniz and Salomão (2010) documented differences in parental expectations, related to whether the child in question was a boy or girl. The fathers, but not the mothers, showed higher social expectations for the boys.

Kagitçibasi (2007) reviewed various studies that used these categories to describe and explain the different patterns of socialization of children, practices and developmental outcomes, and that produced significant results. However, problems in intracultural variability and discontinuity

between different dimensions of the culture, making a classification into one single dimension difficult, have been some of the obstacles encountered in the field of study, leading researchers to seek greater refinement in the formulations and empirical studies.

Another important problem is the lack of a conceptual model capable of reconciling cultural variability with some universality in behavioral patterns functionally important for the survival of the species, such as the reproductive systems - bearing and rearing children. In part, this lack of comprehensive theories may be the result of inconsistency between the levels of analysis of human phenomena (Barkow, 2006; Cosmides, Tooby, & Barkow, 1995).

A theory that is able to explain a phenomenon such as the parental ethnotheories should be able to integrate the levels of analysis of Anthropology, Psychology and Biology. One promising approach was proposed by Evolutionary Psychology, which seeks to relate biological, cultural and developmental variables. From this perspective, child rearing, in terms of beliefs and practices, has been approached from the perspective of parental investment, which predicts a relationship between the reproductive behavior of the individual and their standards and development. The human species, although characterized by high parental investment allocated to the offspring, shows great variability in this aspect, probably due to ecological factors. In unfavorable environmental conditions, with few and unpredictable resources, individuals tend toward a more quantitative reproductive career, commencing puberty and having their first child earlier, having a greater number of sexual partners, more children and shorter intervals between the births. The opposite trend is probable in circumstances of abundant and predictable resources (Keller, 1997).

The model of Belsky et al. (Belsky, 2007; Belsky, Steinberg, & Draper, 1991, Belsky et al., 2007) specifies a developmental dimension to the theory of parental investment in the human case and suggests, as relevant resources in the reproductive career, the availability of parental support, with emphasis on the family climate prevalent during infancy. Thus, continuity between the environmental circumstances during infancy and the reproductive career would be provided through the internal working models developed from the attachment relationship between children and their primary caregiver in the first years of life.

Decisions regarding the reproductive career are obviously unconscious and accompanied by parental ethnotheories associated with a particular cultural context. The investment decisions - how many children to have and how much care to allocate to them - are not made based on calculations; parental investment decisions are constructed during the ontogenesis, from the information available in the environment, including the culture of which it forms part (Keller, 1997).

From the perspective of Evolutionary Psychology, the parental ethnotheories can be seen as tacit and implicit knowledge related to children and their development. They are used to optimize the contextual knowledge appropriate for raising children, i.e. the knowledge shared in a cultural group, which prescribes functional strategies successful in the recent past, and are updated by each generation according to the surrounding ecology. Thus, although one must consider that the parental ethnotheories are a phenomenon with an independent existence, it is essential to also take into account the material conditions. Parental ethnotheories are not static, they may undergo substantial alterations, accompanying changes that occur in the living conditions of the group, although at a slower pace (Keller, 1997). This process can be exemplified with the disharmony among displaced cultural groups (such as immigrants from foreign countries or rural areas), where tensions are often observed between the ethnotheories inherited by the group and the new conditions that prevail in the new environments.

From this perspective, this study aimed to compare socialization goals in two samples with distinct living conditions. The two groups presented some similarity (urban societies, predominantly of Christian religions, access to the contemporary mass media) and several important differences in terms of cultural traditions and, principally, the material conditions of life. The list of the HDI (Human Development Index) is topped by Norway, with the highest index of the world, life expectancy of 81 years of age, a mean of 12.6 years schooling, and the second highest GDP *per capita* in the world (International Monetary Fund, 2010). Brazil presents an average situation, in the 73rd position, with life expectancy of 72.9 years and an average of 7.2 years schooling, the GDP *per capita* is also intermediate in the 60th position, however, with major problems of income distribution, being a place with a diversity of environments and stability of resources (United Nations Development Program, 2010). In cultural terms, Norway has been described as more individualistic (Hofstede, 2006), while Brazil is indicated as intermediate between collectivism and individualism (Gouveia & Clemente, 2000).

Therefore, it was expected that people living in different eco-cultural conditions would manifest different socialization goals for their children. Furthermore, it was expected that these differences would occur in a particular direction: people living in safe environments, with abundant resources, would be less strict in their socialization goals, giving the individuals more freedom to choose personal goals. People living in insecure environments, with fewer resources, were expected to be more concerned with achievements that ensure survival and less about personal achievements.

