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Care Giving and Social Character

Towards a Systematization of the Clinical Assessment of Social Character Traits and Their Relation to Mothers' Care Giving Quality in Urban/Rural Mexican Samples

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Abstract: The theory of social character developed by Erich Fromm asserts that the significance of experience is intimately linked to the material conditions under which persons, located in a specific economic system, live. The shared character traits thus correspond to the social role that these persons play. In the case of women, existing literature does not focus on their function as reproducers of the work force within the family, although this is a generalized function and additional to out-of-home work. This function has a transcendent importance to the development and emotional health of children, as has been established in longitudinal research of attachment theory.

This study explores Mexican mothers' shared character traits, a systematized appraisal of their attitudes towards their lives and their children, their states of mind, and the quality of care they provide as well as their relationship to attachment patterns of their infants; some come from urban Middle, Middle-upper and Upper-class families and others from Poor indigenous peasant families.

The fundamental focus is on the woman's participation inside the family, although it does not exclude the possibility that some of these mothers handle not only the care giving and housework but also work outside of the home (the "double shift"). It concludes that the daily material conditions of existence are closely related to shared character traits and that these are in turn related to patterns of attachment in their infants, their sensitivity in the treatment of their babies, and the results of their Adult Attachment Interviews. Women have been the support and pillar of subsistence for urban populations as well as the most poor and disadvantaged communities. This role played by women is as widespread as undocumented in literature.

The Theory of Social Character: Background

Psychoanalytical theory was enriched when its understanding of unconscious motivations was broadened to include not only "libidinal drives" (Freud, 1908) but also the



human need to relate to others and the person's position within the economic social system in which he/she develops and performs (cf. Fromm, 1962; 1970).

In *Social Character in a Mexican village. A Socio Psychoanalytic Study*, Fromm and Maccoby (1970) tested their approach to the theory of character and essentially confirmed it through their observation of peasant labor and the type of demands placed upon them by the nascent industrialization of the sugar industry in the state of Morelos, Mexico. The role of the woman was analyzed as subrogated to that of the man, the provider. The peasant women are described as "fundamentally dominant hoarding" and with "masochistic tendencies" (ibid., pp. 144-145), while the demands of household duties such as maintaining order and cleanliness were central to their day-to-day activities. The feudal or traditional mindset made them ideologically "property of the man" and "they were expected to treat themselves as property" (ibid., p. 146).

The peasant village in Morelos, that Fromm and Maccoby studied, was composed of homes that, albeit humble, had some urban services, like streets, electricity, water and a health center, as part of the incipient modernization and industrialization of rural Mexico. The authors mention the problem of alcoholism and its negative effects, particularly among receptive-unproductive peasants. Later on, the inhabitants of the village experienced an admiration and yearning for the advancement opportunities that existed in the US, the prelude to a mass emigration that would take place decades later due to the abandoned rural support policies.

The Method

The research project was based on the social character study conducted in Mexico by the Seminario de Sociopsicoanálisis (SEMSOAC) (Gojman, 2000; 2003; Gojman & Millán, 2007; 2008; Gojman et al., 2012; Gojman et al., in press a and b) among 70 mother-infant dyads, 39 of which belonged to urban Middle- and Upper-middle- or Upper-class families and 31 belonged to Poor, rural Nahua families like so many others that exist in Mexico and are common throughout Latin America.

Because the questionnaire did not pose specific questions relating to the socioeconomic status of respondents, we reviewed the answers to the questions and detected responses that might provide indicators of that status. The social character questionnaires were sorted into rural and urban based on the place the interviews were conducted. Based on the responses to the questionnaires, we were able to detect 10 aspects considered pertinent for determining the socioeconomic status of the women interviewed: type of home, means of transport, husband's occupation, woman's occupation, schooling, health services, use of free time, resources for services, parents' occupation, and type of toys. A series of indicative elements were selected for each aspect and an economic scale assigned. This information enabled us to classify the respondents into 5 socioeconomic brackets: Middle-upper/upper, Middle-middle, Middle-lower, Poor and Very poor.

Mothers responded to the Social Interpretative Questionnaire (Fromm & Maccoby, 1970) and the Adult Attachment Interview (Main & Goldwyn, 1984; Main Goldwyn & Hesse, 1998, Gojman, 2004); mother-infant dyads were videotaped twice in their homes (Ainsworth et al., 1978), interacting with their infants (at least two weeks apart), and infant-mother dyads participated in the videotaped Strange Situation laboratory



procedure (Ainsworth et al. 1978).

