

Parenting dimensions in migrant and Spanish families. Self-determination theory and positive parenting

Dimensiones educativas parentales en familias migrantes y españolas. Teoría de la autodeterminación y parentalidad positiva

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Abstract:

In keeping with the principles of positive parenting, understood as parental actions based on the best interests of children and aimed at their overall development, self-determination theory (SDT) posits that it is the family that must satisfy three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Owing to migratory movement, the wide range of cultures present in Spain, and the fact that the family is the preferred place to experience human relationships, this context seems to be an ideal setting for testing the apparent universality of SDT. Hence, the main objective of this study was to examine the parenting dimensions: autonomy (autonomy support vs psychological

control), relatedness (warmth vs rejection), and competence (structure vs chaos) and their influence on children's behaviors in families from a wide range of international backgrounds. The sample comprised a total of 3428 parents and 1785 children attending primary education (7-13 years old) in eight autonomous communities in Spain. Information was collected using three standardized questionnaires, adapted and validated for the Spanish context. The results show that, regardless of family origin, there were higher scores in positive parenting dimensions (autonomy support, warmth, and structure) than negative dimensions (psychological control, rejection and chaos). The findings also indicate that warmth had a positive effect on

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children's behaviors while psychological control had a negative effect, as well as that there were some differences between certain geographical zones in warmth, structure, and chaos. Our study provides confirmation of the universality of the precepts of SDT and positive parenting in families from a wide range of geographical and cultural backgrounds in the Spanish context.

Keywords: family; migration; self-determination theory; positive parenting; family education; parental education.

Resumen:

En concordancia con los principios de la parentalidad positiva (entendida esta como la actuación de los progenitores basada en el interés superior de los menores y dirigida a su desarrollo integral), la teoría de la autodeterminación (TAD) plantea que la familia debe satisfacer tres necesidades psicológicas básicas: autonomía, relación y competencia. Debido a los movimientos migratorios, a la gran heterogeneidad cultural presente en España y al hecho de que la familia se constituye como ámbito preferente para vivenciar las relaciones humanas, dicho contexto parece un escenario idóneo para comprobar la aparente universalidad de la TAD. De ahí que el principal objetivo de este trabajo fuera analizar las dimensiones

educativas parentales: autonomía (apoyo a la autonomía *vs.* control psicológico), relación (afecto *vs.* rechazo) y competencia (estructura *vs.* caos), y su influencia en la conducta de los menores en familias de procedencias internacionales diversas. La muestra se compuso de un total de 3428 progenitores y 1785 menores que cursaban educación primaria (7-13 años) en ocho comunidades autónomas españolas. Para recoger la información, se emplearon tres cuestionarios estandarizados adaptados y validados para el contexto español. Los resultados evidencian que, con independencia del origen familiar, las dimensiones educativas positivas (apoyo a la autonomía, afecto y estructura) obtuvieron puntuaciones más elevadas que las negativas (control psicológico, rechazo y caos). También denotan la influencia positiva del afecto y negativa del control psicológico en la conducta de los menores, así como ciertos matices y diferencias entre determinadas zonas geográficas en relación con el afecto, la estructura y el caos. Por tanto, nuestra contribución confirma el cumplimiento y la universalidad de los preceptos establecidos por la TAD y la parentalidad positiva en familias de procedencias geográficas y culturales muy diversas dentro del contexto español.

Palabras clave: familia, migración, teoría de la autodeterminación, parentalidad positiva, educación familiar, educación parental.

1. Introduction

According to the classical concept of socialization from Rocher (1973), human beings need to learn social and cultural norms to adapt to their surroundings, incorporating them into their personali-

ties through the influence of various social agents. In this regard, families are people's primary in-group and socializing agent, and as such are vital to their learning, survival, and overall development, as well as being one of the main

sources of social cohesion, integration, and development. This socializing role of the family is particularly important during childhood through primary socialization. This is a time when children learn their parents sociocultural and parenting rules through observation, imitation, and reward, while at the same time, the parents (in their secondary socialization processes) learn to play their respective roles (mother/father) throughout their lives, as described by Schaffer's (1989) mutuality model. During these socialization processes, motivated learning, the assimilation of social and cultural norms through behavioral reinforcement, will play a very important role. Llopis and Llopis (2003) are adamant about this idea when referring to parenting, a process through which parents shape the behaviors that they feel are proper and desirable from their children.

It is important to emphasize that in this study we focus on parents and children as basic members of the nuclear or conjugal family as referred to by Durkheim (1892). He attributed an organic kind of solidarity to the relationships in modern societies, motivated by greater division of labor, smaller families, and greater independence from the extended family in favor of other individuals and institutions. This is a key consideration in contexts such as Spain and is related to a growing trend towards individualism or the privatization of morals. Added to that, there is a greater awareness of democratic principles such as equality and tolerance, which means that families no longer unfaithfully follow the tradition-

al rules. This has led to a fall in the number of marriages and a rise in cohabitation (Cea-D'Ancona, 2007).