Method

Participants

The subjects were 76 Brazilian women and 52 Norwegian women who volunteered to take part in the study, with at least one child aged between zero and six years. In Brazil, in the city of Salvador, Bahia, the women were contacted in their homes, with the first contact previously made with a local woman and later from the advice of neighbors (low socioeconomic status group) or of friends and acquaintances (medium socioeconomic status group). In Norway, in the city of Stavanger, the participants were contacted through infant education institutions.

The Norwegian research participants were significantly ($p < 0.0001$) older than in Brazilians ($M = 33.7$ years, $SD = 4.28$ versus a mean of 27.7 years, $SD = 6.39$). They also had a higher level of education (mean of 15.3 years schooling, $SD = 2.39$ versus a mean of 2.3 years schooling, $SD = 4.43$, $p = 0.001$). Almost two thirds (63.5%) of the Norwegians were working at the time of the study, while among the Brazilians, this percentage was 43.4%, including only regular jobs outside the home.

Many of the Brazilian participants were housewives, 23.7% ($n = 18$), 15.8% were students ($n = 12$), and 7.9% were unemployed ($n = 6$). The most common occupations among the Brazilian women were linked to work with low occupational prestige, according to the Hollingshead Socioeconomic Status Scale (1975), as domestic workers ($n = 6$, corresponding to 7.9% of the Brazilian sample); 6.5% of the respondents were sales women ($n = 5$) and two were manicurists. Other occupations, considered more prestigious, appeared less frequently, such as lawyers, psychologists, systems analysts (one case each), among others. In Stavanger, as in Salvador, many of the mothers interviewed were housewives (21.6%, $n = 11$), 5.6% were students ($n = 3$); the more prestigious occupations appeared more frequently than in the Brazilian sample, linked to the area of health, such as physicians, physiotherapists and nurses (13.3% $n = 7$).

Instruments

The Harwood socialization goals interview (Miller & Harwood, 2001) was used, which consists of a semistructured script based on the question "What qualities do you want for your child as an adult?", From which the interviewer adds questions of encouragement so that the interviewees speak more about the issue and further explain their ideas. A sociodemographic data questionnaire was also used in order to characterize the sample.

Procedure

Data Collection

In all the interviews, at the first contact, a summary of the study was presented and the women were invited to participate, which was accepted by approximately 85% of them, followed by the presentation of the Terms of Free Prior Informed Consent. All the interviews conducted in Norway were performed in English, a language in which Norwegians are generally fluent; these interviews were recorded and later transcribed in *verbatim*. In the present study a simplification will be made referring to the mothers of Salvador as the Brazilian mothers and the mothers of Stavanger as Norwegian mothers, however, attention must be called to the notion that the study samples are not representative of the entire populations of the two countries.

Data Analysis

The analysis conducted sought to capture the socialization goals in the terms used by participants. Given the nature of the theme, it was expected that a central core of goals would be shared by all the mothers, regardless of culture or of living conditions. Aspects such as survival, health and normal development are, obviously, basic socialization goals. Even the goals such as being successful, getting a good education, being an accepted member of society, are probably goals desired by all parents. The main interest of this study, therefore, was to identify differences of emphasis in the choice of goals, especially their connection to the surrounding ecology, including the culture. Therefore, a data analysis procedure was sought which would preserve as much as possible, the details of the concepts, their emphasis and manner of articulation, instead of the usual method of organization by content categories. This decision was based on the adoption, as far as possible, of a perspective less focused on the culture of the researcher, seeking to avoid the imposition of ethnocentric bias (Keller, 2007).

Thus, all the descriptors of desired qualities were selected from the transcribed text in order of appearance, ignoring the repetitions. Descriptors were conceived as single words (*ethical, honest, caring*) or descriptive phrases (*not to have a child early, to have a job, to be a person that everyone likes*). The descriptors were recorded according to a principle of minimum reduction, i.e. virtual synonyms were recorded as different descriptors (*sensitive, kind, considerate*). However, when the qualities appeared in the middle of complete sentences, it was necessary to adopt a procedure to summarize the phrase. In this case a

descriptor was selected, which involved some reduction. For example, sentences with the same content, but stated slightly differently (*to have a good job, work, to have a profession, a career, to have a good profession, such as a doctor or engineer*) were converted into a single descriptor, while still attempting to preserve the different meanings associated with the descriptor. For example, some interviewees, when talking about work, emphasized the nature of work, as seen in the examples above, but others emphasized the work as opposed to doing nothing, being lazy, i.e. to have a job, any job, to earn their own money. In these cases, the descriptor assigned was *work*. The same procedure was employed for the Norwegian sample, without translation into Portuguese.