We examined the following:

- (1a) the pervading social character orientations of mothers in the different groups, assessed through their responses to the Interpretative Questionnaire as presented by Fromm and Maccoby (1970; 1996, and Maccoby 1995);
- (1b) the score for their questionnaire responses on the 6-character scales, especially developed by SEMSOAC for assessing their attitudes towards their lives and their children (Gojman, Millán, Sanchez & Gonzalez, 2008); and
- (1c) their basic Productive-Unproductive tendencies, considered independently of their character orientation types;
- (2) their infants' patterns of attachment, assessed through the Ainsworth strange situation procedure (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main & Solomon 1990);
- (3) the quality of care provided by the mothers, assessed through the videotaped home observations on the Ainsworth sensitivity scale (Ainsworth et al., 1978) and
- (4) their states of mind, assessed through the Adult Attachment Interview (Main, Goldwyn, 1984; Main, Goldwyn & Hesse, 2003/2008).

Participants

The participants were 70 mothers (ranging from 15 to 44 years of age at the time of assessment, M: 28.4) and their infants (ranging from 8 to 26 months, M: 13.5--40 boys and 30 girls). 11.4 % were illiterate, 8.6% had not finished elementary school, 4.3% had finished elementary school, 10% had studied something else than elementary school or finished high school, 12.9% had finished *preparatoria* (equivalent to college), 28.6% professional studies, and 5.7% graduate studies (18.6% were missing the information). 18.6% had full time jobs, 45.7% combined housekeeping with part time jobs and 35.7% were not working outside the home. 24.7% were Very poor, 13.7% were Poor, 9.6% were Medium low, 20.5% were Medium-medium, 30.1% were Medium-upper and 1.4% were Upper-income. These mothers were drawn from two different groups:

I. The urban group with 39 native Spanish speaking mothers plus one fluent Spanish speaking mother whose native language was Portuguese (ages 21-44, M: 31.8) and their infants (10-15 months, M: 13.1, 25 boys, 14 girls). Two were Poor, two were Middle-lower income and the rest were middle to Middle-upper and upper income, urban mestizo families who live in Mexico City: 11% had studied something else than elementary school or finished high school, 15% had finished *preparatoria* (equivalent to college), 64% professional studies, and 10% graduate studies; 14 % had full time jobs, 42% combined housekeeping with part time jobs and 44% were not working outside the home.

They were invited and voluntarily agreed to participate through a psycho-prophylactic training center, through the breast feeding league or a kindergarten that was starting an early stimulation project with infants.

II. The rural group with 31 mothers (ranging from 16 to 38 years, M: 26.1) and their infants (ranging from 9 to 26 months, M: 14, 15 boys and 16 girls) from poor to very poor, peasant Nahua families who inhabit in a Nahua, coffee farming village of the Si-



erra Norte region in the State of Puebla. 38% were illiterate, 24% had not finished elementary school, 9% had finished elementary school, 5% had studied something else than elementary school or finished high school, 24% had finished *preparatoria* (an equivalent to college). 19% had full time jobs, 39% combined housekeeping with part time jobs and 42% were not working outside the home. They were classified as:

- 1) Very poor (peasant families without land, living in houses without basic services such as water supply or electric power, floors without cement, just leveled earth and/or straw ceilings);
- 2) Poor (peasants with their own land or working trades such as bus driver, construction or carpenter workers, their families counting with at least some of the elementary services of water and electric power) or
- 3) Medium-lower income (elementary school teachers, nurses or small grocery merchants whose families live in houses with the main services, cement floors and ceilings, as well as some domestic appliances).

Most of them were bilingual—although some are fluent and others have diverse levels of Spanish speaking abilities—since their native ancestral language is Nahua (two or three of them answered the Social Interpretative questionnaire with the help of Francisco Sanchez as a Nahua translator, who facilitated their understanding of the queries and our understanding of their Nahua answers or their rudimentary "Spanish"). These families were contacted by the SEMSOAC who had participated previously in community action projects with Prade, a group that has developed a 30 years participant observer research project (See Sanchez & Almeida 2005) to enhance the community's living conditions and preserve their cultural practices. The mothers voluntarily agreed to participate and were later on paid a symbolic sum for the time they spent coming from outlying areas to the village, in order to respond to the assessments.