The changing profile of Spanish families confirmed by recent studies (Instituto de Política Familiar, 2021; OECD, 2022) is characterized by low fertility rates, an aging society, the dominance of double source income families, greater involvement of parents in household chores and time dedicated to children, and an intergenerational support. In many dimensions, people living in Spain benefit from similar or better well-being levels than OECD countries averages. However, a significant part of the population struggles with adversities such as high poverty rates, a weak labor market, the cost of housing and significant difficulties in reconciling family and work life. Therefore, the design of policies and measures such as increasing economic benefits and employment quality, promoting paternity/maternity leave, guaranteeing equal opportunities, reducing early school leaving, ensuring the right of housing (prioritizing families with children) or improving children well-being can enable a positive impact for all families (Llano, 2023; Jorquera & Del Moral, 2020).

1.1. Migration and families

When it comes to migrant families, the role of parenting becomes even more important, if possible, given that families make up a large proportion of the migrant population (OECD, 2017). Added to that are the more limited social and emotional networks in the destination country,

due in part to how far away the extended family is, and to the idea that the family environment is the preferred place for experiencing stronger human relationships (Martín, 2008, as cited in Fernández-Hawrylak et al., 2016).

We must bear in mind that most of the migrant population (68%) in Spain originate from non-EU countries. The most common countries of origin are in Latin America (30%) and Africa (24%) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística [INE], 2023a). The most common nationalities are Moroccan (17%), Romanian (12%), and Colombian (6%). In the migrant population, the most common age range is 35-29 years old, compared to the Spanish population, where the most common is 45-49 years old (INE, 2023b). This is one reason why the migrant population is a particularly important factor in combatting the aging of the local population. It is also a relevant fact since the most common age group in the migrant population concurs with important work activity and with motherhood and paternity, central aspects in the objectives of the present study.

This multicultural social and educational reality involves what Donati (2003), in terms of family socialization, called a re-evaluation of the family, in so much as migrant families, as we have seen, largely come from pre-modern societies or societies that have followed other routes of modernization in which the family is generally considered to be a strong social structure that exhibits notable internal solidarity. This is reflect-

ed in the importance of social capital in terms of connections (family and friendship networks) in the destination country that facilitate settlement and social integration (Páez-de la Torre, 2020). Unlike native-born families, characterized by more fragmented lives (Donati, 2003) (an organic type of solidarity as noted by Durkheim in 1892) and a weakening of the family institution, families that come from more traditional societies have very strong family ties (Pérez-Díaz et al., 2001), which fit the characteristics of the mechanics of solidarity posited by Durkheim (1892) and reflect a strong sense of collectivism. Values such as kinship, sharing with others, helping members of the family in the broadest sense (the extended family), and respect for elders (grandparents) as sources of authority are often felt to be at the core of African, Latin American, Chinese, and Indian households, as noted by Habiyaakare (2003), Polanco (2003), Guo (2003), and Chittayath (2003). In Africa, China, and India in particular, we can talk about principally community-based societies that, with the advance of urbanization and capitalism, have been pushed back by the individualist societies that are more widespread nowadays in the west.

1.2. Self-determination theory as a conceptual reference framework

Within the analysis of parenting dimensions, self-determination theory (SDT) is a powerful explanatory concept that comes together with the principles of positive parenting, which is parental action based on the greater interest of

the child and aimed at developing their abilities, without violence, through recognition and setting limits (Consejo de Europa, 2006; Torío-López et al., 2022). From this perspective, it is the family that should satisfy the three basic psychological needs referred to by SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985): autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

In terms of the first of those three, *autonomy* support is the ideal parenting dimension, encouraging children to take initiative and express their opinions, and giving them space to solve their own problems (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2009). In contrast, psychological control through reward or punishment, as defined by Barber (1996, as cited in Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010), is an intrusion into children's thoughts via manipulative parenting techniques such as inducing guilt or shame and withdrawal of love, which harm children's autonomy. Baumrind (1966) identified three types of control: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Authoritative is the most desirable in terms of positive parenting. Studies in different cultural samples have shown that the psychologically controlling parenting profile is frequently associated with negative results in children (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010; Yu et al., 2014).

The second need, *relatedness*, refers to a feeling of belonging and is facilitated by communicating respect and affection (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It has been widely demonstrated that when adults offer attention, warmth, and emotional support,

children's development sees notable benefits. In addition, parental lack of affection has a negative effect on children's physical and intellectual development and may lead to potential emotional disorders that make subsequent social relationships more difficult, as well as affecting the development of their adult personality (Abad, 1993; Bowlby, 1951; Mestre et al., 1997; Torío-López et al., 2008).

