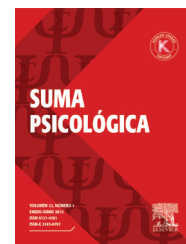




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Differences in allocation patterns and in the use of distributive principles emerge from children of Brazilian parents in Brazil and in the United States

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A B S T R A C T

This study aimed to investigate differences in the way children in Brazil and USA allocate resources and justify their decisions in a fictional situation. The sample was composed by 178 children of Brazilian parents: 98 Brazilian, living in Brazil, and 80 American children, who had low familiarity with Brazilian culture. Participants were requested to resolve a distributive dilemma during which characters with different personal attributes reunited to a picnic in a public park. The results showed that most children preferred equality or near-equality patterns of distribution to allocate the food among the characters of the dilemma. Preference for other patterns of distribution like equity and need was related to age and nationality. Also, children who used equality as justification for their distributions were more consistent (that is, they distributed the food using an allocation system who matched their justification) than children who used other types of justifications. Results are discussed in light of recent works on sharing and processes of socialization during childhood. © 2014 Fundación Universitaria Konrad Lorenz. Published by Elsevier España, S.L.U. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons CC BY-NC ND Licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Diferencias en los patrones de distribución y en el uso de los principios distributivos surgidas de los niños de padres brasileños en Brasil y Estados Unidos

R E S U M E N

Este estudio trató de investigar las diferencias en el modo de distribución de los recursos por parte de los niños en Brasil y Estados Unidos, y en la justificación de sus decisiones en una situación ficticia. La muestra se compuso de 178 niños de padres brasileños: 98 niños

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brasileños que viven en Brasil, y 80 niños americanos, poco familiarizados con la cultura brasileña. Se solicitó a los participantes que resolvieran un dilema distributivo, durante el cual los personajes con diferentes atributos personales se reunían para hacer un picnic en un parque público. Los resultados reflejaron que la mayoría de los niños prefirieron patrones de distribución de igualdad o no igualdad para repartir la comida entre los personajes del dilema. La preferencia por otros patrones de distribución tales como la equidad y la necesidad guardó relación con la edad y la nacionalidad. También se observó más concordancia en los niños que utilizaron la igualdad como justificación de sus distribuciones (es decir, distribuyeron los alimentos utilizando el sistema de reparto que se correspondía con su justificación) que en los niños que utilizaron otros tipos de justificación. Los resultados se analizan a la luz de los trabajos recientes sobre la acción de repartir y los procesos de socialización durante la infancia.

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Culture has been suggested to be an important mechanism that enables humans to develop socio-cognitive abilities for cooperation (Henrich & McElreath, 2003; Henrich & Henrich, 2007; Chudek & Henrich, 2011) through a gene-culture co-evolution (Richerson & Boyd, 2005). From that point of view, cooperative behavior is conceptualized as one of the origins of human morality (Tomasello & Vaish, 2013). Moreover, human beings would be born with specific cognitive mechanisms to acquire and maintain culture in its great diversity (Sperber & Hirschfeld, 2004; Claidière & Sperber, 2007). This would in turn lead to a variety of ways to cooperate and to elaborate social norms and values, including how to distribute resources.

Distributive justice, in a developmental perspective, was first studied by Piaget in his work on moral judgment (Piaget, 1932). In his study, Piaget observed three distributive principles: authority, absolutist egalitarianism, and equity. Along these lines, Damon (1977, 1980) found that by age of three children are able to reason in terms of justice when allocating resources, and that a preference for considering someone else's need increases with age. Several studies have confirmed the association between age and children's ability to use and coordinate different distributive justice principles (Dell'Aglio & Hutz, 2001; Frederickson & Simmonds, 2008; McGillicuddy-De-Lisi, Vinchur & Watkins, 1991; Sampaio, Camino & Roazzi, 2007; Sigelman & Waitzman, 1991; Takagishi, Kameshima, Koizumi & Yamagishi, 2010; Wong & Nunes, 2003).

Cross-cultural studies indicate that cultural differences might influence sharing from an early age (Rochat et al., 2009; Henrich & McElreath, 2003). Also, socialization processes within each culture could affect the way children coordinate distributive principles when they allocate resources on hypothetical scenarios and justify their allocations. Indeed, it could be particularly relevant if cultures that emphasize either collectivist or individualistic values are contrasted.

Immigrants are an interesting group to investigate this kind of situation — especially immigrants' children, as they might be influenced both by their parents' and by their peers' norms

and values. In order to verify the strength of socialization processes and culture on distributive judgments, this study considered two different populations: children of Brazilian immigrant parents in the United States, and Brazilian children in Brazil.

Studying these two groups enables us to identify the influence of each culture on distributive judgments, as these children were born, raised and live in two different countries: one of them, Brazil, described by some authors as a *Simpatia* country, with prevailing collectivist values, and the other with more individualistic values (Gouveia & Clemente, 2000; Levine, Norenzayan & Philbrick, 2001; Matsumoto et al., 2008). In fact, cross-cultural studies showed Brazilians at the top of a ranked list of the most helpful persons whenever a stranger is in need, among participants from 23 countries, while the participants from the United States ranked next to last (Levine et al., 2001). So, if children who were born in USA allocate resources differently as compared to children who were born in Brazil, this could be attributed to their distinct cultures. If this doesn't happen, it is impossible to say anything, since it could mean either that culture had no influence, or alternatively that they were more influenced by their parents.

In addition, socialization processes could also be investigated because children in both countries have Brazilian parents, therefore a similar influence of norms and values from family. However, for those who were born in USA, the social norms and values of American culture are acquired by socialization through their peers, whereas they have acquired Brazilian norms and values from their parents. So, if different judgments of resources allocation are made by these two groups, it could be said that —in addition to cultural influence— children privilege norms and values from their peers, in regards to allocation of resources. So what could we say about children who have a cultural environment at home, and a different one among their peers? In these situations, we can ask whether parents' culture would influence more or less than the local (peer) culture.

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