Procedure

The 70 Participant mothers were assessed through the Social Interpretative Questionnaire and classified according to the central character orientations proposed by Fromm (Fromm, 1947; see also Maccoby, 1995).

Mothers' responses to the interview were written down and typed out by interviewers. The text interviews were then assessed on the 6 scales specifically developed by SEMSOAC (Gojman, Millán, Sanchez & Gonzalez, 2008) for appreciating mothers' attitudes towards their lives and towards their children: (a) Sensitivity to emotional needs, (b) Lovingness, (c) Joy of life (d) Attention to everyday survival needs of their children, (e) Passive hopelessness and (f) Active-violent hopelessness.

The basic tendency identified from the questionnaire responses of each participant, independently of their character orientation and only to observe whether the tendency was Productive or Unproductive was then assessed and compared between the two groups and within each group according to socio-economic level.

Materials

A. The Social Interpretative Questionnaire

The Social Interpretative Questionnaire is an instrument developed by Fromm (1932,



1970, 1984, Fromm & Maccoby 1970, 1996) to assess shared character traits in a group, based on the common material conditions of daily existence. The research "is based on the premise that not only is the energy of the individual structured in terms of Freud's dynamic character concept, but that there is a character structure common to most members of groups or classes within a given society" (ibid, p. 16). It is this common character structure which Fromm has called *social character*. "The concept of social character does not refer to the complete or highly individualized, in fact, unique character structure as it exists in an individual, but to a "character matrix," a *syndrome of character traits which has developed as an adaptation to the economic, social, and cultural conditions common to that group.*" (Ibid.)

"The interpretative questionnaire is a method that permits the application of psychoanalytic categories to the study of social groups, by the minute examination of the personality of each member of the group, by the simultaneous and equally minute observation of all social economic and cultural data, and eventually, by the attempt to use refined statistic methods for the analysis of the data." (Ibid., p. 8.) It is "an analogy between a social and a personal psychoanalytic interview....in which the psychoanalyst", and the researcher that interviews a person, "tries to understand the unconscious meaning of certain phrases and statements used by the patient" or the respondent of the interview, "a meaning which he did not intend to express or is not aware of expressing" (p. 25).

By analyzing each answer and the totality of the answers to the questionnaire (p. 26), Fromm's proposed method "attempts to arrive at the knowledge of the dynamic tendencies of a respondent's character most relevant to his social and political attitudes ...a character structure found in each questionnaire with all others and with objective data such as age, income, sex, and education".

The main difference between this type of questionnaire, called *interpretative questionnaire*, and most other questionnaires used in social research is not that one is open and one is pre-formulated, but that the answers are used in different ways. The main effort is not to choose an adequate sample of relevant questions and toward the most fruitful statistical elaboration of them, but to interpret the answers with regards to the unconscious or unintended meaning. "The task of interpretation is, like any other psychoanalytic interpretation, difficult, and takes a great deal of time. It requires knowledge of psychoanalytic theory and therapy (including the experience of one's own analysis), a clinical psychoanalytic experience, and, as in everything else, skill and talent." (Ibid., p. 26.) "Uncertainty is the price the psychoanalytic researcher pays for the attempt to arrive at a deeper understanding of the most relevant data." (Ibid., p. 28.)

Scales for rating mothers on responses to the Social Interpretative Questionnaire (Gojman, Millán, Sanchez & Gonzalez, 2008):

a) *Sensitivity toward their children's emotional needs.* This scale deals with the mother's ability to perceive, notice, experience impressions and sensations, to identify the range of feelings, emotions and communications of another human being, in this case her child. The mother is in a state of vigilant serenity, open to all changes relating to her child's situation. This scale establishes the degree to which the mother is alert and empathetic, but above all accessible to her children, or to those who need from this person for her to respond promptly and appropriately, without distortion and in a man-



ner consistent with their need.

b) *Lovingness*. This scale refers to the responses to the interpretative questionnaire that have to do with the ability or capacity of the interviewee to show affection to their children. "Lovingness", on this scale, involves various elements: caring for, physical contact, embracing, comforting, respect, and knowledge.