Next, the descriptors were organized into the appropriate databases for analysis in the program *Analyse d'evocations* (EVOC), which organizes the descriptors into four positions according to their frequency and order of appearance. The first two positions group the descriptors with higher frequency and the last two with lower frequency. The first and third positions include the descriptors whose order of recall is lower and the second and fourth group those concepts whose order of recall is higher. The inclusion of descriptors in the first two positions is defined by the researcher through the intermediate frequency parameter. An overview of the significance of these orderings can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Categories of the Program Analyse d'evocations (EVOC) Used in the Data Analysis

1st position - high frequency, low order (high priority, shared by the group) *The descriptor is cited by many people and always in the first evocations*	2nd position - high frequency, high order (low priority, shared by the group) *The descriptor is cited by many people, but in the last evocations*
3rd position - low frequency, low order (high priority, shared by few people) *The descriptor is cited by few people and always in the first evocations*	4th position - low frequency, high order (high priority, shared by few people) *The descriptor is cited by few people and always in the last evocations*

The analysis of the two samples was performed in two different databases. The descriptors that appear in this article have been translated into English only after all analyzes had been performed, merely for readability. The interpretation of the data is limited to comparing descriptors in two different languages, since the same descriptor can have different meanings, depending on the context. For example, the words *independent* and *independente* are true cognates, but the interpretations of the Brazilian and Norwegian participants regarding the meaning of the concept differ significantly. Among the Norwegian women, *independence* was often associated with personal autonomy, in ideas and actions, the ability to make their own choices based on personal criteria. Among the Brazilian mothers *independence* was associated, generally, with a material dimension, the ability to provide their own sustenance and not to be dependent on others, therefore, being able to make free decisions. In this way, the interpretation of the similarities and differences should be parsimonious, considering that the correspondence between the descriptors is only approximate.

Ethical Considerations

The research project was approved by the Human Sciences Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Bahia. All procedures for recruiting participants, data collection and data analysis were conducted in accordance with current legislation in Brazil and Norway. All the mothers received information about the project and signed the Terms of Free Prior Informed Consent.

Results

Socialization Goal Descriptors

Although the absolute number of different descriptors found were approximately the same (85 for Brazilian mothers and 90 for Norwegian), in relative terms, the Norwegian women showed a greater variety of desirable qualities, given their lower representation in the sample, probably due to the higher level of education that this population presented. Furthermore, the number of descriptors cited was higher among the Norwegians, as can be seen from the analysis of variance, with an mean of 7.8 versus 6.2 for the Brazilian women [F (1, 125) = 14.87, p < 0.001]. The absolute majority of the responses were given in the form of positive attributes, according to the instructions given (desired qualities), however, a certain number of attributes listed in the negative (*not having children early, not being a liar, not being a prostitute, not using drugs,* among others) appeared in the statements of the interviewees.

Among the descriptors that reached the stipulated minimum frequency of five (24 qualities in the Norwegian sample and 31 in the Brazilian), 13 qualifiers were common to both samples, as can be seen in Table 2, possibly indicating ideals universally shared in urban societies: *good*

education, a good person, honest, considerate, a nice person, independent, respect people, a good profession, a good life, kind, responsible, good interaction with other people, and understanding.

Table 2

List of Common and Divergent Attributes between Samples of Brazilian and Norwegian Mothers

Common attributes	Only among the Brazilians	Only among the Norwegians
Good education	Good character	Self-confident
Good person	Studious	Happy
Honest	Good son	Empathic
Considerate	Worker	Healthy
A nice person	To work	Strong
Independent	Good person	Having friends
Respect people	Sincere	Tolerant
A good profession	Intelligent	Courageous
A good life	Religious	Having a family
Kind	Obedient	Choose a job
Responsible	Decisive	Openness
Good interaction	Avoid bad company	
Comprehensive	Not having children early	
	Friend	
	Not using drugs	
	Supportive	
	Calm	

Not all the qualifiers were shared by the two samples, at least in the strict sense. Here the parsimonious nature of the data processing, in relation to the reduction of the transcribed material, must be considered as a factor that can artificially increase the amount of divergent goals. For example, the descriptor *solidário*, which occurred in the Brazilian sample, has a semantic content close to the

word *caring,* as used in the Norwegian sample, in the same manner that *compreensivo* is similar to *emphatic*. It may also be the case for the qualifier *healthy*, which appears in this form in the Norwegian sample and can be interpreted as a generic equivalent of behavior such as not smoking, drinking or using drugs. Thus, taking into account the possibility of overestimation of the differences in the interpretation of these results, it can be seen that 17 descriptors were unique attributes exclusive to the Brazilian sample and 11 appeared only among the Norwegian mothers.