Lastly, *competence* is about the need to acquire certain tools that will allow children to do certain tasks and overcome adversity (Torío-López et al., 2022). Ryan and Deci (2020) refer to the sensation of being able to succeed and grow and indicated that this is better satisfied in well-structured (non-chaotic) environments with positive feedback and opportunities for growth. Farkas and Grolnick (2010) note six components for parents or guardians that characterized structure in the home: clear rules, guidelines and expectations; predictable consequences; task-focused feedback; opportunity to meet expectations; rationales for rules and expectations; and authority.

Moreover, the satisfaction and frustration of these basic psychological needs would be related to adolescents' well-being and psychological maladjustment (Van der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2017; Rodríguez-Meirinhos et al., 2020). Without any doubts, prosocial disposition can be considered as a protective factor or modulator of aggressive behavior and emotional instability. Tur-Porcar et al.

(2018) verify the positive relationship of prosocial behavior with attachment (father and mother), functional coping and peers acceptance. Likewise, they showed the negative relationship of prosocial behavior with abandonment (father and mother), emotional instability, aggressiveness, dysfunctional coping and peers rejection.

SDT suggests that these three psychological needs are universal and part of the human condition, even in more collectivist cultures, as Soenens et al. (2015) noted. According to Donati (2003), the process of intra-occidental and intra-continental cultural dialog that we engage in nowadays, which includes ingredients such as identity and family relationships, is a huge opportunity for any comparison between family cultures to also show what they have in common, regardless of origin. In this regard, Spain, with the wide variety of cultures that families here have originated from, is an ideal setting in which to test this apparent universality. Given that, the following objectives for the study were established: a) analyze the parenting dimensions of migrant families in Spain using SDT as a theoretical framework: autonomy (autonomy support vs psychological control), relatedness (warmth vs rejection), and competence (structure vs chaos); b) examine the possible differences and similarities in the parenting dimensions in terms of family origin; c) determine children's opinions about the autonomy provided by their parents and whether this corresponds to the parents' opinions in the migrant families; and d)

predict the children's behaviors according to the parenting dimensions, considering family origin and educational attainment.

We hypothesize that the main precepts of SDT are universal and also apply in the Spanish context, regardless of family origin (Spanish/migrants), and that origin will not determine differences in children's behaviors. This information should help us to clarify guidelines, and lead to more accurate diagnoses from which interventions can be designed that are aimed at the most common family profiles in Spain.

2. Method

The methodology used in the study followed a non-experimental, *ex post facto* design.

2.1. Participants

The sample was made up of 5213 participants. 85.8% of the families were Spanish and 14.2% migrants. The current migrant population in Spain is around 12% (INE, 2023c), which is a similar proportion in our study, indicating that this is a representative sample. The mean age of the Spanish parents was 43 years old; the mean age of the migrant parents was 42.9. The children were aged between 7 and 13 years old (in the 3rd to the 6th year of primary education). The families were resident in eight of the autonomous communities in Spain, and the migrant families (like the general migrant population in Spain) came from a wide range of geographical

regions: North Africa (22.1%); Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil (18.7%); the Andean States (12.8%); Eastern Europe (11.4%); Western Europe (10.7%); the Southern Cone (10.4%); Central America and Mexico (7.6%); Sub-Saharan Africa (2.4%); Asia (2.1%); and North America and Australia (1.7%). 847 (47.5%) of the sample were boys and 932 (52.3%) girls. The sample was formed by 1627 (48.3%) fathers with an average age of 45.2 years and by 1742 (51.7%) mothers with an average age of 42.73 years. A total number of 1738 families formed the sample, being most of them nuclear or conjugal and heterosexual. Both parents participated in the study.

We found a relationship between the type of school the children attended and the family type (Fisher's test, $p < .001$). Although most of the children attended state-funded public schools (78.4% of Spanish families [SF], 69.1% of migrant families [MF]), a higher proportion of children from migrant families than Spanish families went to *concertado* schools [these are semi-private schools that receive some state funding but are administratively independent] (20.5% SF, 30.2% MF), whereas a higher proportion of children from Spanish families attended private schools (1.1% SF, 0.7% MF), which were the minority. In terms of parental educational attainment, there was also a relationship with family type (Pearson's chi-squared test, $p < .001$). In the Spanish families, 45% had secondary-school qualifications, 42.7% had university-level qualifications, and 12.2% had only a primary education. In

the migrant families the picture was different: 54.6% had a secondary-school education, a higher proportion (18.9%) had only a primary education, and a smaller proportion (26.5%) had a university education. These data are in line with Reher et al. (2007), who note a moderate level of education in the migrant population, and with Iglesias et al. (2020), who indicate that migrants' cultural capital was significantly lower than the native population's. According to gender differences and level of studies, it can be observed that an important number of fathers and mothers had secondary-school qualifications (47.4% fathers and 45.7% mothers) and university-level qualifications (35.4% fathers and 44.2% mothers). 17.2% of fathers and 10.1% mothers had only a primary education. It should be noted that the percentage of mothers with university-level qualifications was almost 10 points higher than fathers' one.