c) *Joy of living*. This scale deals with the existence and degree of the presence of a vibrant sense of joy in the life of people, particularly her children, but also her own and that of others. The person shows interest and seems awake, lively, tends to establish significant loving relationships, demonstrates capacity to enjoy and take pleasure from the activities she performs; expresses delight, is pleased by growth, development, which sprouts from the earth or what has just been born.

d) *Instrumental attention to her children's daily survival*. This scale measures the extent to which, through questionnaire responses, we may infer that the interviewee fulfills her duties and functions as mother of her children. She provides them with basic care. It also takes into account general aspects of responsibility toward herself and others. The mother responds with attention; care, promptly and directly, to her child's need for survival and physical care.

e) *Passive hopelessness* is an emotional state in which defeat and powerlessness to change the adverse conditions of daily life are determinant, placing the subject in a condition of inertia and passive acceptance. This passivity excludes the capacity to even conceptualize, think or imagine alternate solutions, and in extreme cases, may lead them to not even be able to conceive compensatory fantasies or magical thought with regard to the possibility of some solution.

f) *Active or violent hopelessness*: This refers to an emotional state in which defeat and powerlessness to change the adverse conditions of daily life are determinant, placing the subject in a condition of irritability-hopelessness, impulsiveness that translates into aggressive or violent actions that can go from subtle harm, whether physical or emotional, to irreparable damage in the most extreme cases.

The first three scales—Sensitivity to children's emotional needs, Lovingness, and Joy in living—point in the direction of what we think might favor, over the long term, a humanly significant emotional development in the children, and therefore enable them to overcome or contend with adversity, which, in our view, is not the exception but rather the rule for human development.

The fourth scale, Instrumental attention to children's daily survival, refers to the mother's capacity to provide the essential, minimum, basic and necessary elements for development, offering her children an organized lifestyle.

The last two scales, Passive hopelessness and Violent hopelessness, in our view, may be contrary to or oppose the children's significant emotional development, and denote character traits in the mother that may indicate an affective or traumatic loss, which would not tend to facilitate the capacity to overcome adversity, either through resignation—the inability to search for acceptable alternatives or outcomes—expressed as passive hopelessness—or through violence, retaliation, and hopelessness—expressed as active or violent hopelessness.



The elements expressed on each scale, sometimes in subtle but meaningful ways, are identified and marked in order to arrive at point score or grade indicating the extent to which each characteristic seems to be present in the interviewee's treatment of her children.

The scales have to do fundamentally with the mother, in relation to the emotional needs of her children. The traits manifested throughout all the questionnaire responses are identified by marking the respective passages.

With the ratings from these 5-point scales, we then attempt to determine which characteristics are outstanding, how prominent or reticent they are, since many times a number of tendencies can be present simultaneously, although in different proportions and degrees.

Each scale is rated globally on the basis of what appears throughout the questionnaire, and on what can be detected from the responses when they are viewed as a whole.

Major Character Orientation

The interviews are once again seen as a whole, and discussed in group sessions to be classified as being Receptive, Hoarding, Exploitative-Authoritarian or Self-Developing and in these as mainly Productive or Unproductive, according to the liveliness or lifelessness of their expressions.

Receptive-productive: The interviewee tends to be loving, affectionate, close, shows signs of affection through physical contact; Describes her relations with authorities based on what she receives from them. Often refers to extreme sadness when she has been far from her parents; presents memories of fear of abandonment by her authority figures. Believes affection is important, she is generous, altruistic; the most important thing in life for her, is relationships with others and/or emotional life.

Receptive-unproductive: Maternity and children are seen as a burden, with no active interest; there is an absence of joy in living, or a rejection of life. A receptive-unproductive mother submits to what she has to do, but makes it clear, in one way or another, that she doesn't like the work, but it must be done. She cannot escape the traditional role of having to assume the necessary duties for the survival of the nuclear family. Her dreams, for example, may be a metaphor of what her life is, of her vulnerability, sometimes not even knowing where she is headed, or what will happen, or where she will end up; she tends to see herself as impotent, unable to do anything, she finds no inner activity or strength to seek out some solution. The person tends to try to perform what is expected of her in order to be accepted into the social group to which she belongs (even at times by the person who is interviewing her). For example, she may tell someone else to tell her children not to misbehave and not to fight, because she is unable to exercise her own authority; she depends on the authority of her elders or of some anonymous authority. She never disobeys or disobeyed her parents and often believes it is good for children to be afraid of their parents, because fear means obedience.