Among the Brazilian mothers, attention is called to the presence of attributes characteristic of collectivist cultures, such as *a good child*, *obedient* and *religious*, absent in the Norwegian sample. In addition, concerns appear regarding the more difficult living conditions characteristics of many urban environments in poor countries, with high rates of juvenile mortality and few prospects for economic integration, as is the case of Brazil. These concerns were translated into goals such as *avoid bad company*, *not having children early, not using drugs, worker, to work*. In the latter, it was necessary to particularize the cases in which the goal of having a good profession was replaced by the desire that the child at least works, whatever the job, in a clear rejection of what was sometimes called laziness or indolence.

The results also showed strong differences in the position and frequency of the descriptors. Analysis using the EVOC program combines order of appearance and frequency as parameters for inclusion in the groups. Analyzing the first group of descriptors, it can be seen from Table 3 that, for the Brazilian women, the most important were: *good education, studious, good character, honest, responsible, good profession, good child, good person and worker.* For Norwegian women, the descriptors most cited were: *self-confident, independent, kind, good person, considerate, respect people, happy, and a good education.* Note that the translation given in the text seeks to facilitate the reading and does not affect the analysis of the material collected, which was made with the descriptors in the languages in which the data were collected.

Table 3

Distribution of the Socialization Goals Descriptors in Four Positions among Brazilian and Norwegian Mothers, Organized by Order of Appearance and their Frequencies

Brazil	Norway	Brazil	Norway
First position		Second position	
Good education (34)	Self-confident (30)	Worker (14)	Having friends (12)
Studious (13)	Independent (15)	Respect people (13)	A good profession (15)
Good character (14)	Kind (10)		Good Life (10)
Honest (28)	A nice person (11)		
Responsible (16)	Considerate (13)		
A good profession (22)	Respect people (13)		
Good son (10)	Happy (28)		
Good person (15)	Good education (21)		
Worker (10)			

Table 3
Continuation

Third position		Fourth position	
Hard-working (6)	Responsible (7)	Coexist well (7)	Tolerant (7)
Good person (5)	Empathic (9)	Forceful (7)	Courageous (5)
Sincere (5)	Comprehensive (7)	Avoid bad company (6)	Good person (9)
Independent (7)	Honest (8)	Not having children early (5)	Having a family (8)
Intelligent (7)	Healthy (6)	Good Life (5)	Choose a job (6)
Religious (8)	Strong (7)	Friend (6)	Openness (5)
Affectionate (9)	Good interaction (6)	Comprehensive (5)	
Obedient (9)		Not using drugs (9)	
Decisive (9)		Supportive (7)	
		Good manners (5)	
		Calm (5)	

The qualifiers cited refer clearly to the strong differences in socialization goals in these two samples. A single descriptor (*good education*) is shared by the two groups, the others referring to very distinct areas: in the Brazilian case, a combination of concern about survival and adaptation to social standards, while among the Norwegians personal fulfillment, in a broad sense, and an emphasis on interpersonal interaction constitute the most salient dimensions of socialization goals.

The descriptors least used and cited last, those situated in the fourth position, are fairly diverse. In this group, some of the qualifiers divergent between the two samples appear most often. While some of the Brazilian mothers revealed their concern about avoiding routes of development seen as dangerous and doomed to failure, such as *to avoid bad company*, *not having children early, not using drugs*, some Norwegian mothers emphasized personality attributes such as *tolerance, courage* and *openness*.

Possible associations with the level of maternal education and with the gender of the child were explored. Concerning education, the two samples differed significantly in the number of completed years of schooling, with the Norwegians being a lot better educated and presenting a mean of 15.3 years (*SD* = 2.5), while the Brazilian mothers presented a mean of 10.9 years (*SD* = 4.4). Thus, the analysis performed grouped the mothers with higher and lower levels of education on the basis of different criteria: in Norway, the women with lower levels of education had 15 years of study (six years beyond compulsory schooling), while in Brazil the group was formed by women with 11 years of study (three years beyond compulsory schooling).

The qualifiers preferred in the first two positions differ according to the educational level, as can be seen in Table 4. The mothers with less education indicate in the first place the descriptors *good education, good person* and *good profession*, while the mothers with higher educational level more frequently mention *good character* and *studious*. Among the Norwegian mothers differences associated with education also occur. The mothers with higher education levels concentrated their choices in a few qualifiers, *self-confident* in the first position and *good education* and *happy* in the second position. The mothers with lower education levels, however, distributed their responses in various qualities: *considerate, independent, kind,* etc.