Looking at the migrant families' incomes, lower incomes were more common: <15 000 euros (44.4%), 15 000-25 000 euros (22%), 25 000-35 000 euros (11.8%). In the Spanish families, the incomes were higher: 15 000-25 000 euros (22.9%), 25 000-35 000 euros (19.8%), >55 000 euros (15.2%) ($p < .001$).

The majority of parents were in full-time work (75.9% SF, 53.6% MF), whereas it was more common for migrant families to homemakers (14.1%) or unemployed (12.1%) than for Spanish parents (5.4% and 6.1%, respectively) ($p < .001$). This sociodemographic picture is in line with

reports from the Spanish Economic and Social Council (CES España, 2019): wage gaps between foreigners and Spanish workers, and a worse position in the job market for the migrant population, with higher rates of unemployment. The European Anti-Poverty Network in Spain (EAPN España, 2021) noted that 36.3% of EU non-nationals living in Spain and 49.5% of those from the rest of the world were living below the poverty line. This is consistent with the most commonly indicated incomes from the migrant families in our study: <15000 euros (44.4%) and 15000-25000 euros (22%), close to the poverty line. The Spanish charities Foessa Foundation and Cáritas (2022) have also noted this pattern, which has only been made worse by the pandemic, highlighting nationality and ethnicity as key factors in social exclusion. The various sources mentioned underscore the representativeness of our sample in Spain, both quantitatively and qualitatively, with regard to the sociodemographic characteristics described above.

2.2. Instruments

The data were collected via standardized questionnaires that had been adapted and validated for the Spanish context. These were completed by the parents and children from the Spanish and migrant families:

- Parents as a Social Context Questionnaire (PSCQ) (Skinner et al., 2005; Spanish adaptation by Inda-Caro et al., 2023). This is a questionnaire for parents to complete individually, comprising 31 items that evaluate

the parenting model based on SDT with three dimensions (Skinner et al., 2005): autonomy support (6 items; e.g., “I encourage my child to express their opinions, even when they differ from mine”) vs psychological control (8 items; e.g., “I do not allow my child to decide too many things for themselves”); warmth (6 items; e.g., “I do special things with my child”) vs rejection (5 items; e.g., “My child fights me at every turn”); structure (5 items; e.g., “I make it clear to my child what will happen if they do not follow the rules”) vs chaos (6 items; e.g., “My child needs more time than I have available”). The items are presented with a four-point Likert scale (from 1 = completely disagree to 4 = completely agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .916. The Bartlett test indicated that the principle of sphericity was fulfilled ($\chi^2 = 17,543.8$, $p = .000$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test obtained a value of .883 (Inda-Caro et al., 2023).

- Prosocial Behavior Scale (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993; Spanish adaptation by Tur, 2003). This instrument is completed by children and comprises three scales:
 - The first one measures the child’s altruistic behavior through 15 items with three responses: rarely, sometimes, never (e.g., “I try to help others”). Cronbach’s alpha was .72 for the Spanish version (Tur-Porcar et al., 2018);
 - The second one is the Emotional Instability Scale (Caprara &

Pastorelli, 1993; Spanish adaptation by Del Barrio et al., 2001), which has 20 items evaluating children's behavior related to lack of control, impulsivity, and emotionality in social contexts. The items have three response options indicating how often each behavior occurs: rarely, sometimes, never (e.g., "I'm impatient"). Alpha for the Del Barrio et al. (2001) version, with children aged 7-10 years old, was .74 (2001); for the Tur-Porcar et al. (2018) adaptation, with children aged 7-12, it was .81.

- The third one is the Physical and Verbal Aggressiveness Questionnaire (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993; Spanish adaptation by Del Barrio et al., 2001). This has 20 items evaluating behavior aimed at physically or verbally hurting others, each with three response options: *rarely*, *sometimes*, *never* (e.g., "I hurt my classmates"). Alpha for the Del Barrio et al. (2001) version, with children aged 7-10 years old, was .84 (2001); for the Tur-Porcar et al. (2018) adaptation, with children aged 7-12, it was .89.
- Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (PPASS) (Mageau et al., 2015; Spanish adaptation by Inda-Caro et al., 2022). This scale is completed by children, and consists of 18 items, each with four response options: *almost never*, *not very often*, *quite often*, and *almost always*. It measures the

children's perceptions of their parents' support for autonomy (9 items; e.g., "They can put themselves in my shoes and understand how I feel") or psychological control (9 items; e.g., "When they want me to stop doing something, they say or do things that make me feel bad"). The original version was translated into Spanish. Cronbach's alpha was .92. The Bartlett test indicated that the principle of sphericity was fulfilled ($\chi^2 = 2069.0$, $p < .000$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test obtained a value of .92 (Inda-Caro et al., 2022).