Hoarding-productive. Methodical, tenacious, and perseverant, the hoarding-productive mother may be sensitive but she does not express it physically. She is systematic, careful but not physically demonstrative. She tends not to openly show loving gestures,



which results in mixed results in the scales of sensitivity and lovingness: lower points on the lovingness scale and higher on the sensitivity scale. She tends to intellectualize.

Hoarding-unproductive. Implies a distancing from other people; any intimacy with the outside world represents a threat this type of autarkic security system. This orientation makes people have little faith in anything new they might get from the outside world; their security is based upon hoarding and saving, while spending is felt to be a threat. They surround themselves as it were by a protective wall and their main aim is to bring as much as possible into this fortified position. Love is essentially a possession; they do not give love but try to get it by possessing the beloved.

Exploitative Authoritarian Narcissistic. Enterprising, courageous, dynamic: this is a person whose basic premise is the sense that the source of all good comes from the out; that anything that one wants must be pursued outside of oneself, the individual can produce nothing for him or herself. She does not, however, expect to receive goods from others as gestures of charity, but rather by taking them away by cunning or violence. Her activities are oven colored by a mix of hostility and calculation. Traits such as suspicion and cynicism, envy and jealousy, are foremost; which they often compensate through their belief that they are always right, and must impose their will on others.

Self-developing mothers might have a productive motivation for learning, for team work, and solving problems (Maccoby, 1995). They usually value independence, networking, and maintaining employability. She tends to pursue her own intellectual or professional development, even if it causes problems for her family members or co-workers. Narcissistic tendencies may, on the other hand be pronounced, and may override the authentic interests of personal development.

Basic tendencies shared by different character orientations

Once we had appreciated the dominant character orientation of each of the mothers, they were grouped according to the basic tendency toward productiveness or unproductiveness, as follows:

Productive, including Receptive-productive, Hoarding-productive, Self-developers/self-affirming, were grouped together in this study because they all denote the realization of the potentialities characteristic to the subject, in the sense that they were not only occupied in external activities but with a certain internal activity in favor of life, love and work (Fromm, 1947); they have an emotional life. This tendency is related to internal and external strengths and energies that move the individual; spontaneous activity is understood to mean activity of their own initiative. In this group we observe a certain freedom, a life with meaning, not dominated by fear or dependence on authority figures but which "generate with their own powers in reality, and not merely reproduce reality" (Funk, 1983). In their dreams, adversity is not absent and the dreamer may feel powerless, but she shows a strength or inner activity that enables her to respond, do something, run, scream, defend herself, and often find a solution.

Unproductive includes Receptive-unproductive, Hoarding-unproductive, and Exploitative-authoritarian as a group because they share a tendency to fail to use their potentialities, lack their own activating or energizing force. In this group, the passive tendency prevails, incapable of facing or changing a given situation; of influencing events, with a sensation of emptiness, of their vital energy being diminished or depleted by the condi-



tions of life, by external forces. They express what they do in self-effacing terms, absent of emotional life, acting as a robot or automaton. The general character orientation is given by the function or prioritizing the material, appearance, objects, money and power over relationships and people.

B) Infant Attachment Assessment.

Infant attachment was assessed in the Strange Situation laboratory procedure (Ainsworth et al., 1978), a standardized laboratory assessment that consists of eight brief episodes designed to activate infant attachment behavior through an increasingly stressful series of infant-mother separations and reunions. Individual differences in attachment relationships are coded with respect to the infant's ability to gain comfort in the mother's presence when stressed and using the mother as a secure base from which to explore. Based on the patterning of the infant's behavior across all episodes, infant-mother dyads are assigned to one of four major classifications: secure, anxious avoidant, anxious resistant, or disorganized/disoriented (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main & Solomon, 1990).