Table 4
Distribution of the Socialization Goals Descriptors in First Two Positions of Brazilian and Norwegian Mothers According to the Level of Education

Brazilian mothers			
Up to 11 years of study (*n* = 38)		From 12 years of study (*n* = 28)	
First position	Second position	First position	Second position
Good education	To work	Good character	Affectionate
Good person		Studious	Decisive
Good profession			Honest
			Respect people
			Responsible

Table 4
Continuation

| Norwegian mothers | | | |
| Up to 15 years of study (*n* = 26) | | From 16 years of study (*n* = 24) | |
First position	Second position	First position	Second position
Considerate	Having friends	Self-confident	Good education
Independent	Good education		Happy
Kind	Good profession		
A nice person	Happy		
Respect people			
Self-confident			

The question asked in the interview focused on one particular child and the responses of the mothers specified "he" or "she", although in some cases the mothers disdained this aspect, referring to the children with a generic "they", "my children". For the cases where the gender of the child was specified, a comparative analysis of the qualifiers was performed, according to the gender of the child. The considerable reduction of cases that are comparable limits the possibility of analyzes, but there is some indication that, at least in the Norwegian sample, there was some change of emphasis associated with the gender of the child, especially in the qualifier *Independent*, which took the first position when the focus of the interview was a girl.

Discussion

The results encountered suggest a common set of socialization goals in the two samples, while also highlighting important divergences regarding the most emphasized aspects. Goals shared by the two samples, in terms of qualities desired for the children suggest a certain universality of goals, as would be expected, i.e. to be economically and socially successful as an adult. The highlighting of the goal *good education*, in a position of priority in both samples, clearly suggests the vital character of this attribute in urban and industrial or post-industrial societies.

The observed differences are consistent with the referential framework of individualism-collectivism, considering that the Norwegian culture has been described as reaching a high position in measures of individualism, while Brazil has been situated in a more intermediate position (Hofstede, 2006). However, there are few empirical studies that validate this conclusion or even reexamine the construct in order to improve its explanatory power (Gouveia & Clemente, 2000).

Descriptors frequently mentioned by the Norwegian women only suggest a particular concern with personal fulfillment and independence as an autonomous individual, manifested in qualities such as *self-confidence, happiness,* *strength and independent choice of any job*. These concerns are linked to values prevalent in individualistic societies (Triandis, 1994). Even more focused on issues related to independence, most Norwegian mothers demonstrated other desires in relation to the future qualities of their children. The inclusion of goals such as *having friends, tolerance, empathy* and *openness* suggests a concern for a harmonious social life, shaped by respect for others, consistent with the supposed horizontality (Triandis, 1994) of Norwegian society that stands out for its emphasis on egalitarianism.

The set of results also suggested good congruence with the view of Evolutionary Psychology regarding parental ethnotheories. The differences that characterize the two samples are consistent with parental investment strategies guided by the surrounding ecology. Stable and abundant resources allow the use of qualitative strategies of parental investment, focused on the development of the individual potential of each child. Thus, descriptors such as *self-confidence independence* and *fulfillment* can take priority, since the basic survival is not threatened, as is the case of Norway. Conversely, in environments where resources are less abundant and unreliable, parental investment strategies tend to be more quantitative, with an emphasis on the immediate survival and on obtaining earlier reproductive success, which may be the case in Brazil.

Conclusions

This study had some limitations, among them the language. When comparing discourses or descriptors between two languages, synonyms may not have the same meaning for the individuals, as is the case of the descriptors *independente* and *independent*, which carry different values and meanings for the mothers of the two countries, being linked to financial independence in Brazil, while having a broader meaning related to personal autonomy in Norway. Another issue related to the language can be raised, namely the decision not to reduce the units of analysis in relation to the descriptors with close meanings, such as *kind* and

considerate, which if they were recorded with a single descriptor, would appear with greater frequency or priority However, the decision not to reduce the descriptors to more general categories has the advantage of preserving the discourse of the participants in their own terms, avoiding the bias of the researcher, in a more culturally ideographic perspective (Kagitçibasi, 2007).

The data set is consistent with the hypothesis that the collectivist or individualistic dimension of the parenting practices is linked to particular physical conditions. The psychology of the caregivers is, however, interposed between the surrounding ecology and culture, i.e. the individuals create and recreate the culture that guides their actions, according to their biological interests and the resources available to achieve them (Tooby & Cosmides, 1995). The results of this study are consistent with this perspective, which provides consistency between the various levels of analysis: the biological, when emphasizing the reproductive interests of individuals, the ecological, when specifying the surrounding conditions that enhance and limit the realization of reproductive goals, and the psychological, which describes the parental beliefs and ideas appropriate to a particular context.

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