2.3. Procedure

The instruments were adapted from English to Spanish following the rules of the International Test Commission. Two translations were made from English by members of the research team which were assessed by two experts (T1). Subsequently, they were back-translated into English by two native-speaking translators (T2) to confirm a definitive Spanish version following agreement between the participating members of the research team. Following this adaptation to Spanish, the members of the research team, with the help of area coordinators (teachers from various universities), contacted schools in eight different autonomous communities in Spain to ask them to participate in the study. Those who agreed were sent a letter explaining the study which also included a form for informed consent and authorization from parents. The children completed their questionnaires during normal class time, taking between 25 and 45 minutes

to do so depending on age. Owing to the covid-19 situation, certain modifications were required by the authorities (e.g., online assistance for the teachers in the schools, instruments being administered by form tutors following written instructions from the research group, etc.). Parents completed their questionnaires outside of school and returned the completed instruments to the school in sealed envelopes delivered by their children. None of the participants received any reward or remuneration for their participation in the study, which was approved by the Ethics Committee of Principality of Asturias (Cod. CEIm PAsT: no 200/19).

2.4. Data analysis

A descriptive analysis was performed first. The study of the relationships between two variables, performed on the sociodemographic variables to better understand the representativeness of the sample (e.g., educational attainment and family), were examined using Pearson chi-squared and Fisher's test given the failure to verify the hypothesis about expected frequencies. To analyze the parental dimensions and their relationship with geographical areas of origin, we looked at the differences of variables between more than two groups with the ANOVA test or the Kruskal-Wallis test depending on whether normality and/or homoskedasticity was confirmed, along with Dunn's test to determine which groups were significantly different. In order to make the statistical analysis possible and to reduce bias, we chose to group countries of origin based on cul-

turally close geographical regions, namely: Sub-Saharan Africa; North America and Australia; Central America and Mexico; Asia; the Southern Cone; the Andean States; Eastern Europe; Western Europe; North Africa; Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil.

This gave a balance between achieving a minimum number of data points per category and avoiding overgeneralization. Where there were two groups to compare, we used the Student *t* test or Welch's test for independent samples (e.g., the relationship between PSCQ autonomy support and family). Following that, we specified ANCOVA models to predict children's behaviors based on the parenting dimensions of autonomy support, psychological control, and warmth. Parents' educational attainment and the family origin were also considered in examining the differences. The level of significance was set at .05. Statistical analysis was done using *R* software (R Core Team, 2022) version 4.1.3.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive and correlational analysis

The results from the PSCQ questionnaire given to Spanish parents indicated a high level of autonomy support ($M = 3.74$; $SD = 0.36$) on the 4-point scale; a moderate level of psychological control ($M = 1.92$; $SD = 0.61$); a high level of warmth ($M = 3.41$; $SD = 0.46$) (Table 1), with frequencies as follows: high warmth (50.2%) and low warmth (49.8%) (Table 2); and a moderate level of rejection ($M = 1.74$;

SD = 0.57). There was also a high score in structure (*M* = 3.43; *SD* = 0.46) and a moderate score in chaos (*M* = 1.73; *SD* = 0.54) (Table 1).

Looking at the scores from the parents in migrant families, there was also a high level of autonomy support, similar to the Spanish parents, with a mean score of 3.77 (*SD* = 0.32). The mean score for psychological control was also moderate, although slightly higher than the score from the Spanish parents (*M* = 2.04; *SD* = 0.64). We found a high score in warmth (*M*=3.50; *SD*=0.47) (Table 1), with the following frequency distribu-

tion: high scores (60.4%) and low scores (39.6%) (Table 2); and a moderate level of rejection (*M*=1.80; *SD*=0.63). Taking into consideration the great academic consensus regarding the importance of warmth in child development these data were particularly highlighted in the current study. Relative percentages were also provided as complementary data. In both measures these were higher than the Spanish families. In the third dimension, competence, we again saw higher scores than the Spanish parents gave, with a high level in structure (*M* = 3.53; *SD* = 0.42) and a moderate level in chaos (*M* = 1.91; *SD* = 0.62) (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Mean scores from parents in the parenting dimensions.

PSCQ parenting dimensions	Parents in migrant families			Parents in Spanish families		
	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Autonomy support	374	3.77	0.32	2286	3.74	0.36
Psychological control	362	2.04	0.64	2241	1.92	0.61
Warmth	365	3.50	0.47	2290	3.41	0.46
Rejection	367	1.80	0.63	2269	1.74	0.57
Structure	371	3.53	0.42	2279	3.43	0.46
Chaos	361	1.91	0.62	2237	1.73	0.54

TABLE 2. Distribution of frequencies and percentages in warmth.