C) Quality of Care giving

Mother-infant dyads were videotaped interacting in the home at two different times (at least two weeks apart). On each visit, observations included two activities, such as feeding, bathing, changing diapers or playing. Maternal behavior was rated on Ainsworth's Maternal Sensitivity/Insensitivity scale (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974). The focus of the 9-point Sensitivity/Insensitivity scale is the extent to which the mother reads and responds to her infant's cues and demonstrates an awareness of the infant's subjective state by adjusting her own behavior

D) Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)

Mothers responded to the Spanish version of the Adult Attachment Interview (George et al., 1985/1996; Gojman, 2004/2005/2010; Gojman et al., in Press). The Adult Attachment Interview utilizes a semi-structured interview format, focusing on an individual's descriptions and evaluation of salient early attachment experiences and the effects of these experiences on current personality and functioning (George et al., 1985/1996). Based on continuous 9-point ratings of the speaker's inferred childhood experiences and current state of mind, interview transcripts are classified into one of five general categories: secure-autonomous, dismissing, preoccupied, unresolved and cannot classify (Main & Goldwyn, 1984/1998; Main et al., 2003/2008). Classification focus is on the quality of discourse (rather than content), the extent to which communication is collaborative and provides a coherent, free flowing picture of the participant's experiences and related feelings (Main & Goldwyn, 1984/1998). Both validity and reliability among coders have been documented (see also Hesse, 2008 for an overview).

Results

(1) Character Orientation

As can be seen in Table I, we found that the Receptive orientation was the predominant trait in both groups; in the urban group the Receptive-productive orientation prevailed, and in the rural group, Receptive-unproductive.



Table I. Distribution of character orientations of the diverse socio-economic levels in the Urban and Rural samples

A. Urban Sample

Character orientations	Poor	Middle-lower	Middle-middle	Middle-upper	Total
Receptive-productive 28%		2+	6+	3+	11+
Receptive-unproductive 23%	2-		3-	4-	9-
Hoarding-productive 15%			1+	5+	6+
Hoarding-unproductive 10%			1-	3-	4-
Exploitative-authoritarian-narcissistic 18%			1-	6-	7-
Self-developing 5%			1+	1+	2+
Total	2 (2-)	2 (2+)	13 (8+ & 5-)	22 (9+ & 13-)	39 (19+ & 20-)

Note: +Productive -Unproductive.

Chi square (Productivity-Unproductivity) not arriving to a statistical significance

In the urban group, see Table IA (N=39) the Receptive orientation was more prevalent (in 20 cases) than the others; the most frequent variant was Receptive-productive (11 cases) followed by Receptive-unproductive (9 cases). The next most prevalent orientations were Exploitative- authoritarian-narcissistic- (7 cases), Hoarding-productive (6 cases), Hoarding-unproductive (4 cases) and Self-developing (2 cases).

Grouping them on the basis of their productivity tendencies, we found 20 were Unproductive (9 Receptive-unproductive, 4 Hoarding-unproductive and 7 Exploitative-authoritarian); 19 Productive (11 Receptive-productive, 6 Hoarding-productive and 2 Self-developing/Self-affirming);

By socioeconomic level, we found that: the 2 Poor mothers were Unproductive, the 2 Middle-lower were Productive, the Middle-middle were more Productive than Unproductive (8-5), and the Middle-upper were more Unproductive than Productive (13-9). The distribution did not attain the level of statistical significance.

B. Rural Sample

Character orientation	Very poor	Poor	Middle-lower	Total
Receptive-productive 23%	1+	6+		7+
Receptive-unproductive 45%	13-	1-		14-
Hoarding-productive 16%		1+	4+	5+
Hoarding-unproductive 6%	2-			2-
Exploitative-authoritarian-narcissistic 6%	2-			2-



Self-developing 3%			1+	1+
Total	18 (1+& 17-)	8 (7+& 1-)	5 (5+)	31 (13+& 18-)

Chi square =28.887 df=10 p <.001 - Note: +Productive –Unproductive

In the rural group, see Table IB (N=31) the Receptive orientation was also more prevalent (in 21 cases): 14 were Receptive-unproductive and 7 were Receptive-productive; 5 were Hoarding-productive, 2 were Hoarding-unproductive, 2 were Exploitative-authoritarian and 1 was Self-developing.

Grouping them on the basis of their productivity tendencies, we found 18 Unproductive (14 Receptive-unproductive, 2 Hoarding-unproductive and 2 Exploitative-authoritarian); and 13 Productive (7 Receptive-productive, 5 Hoarding-productive and 1 Self-developing/Self-affirming).

With regard to the impact of poverty on character orientation in this group, we found that there was a difference in character orientation among the Very poor, and the Poor and Middle-lower income mothers (see Table 1B). The first group (the Very poor), were mostly Unproductive, and the second group mostly Productive. These differences reached a very high level of statistical significance (Chi square =28.887 df =10 p < .001).