Level of warmth	Migrant families		Spanish families	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
High warmth	267	60.4	1336	50.2
Low warmth	175	39.6	1325	49.8
Total	442	100.0	2661	100.0

Subsequently, we examined the relationships between the parenting dimensions and the different areas of origin of the families. Due to the heterogeneity of the sample, the study focused on geographical areas (Table 3) instead of family origin (Spanish/migrants) (Table 4). We found no statistically significant differences in the relationships between PSCQ autonomy support and geographical area (Kruskal-Wallis test, $p = .385$), or between PSCQ psychological control and geographical area (Kruskal-Wallis test, $p = .134$), or between PSCQ rejection and geographical area (Kruskal-Wallis test, $p = .108$), but we did find significant differences in the relationship between PSCQ warmth and geographical area (Kruskal-Wallis test, $p = .003$). Dunn's test indicated that certain pairs did produce significant differences. In order of significance, they were: Central America-Mexico and Spain ($p = .002$), Central America-Mexico and Western Europe ($p = .009$), North Africa and Spain ($p = .029$), and Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil and Spain ($p = .041$). Parents from Central America-Mexico, North Africa, and Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil demonstrated significantly higher levels of warmth than Spanish parents (or parents from Western Europe in the case of Central America-Mexico).

With regard to the final dimension, competence, analysis of the relationship between PSCQ structure and geographical area, we did find significant differences (Kruskal-Wallis test, $p < .001$). Dunn's test again indicated that there were significant differences between cer-

tain pairs. Ranked by significance, they were the Andean States and Spain ($p < .001$), the Southern Cone and Spain ($p = .005$), the Andean States and Western Europe ($p = .011$), Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil and Spain ($p = .021$), and the Southern Cone and Western Europe ($p = .049$). Parents from the Andean States, the Southern Cone, and Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil had significantly higher levels of structure than Spanish parents, or than parents from Western Europe in the case of the Andean States and the Southern Cone.

Finally, analysis of the relationship between PSCQ chaos and geographical area, we did find significant differences (Kruskal-Wallis test, $p < .001$). Dunn's test indicated that there were statistically significant differences between many pairs. In order of significance, namely: Eastern Europe and Spain ($p < .001$), North Africa and Spain ($p = .001$), the Andean States and Spain ($p = .002$), Asia and Spain ($p = .002$), Asia and Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil ($p = .004$), Asia and the Southern Cone ($p = .006$), Asia and Western Europe ($p = .008$), Asia and North Africa ($p = .01$), Central America-Mexico and Asia ($p = .014$), the Southern Cone and Eastern Europe ($p = .019$), Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil and Eastern Europe ($p = .021$), Asia and the Andean States ($p = .025$), and Eastern Europe and Western Europe ($p = .034$). Parents from North Africa and the Andean States had significantly higher levels of chaos than Spanish parents. Parents from Asia had significantly higher levels than most other regions:

Spain, Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil, the Southern Cone, Western Europe, North Africa, Central America-Mexico, and the Andean States. Parents from Eastern Europe also had higher levels than parents from Spain, the Southern Cone, Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil, or Western Europe (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Relationships between PSCQ parenting dimensions and geographical area.

PSCQ parenting dimension and geographical area	Kruskal-Wallis test	Pairs with significant differences according to Dunn's test
PSCQ autonomy support and geographical area	.385	
PSCQ psychological control and geographical area	.134	
PSCQ warmth and geographical area	<.001	Central America-Mexico and Spain ($p = .002$) Central America-Mexico and Western Europe ($p = .009$) North Africa and Spain ($p = .029$) Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil and Spain ($p = .041$)
PSCQ rejection and geographical area	.108	
PSCQ structure and geographical area	<.001	Andean States and Spain ($p < .001$) Southern Cone and Spain ($p = .005$) Andean States and Western Europe ($p = .011$) Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil and Spain ($p = .021$) Southern Cone and Western Europe ($p = .049$)
PSCQ chaos and geographical area	<.001	Eastern Europe and Spain ($p < .001$) North Africa and Spain ($p = .001$) Andean States and Spain ($p = .002$) Asia and Spain ($p = .002$) Asia and Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil ($p = .004$) Asia and Southern Cone ($p = .006$) Asia and Western Europe ($p = .008$) Asia and North Africa ($p = .01$) Central America-Mexico and Asia ($p = .014$) Southern Cone and Eastern Europe ($p = .019$) Venezuela-Colombia-Brazil and Eastern Europe ($p = .021$) Asia and Andean States ($p = .025$) Eastern Europe and Western Europe ($p = .034$)



We found similar results when we examined whether the parenting dimensions behaved differently for the different levels of the family variable (migrant/Spanish) (Table 4). Looking at the relationship between PSCQ autonomy support and family or PSCQ rejection and family, there were no significant differences between the groups (Welch's test, $p = .06$) (Welch's test, $p = .068$). Analyzing the relationship between PSCQ psychological control

and family we did find significant differences (Student t test, $p < .001$). There was a slightly higher level of parental control in migrant families. A similar result was found for the relationship between PSCQ warmth and family (Student t test, $p = .001$), with higher levels of warmth in migrant families. The difference was more notable in structure (Welch's test, $p < .001$), and particularly in chaos (Welch's test, $p < .001$), with higher scores from the migrant families.

TABLE 4. Relationships between PSCQ parenting dimensions and family.

PSCQ parenting dimension and family	Welch's test / Student t test
PSCQ autonomy support and family	.06
PSCQ psychological control and family	<.001
PSCQ warmth and family	.001
PSCQ rejection and family	.068
PSCQ structure and family	<.001
PSCQ chaos and family	<.001

When looking at the first parenting dimension, autonomy, we also asked the children about their perceptions of their parents' autonomy support and psychological control, and examined whether the children's and parents' views agreed. We found through the correlations (Spearman test) that the association between PPASS autonomy support (children) and PSCQ autonomy support (parents) was on the limit of significance ($p = .05$). The children's

mean score for autonomy support was moderately high ($M = 3.10$; $SD = 0.58$), and lower than the parent's mean score, which was high ($M = 3.77$; $SD = 0.32$). There was a significant positive relationship between the two in terms of psychological control ($p < .001$), with a high level of agreement between the mean scores from PPAS psychological control (children) ($M = 1.81$; $SD = 0.55$) and PSCQ psychological control (parents) ($M = 1.92$; $SD = 0.61$), both

indicating a moderate level of psychological control.

3.2. ANCOVA models

We created ANCOVA models for children’s behaviors (prosocial behavior, emotional instability, and physical or verbal aggressiveness). The predictor variables included in each model were the results from the parenting dimensions autonomy and relatedness, along with two variables for examining differences: parental education and family origin.

As Table 5 shows, we confirmed that children’s behavior is not associated with the parenting dimensions and there were no significant differences according to parental education or family origin.

In the second child-related category, we found that high scores for parental

warmth were associated with low scores for children’s emotional instability ($p = .002$), which were significantly lower in migrant families ($p = .019$) or when the parents had higher educational attainment ($p = .001$). In contrast, high scores in psychological control were associated with high scores in emotional instability ($p < .001$) (Table 6).

With regard to children’s verbal or physical aggressiveness, we found that high scores in parental psychological control were associated with higher scores in aggressive attitudes ($p < .001$). There were differences according to parental educational attainment, with parents who had lower levels of education associated with higher scores in physical aggressiveness ($p = .034$), which were significantly higher in migrant families ($p = .048$) (Table 7).

TABLE 5. ANCOVA coefficients for prosocial behavior with the results of the parenting dimensions as predictors.

Prosocial behavior	Univariate coefficient	Multivariate coefficient
Warmth	0.02 ($p = .053$)	0.01 ($p = .473$)
Rejection	-0.02 ($p = .015$)	-0.01 ($p = .464$)
Psychological control	-0.03 ($p = .001$)	-0.02 ($p = .068$)
Autonomy support	0.03 ($p = .073$)	0.00 ($p = .812$)
Educational attainment		
Primary		
Secondary	-0.00 ($p = .962$)	-0.00 ($p = .858$)
University	0.03 ($p = .056$)	0.03 ($p = .100$)
Family		
Spanish		
Migrant	-0.03 ($p = .044$)	-0.02 ($p = .383$)

TABLE 6. ANCOVA coefficients for emotional instability with the results from parenting dimensions as predictors.

Emotional instability	Univariate coefficient	Multivariate coefficient
Warmth	-0.10 ($p < .001$)	-0.06 ($p = .002$)
Rejection	0.07 ($p < .001$)	0.01 ($p = .516$)
Psychological control	0.10 ($p < .001$)	0.08 ($p < .001$)
Autonomy support	-0.08 ($p < .001$)	0.00 ($p = .958$)
Educational attainment		
Primary		
Secondary	-0.02 ($p = .297$)	-0.01 ($p = .539$)
University	-0.09 ($p < .001$)	-0.08 ($p = .001$)
Family		
Spanish		
Migrant	-0.04 ($p = .039$)	-0.05 ($p = .019$)

TABLE 7. ANCOVA coefficients for physical or verbal aggressiveness with the results from parenting dimensions as predictors

Physical or verbal aggressiveness	Univariate coefficient	Multivariate coefficient
Warmth	-0.06 ($p < .001$)	-0.02 ($p = .236$)
Rejection	0.04 ($p < .001$)	0.00 ($p = .758$)
Psychological control	0.06 ($p < .001$)	0.05 ($p < .001$)
Autonomy support	-0.07 ($p < .001$)	-0.02 ($p = .257$)
Educational attainment		
Primary		
Secondary	-0.01 ($p = .540$)	-0.02 ($p = .430$)
University	-0.04 ($p = .046$)	-0.04 ($p = .034$)
Family		
Spanish		
Migrant	-0.02 ($p = .191$)	-0.04 ($p = .048$)