Among the Very poor group the tendency toward Unproductivity was the most prevalent (17 cases), and there was only 1 case of Productive; among the Poor, most were Productive (7 cases) and only 1 was Unproductive; among the Middle-lower group, all were Productive (5 cases).

We found that mothers in the Very poor group often underwent the presence of family or inter-generational violence and alcoholism.

(2) Scales of mothers' attitudes toward their lives and their children and their relationships to the basic Productive or Unproductive tendency.

As shown in Table II, the statistical tests exploring the relationship between the different scales to appreciate mothers' attitudes toward their life and toward their children—Sensitivity toward their children's emotional needs, Lovingness, Joy of living, Instrumental attention toward their children's survival needs, Passive hopelessness and Violent hopelessness—and the basic tendency of character orientation—Productive or Unproductive—in the urban and rural samples (N=70) were significant (Chi square varied between 45.316 and 4.015 with a probability between .000 and .048). In all cases, the observed frequencies percentage that match what is to be expected, called Observed Match, (meaning that Productive mothers present high Sensitivity, Lovingness, Joy of living and Instrumental attention to their children's survival and low levels of Passive and Violent hopelessness) were significantly higher than chance. This indicates that the scale ratings and the basic tendency of character orientation ratings followed the same basic lines, having been rated independently. In this sense, we can consider them to be reliable.



Table II. Relations between scales of mothers' attitudes and basic tendency toward Productivity-Unproductivity.

Scales		Productive	Unproductive	
Sensitivity Observed Match=90% Chance Expected Match=51%	Low	6 (19.7)	37 (23.3)	Chi square=45.316 df=1 p < .000
	High	26 (12.3)	1(14.7)	
Lovingness Observed Match=80% Chance Expected Match=51%	Low	13 (22.9)	37 (27.1)	Chi Square =27.407 df=1 p <.000
	High	19 (9.1)	1 (10.9)	
Joy in Life Observed Match= 83% Chance Expected march= 52%	Low	14 (23.8)	38 (28.2)	Chi Square =28.774 df=1 p <.000
	High	18 (8.2)	0 (9.8)	
Instrumental Attention Observed Match =54% Chance Expected Match= 47%	Low	1 (3.7)	7 (4.3)	Chi square=4.015 df=1 p <.048
	High	31 (28.3)	31 (33.7)	
Passive hopelessness Observed Match=76% Chance Expected Match= 49%	Low	31 (21.5)	16 (25.5)	Chi Square =23.620 df=1 p <.000
	High	1 (10.5)	22 (12.5)	
Violent (Active) hopelessness Observed Match =79% Chance Expected Match= 47%	Low	31 (25.1)	24 (29.9)	Chi Square =11.729 df=1 p <.000
	High	1 (6.9)	14 (8.1)	

Note: Expected frequencies appear in parenthesis. Predicted cells are bold

(3) Relationship between basic Productive-Unproductive tendencies in mothers and quality of care giving.

Table III shows the results of our preliminary tests of the impact that the mothers' basic Productive or Unproductive tendencies have on the quality of care giving they offer their children i.e Productive mothers more often have babies with a secure attachment pattern This is evident in the independent rating from the Ainsworth et al. Strange Situation Procedure for the mothers and their babies, which was statistically significant (Chi square=7.349 df=1 p < .006) taking the two groups together, urban and rural. The Observed Match (secure babies with Productive mothers and insecure babies with Unproductive mothers) was 66%, higher than the chance of 50% (see Table IIIA).

We also found that Productive mothers tend to be more sensitive in the treatment of their babies, rated according to the Ainsworth sensitivity scale (Ainsworth et al., 1978), in observation of home videos regarding the two groups together, urban and rural (Chi square=16.144 df=1 p <.000). The Observed Match (highly Sensitive mothers who are also Productive, and Insensitive mothers who are also Unproductive) was 67%, higher



than chance of 45% (see Table IIIB).

In studying the results for Productive or Unproductive mothers, we found that Productive mothers more frequently present Autonomous-Secure transcripts of the Adult Attachment Interview than Unproductive mothers, who tend to present Non-Autonomous or Insecure transcripts, taking the two groups together, urban and rural (Chi square=10.353 df=1 p < .001). The Observed Match (mothers that rate as Autonomous in the AAI who are also Productive, and Non-Autonomous mothers who are Unproductive) was 64%, higher than the chance of 46% (see Table IIIC).