4. Discussion and conclusions

In the Spanish context, migrant families demonstrated what might be desirable according to the precepts of SDT put forward by Deci and Ryan (1985) about the main psychological needs and their corresponding parenting dimensions. In the first place, with regard to autonomy, there was a high level of autonomy support and a moderate level of psychological control. Perceived autonomy support is slightly lower in children than in parents but perceived psychological control is similar in parents and children. In addition, there were high levels of warmth, moderate levels of rejection and higher levels of structure than chaos (which was reported at a moderate level).

Making comparisons based on where the families originated, overall, we found similarities, as reported by Soenens et al. (2015). The first similarity was in the levels reported for the various parenting dimensions, which had comparable scores regardless of family origin, especially in autonomy support. Furthermore, there were higher scores in the dimensions that are considered positive for children's development (autonomy support, warmth, and structure) than in those considered negative (psychological control, rejection, and chaos). It is worth noting that the scores for psychological control, rejection and chaos were not low, but moderate in both Spanish and migrant families. Another similarity was the negative influence of parental psychological control on children's behavior, which was associated with more physical or verbal aggressiveness and greater emotional instability, consistent

with the findings from Soenens and Vansteenkiste (2010), and Yu et al. (2014). Parental educational attainment also influenced the latter two behaviors. We found that the higher the parents' educational attainment, the lower the children's emotional instability and aggressiveness. A possible cause or relevant factor might be having university-level studies, as a key point which might provide families with more strategies in order to create a positive, non-violent climate. The final similarity was related to the clear positive influence that warmth had on children (Abad, 1993; Bowlby, 1951; Eltink et al., 2024; Mejia-Flores et al., 2024; Mestre et al., 1997; Torío-López et al., 2008). We found that the greater the parental warmth, the lower the children's emotional instability.

In terms of the differences we identified, it is worth noting that although all of the scores in the parenting dimensions were close, as noted above, they were higher in the migrant families than in the Spanish families. The biggest differences were obtained in competence, observing higher levels of chaos in migrant families. In this sense, social and economic aspects need to be considered: the absence of family or social support network, greater job segregation, precarious occupations which often involve strenuous work (CES, 2019; Iglesias et al., 2020). All these circumstances might imply more chaotic environments.

Migrant parents were also slightly more controlling, which is consistent with reports from Henao-Agudelo et al. (2016) and Yu et al. (2014), which influences

higher emotional instability and aggressive attitudes in children. They are also more affectionate, which influences lower emotional instability in children in migrant homes. This pattern is in line with findings from Donati (2003), Pérez-Díaz et al. (2001), Habiyaakare (2003), Polanco (2003), Guo (2003), and Chittayath (2003), who suggested that in families from more traditional societies (or societies at different points on the path to modernization) family and group ties are particularly close and important. Our results in terms of specific geographical area of origin were along similar lines. We found differences in warmth, structure, and chaos. Parents from Eastern Europe scored lower in warmth than those from Central America and Mexico, and lower in structure than those from the Southern Cone; parents from North Africa had higher scores in warmth and chaos than Spanish parents; Venezuelan, Colombian, and Brazilian parents scored higher in warmth and structure than Spanish parents; and Asian and Eastern European parents stood out for higher scores in chaos than most other regions. Once again, socioeconomic and labour factors need to be considered to understand chaotic environments. That is, those origins which showed the highest levels in chaos (North Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe) are the ones which experience more vulnerability.

To sum up, and by way of conclusion, we can say that in general terms the precepts laid out in SDT and positive parenting held and we have confirmed their universality in families from a wide range of geographical and cultural ori-

gins. These families demonstrated high levels in all of the parenting dimensions that effectively have a positive influence on children's overall development (autonomy support, warmth, and structure), higher than the moderate levels they exhibited in the dimensions that have negative effects (psychological control, rejection, and chaos).

We can confirm our initial hypothesis, the precepts of SDT hold in families regardless of origin, and this origin is not determinant of the differences in children's behaviors. These results, together with the importance of the family as socializing agents, show the need for continued socio-educational intervention, both for families and for the professionals that work with them, to provide resources and tools that encourage and empower positive parenting.

The similarities that we found, which are important, are not incompatible with the differences and details we observed, which are indicative of a notable heterogeneity in terms of the cultural and social diversity the families originated from. In this regard, and one limitation of the study, it is worth noting we must be cautious when generalizing the results, as they are only from the Spanish context, where all of the participants in the study resided.

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María Elena Rivoir-González: Conceptualisation; Data curation; Methodology; Writing (original draft); Writing (review & editing); Visualisation.

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