Table III. Relations between mothers' basic tendency toward Productivity-Unproductivity in urban and rural samples with attachment instruments

Attachment Instruments		Productive	Unproductive	
A. Infant Attachment Pattern Observed Match=66% Chance Expected Match=50%	Secure	23 (17.4)	15 (20.6)	Chi Square =7.349 df=1 p <.006
	Insecure	9 (14.6)	23 (17.4)	
B. Mothers' Sensitivity as observed in videotape Observed Match=67% Chance Expected Match=45%	Low	8 (15.8)	27 (27)	Chi Square =16.144 df=1 p <.000
	Middle/High	20 (12.2)	7 (14.8)	
C. Adult Attachment Interview Observed Match=64% Chance Expected Match=46%	Autonomous-Secure	19 (12.7)	8 (14.3)	Chi Square=10.352 df=1 p <.001
	Non-Autonomous-Insecure	11 (17.3)	26 (19.7)	

Note: Expected frequencies appear in parenthesis. Predicted cells are bold.

Discussion

This study may be considered as an attempt to facilitate the appraisal of mothers' emotional states which seem to be clinically transcendent to the care giving quality they offer to their infants. The assessment of the above mentioned 6, 5-point scales were very helpful for becoming aware of when and where the diverse attitudes considered in each of the scales were manifested throughout the responses to the questionnaires; the scores on the scales appeared, as we have mentioned before, significantly related to both the basic character tendency shown by mothers in the combined group and the attachment instruments.

The Receptive character orientation was prevalent among both groups and seems to be related to their everyday activities, dedicated basically to the care of the family and household. Their attitudes towards these may be vital and meaningful but may also be in other cases passive and with a pervading resignation quality.

The results show that the daily material conditions of existence were closely related to the shared character traits, especially the basic tendency toward Productivity-



Unproductivity in the mothers. The Very poor mothers, in the rural group, were almost exclusively Unproductive (a finding that was proven through statistically significant results) even compared to the Poor mothers -the vast majority of whom were Productive, and in greater contrast to the other socio-economic levels studied in this rural group. A further careful analysis of what allowed the development of the exceptionally productive cases under these conditions (one in this study) should follow.

On the other hand Upper-middle and Upper class mothers in the urban group were more likely to be rated Unproductive than Middle-lower and Middle-middle income groups, although in this case the results did not reach statistical significance. Counting with economical resources beyond the required for fulfilling everyday life needs, seems to us to signal here to the possibility that these may not conduct by themselves to a better quality of life or care giving.

In fact the mothers studied in the urban group –as described in method- may have been filtered because most of them were coming from support groups like the Breast Feeding League or natural childbirth and early stimulation classes for their babies, thus perhaps being women especially interested in their children's development and thus having specific qualities that can make them not representative of the overall urban population.

These findings may be especially significant to us, as we found that basic tendencies toward Productivity or Unproductivity were in turn related with the babies' attachment patterns, the mothers' sensitivity in the treatment of their babies and the Adult Attachment Interviews.

Although we worked with a small group and further research is necessary among different and broader samples, we have found that recognizing and trying to decipher the specific characteristics of different economic everyday life conditions in diverse cultures, can allow to understand the effects of them on the mothers, and how they comply their central role in the emotional development of the children (see also extreme conditions in Gojman & Millán, 2008).

Our findings speak of the suffering of the poor excluded families. Also of the non productive tendency in Upper and Upper-middle class mothers.

The desire or conscious intention of mothers to favor their children's development may be generalized, but may ultimately not be achieved when raising them and thereby facing their own childhood experiences, which they may often involuntarily repeat in their care giving, and also importantly by being affected by the social conditions of a system that can bent them all to impulsive consumption, which divert and alienate them; something that—we believe—can only be countered to some extent by a genuine attitude in favor of life, joy and hope.

Let us end this preliminary report by still agreeing with the 1970 outlook of Fromm and Maccoby at the end of their study (p. 237):

"The process of industrialization, increasing alienation and hunger for commodities, and the new values of industrial society, profoundly influence the mentality of the peasant in spite of the fact that economically he hardly participates in the new structure. What we find in the village, as in many peasant societies all over the world, is the victorious march of the spirit of technological industrialism destroying



the traditional values and replacing them with nothing except a vague longing for the good life represented by the (*dream of the*) City”.

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