



ETNIA-E: CUADERNOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN ETNOGRÁFICA
SOBRE INFANCIA, ADOLESCENCIA Y EDUCACIÓN DEL
IMA/FMEE

Nº8:

*Strategies for Socialization into a Non-Conventional Family
Project*

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Enero 2015

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ISSN: 2254-3872



ABSTRACT

In this paper we put together data from various projects focused on the construction of non-traditional family projects in Spain: (1) a multi-sited ethnographic study on the construction of single-parent families by choice in Spain; (2) a qualitative comparative study of adoptive families in Madrid and Chicago; (3) an on-going multi-sited ethnographic project on disclosure processes in families formed via gamete donation. Across the data of these studies, involving a wide variety of family configurations (single and two-parent families, heterosexual and homo-parental families, international and interracial adopted children, partially-related biological offspring, etc.), we have identified a series of socialization strategies that are explicitly pointed out by parents as playing a role in socializing children into understanding their non-conventional family experience. Some of these strategies include creating socialization, support and leisure spaces with families of similar characteristics, multiple forms or narrative and storytelling activity on children's origin and the construction of their family project, managing conversations and interactions about their family when their children are present as over hearers or using daily interactions to construct and explore their family project. Across our data and studies socialization emerges as an active, bi-directional and reflexive process central to family and parental identities. With our findings we present a portrait of emergent processes in Spain and open the door to cross-cultural comparisons.

Keywords: Socialization - Non-conventional families - Developmental tasks - Ethnography

Non-conventional families in Spain, and probably across a variety of Western contexts, appear to navigate within a set of contradictory discourses. Academic discussions across disciplines (e.g. Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology or Law) seem to agree on the need to profoundly re-construct the definition of family in Western contexts, including aspects such as who forms a family, the nature of the bonds between members of a family unit and the mechanisms through which a family can be formed (and dissolved and re-formed). Contemporary thinking underscores how social ideas about kinship have progressively dismantled the necessary connections between marriage, sexuality, biological reproduction and family (Rivas, 2009) or how family is seen much more as an individual and "voluntary" vital project (Hochschild, 2008; Beck-Gernsheim, 1998). More generally, research discussions tend to work from a systemic perspectives and see families as dynamic social units composed of multiple sub-systems and in which individual family members may have unique family experiences and understandings of who is part of their family (Trost, 1999; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Imber-Black, 2011).

Also, family diversity has been in the policy agenda of many Western countries for at least two decades. Indeed, many non-traditional family configurations have seen crucial improvements in the legal status and policy protection of their family project - even if these changes are happening slowly and irregularly. For example, Spain legalized same-sex marriages in 2005 and opened the door to equal legal treatment of family projects headed by same-sex couples. In the area of assisted reproduction, unlike other countries in Europe, single-women may access (privately) assisted reproductive procedures and become single-mothers by choice in this way. Also, even though surrogacy is not legal in Spain, steps have been taken to protect the legal and family status of surrogate children conceived in countries where the procedure is legal.

However, despite this availability of alternative discourses on the construction and definition of family, it seems that non-conventional families continue to experience their family project as socially set against a hegemonic and normative view of family, which is ideally formed by a heterosexual married couple and their ("appropriate" number) of biological offspring (Descartes & Rudd, 2008). Based on our findings in Spain, it may be not so much that non-conventional parents report frequent explicit prejudice or discrimination against their family project but, rather, that in the daily socialization contexts of their children (school, neighborhood, media, children's literature, peers, extended family, etc.) they find few references and exemplars of their particular family project or of family diversity more generally. Consequently, parents from non-conventional families have to tackle with lack of knowledge or experience about their family project in these settings and, especially, in the institutional contexts that serve their children (i.e. schools, health settings, children's services, etc.).

These social conditions create for parents in non-conventional families what classic theories of human development would call an additional developmental task (Havighurst, 1956; Erikson, 2000; Uhlendorff, 2004; ter Laak, Heymans & Podols'kij, 1994) in which the origin, legitimacy and particular demands of their family project have to be explicitly addressed and worked through with children. Yet it is a developmental task with, at least, two particularities. First, rather than being something that is resolved at certain period of life of the individual (Havighurst, 1956; Heymans, 1994), as we will see below, understanding one's own family project is seen as an on-going process that may be worked through different stages of the life-cycle and in which parents define different needs and demands and deploy (or predict to use) different strategies as their children grow. Second, this task is primarily defined by cultural expectations, or what Eckert (1994) called developmental imperatives, in which parents and children in non-conventional families have to develop strategies and discourses to respond to socio-cultural and moral expectations regarding cultural ideals of the family and

appropriate conditions for child-rearing and optimal child development (e.g. Lee, Bristow, Faircloth & Macvarish, 2014).

In this paper we combine findings from various research projects and attempt to identify emergent and shared parental socialization strategies that focus on the construction of their particular type of family project. Our analysis draws from a systemic-ecological, active and bi-directional perspective of family socialization processes (Parke & Buriel, 2008). More broadly, such an approach is concerned with building a full portrait of socialization processes including: (a) the conditions and ecological factors that mediate in the construction of these parental strategies (i.e. extra-familial and familial variables, various media, expert discourses, support networks, etc.), (b) the enactment of particular socialization strategies and (c) the developmental effects on children of these socialization strategies. In this paper we restrict our discussion to the identification and analysis of parental strategies and focus on the "how", on the enactment of family socialization strategies in relation to the construction of alternative definitions of family and family experience that seem to be significant and shared by the non-conventional families we have worked with.

DATA: FAMILIES, METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

The data we present in this paper draws from three qualitative-ethnographic research projects focused on a variety of non-conventional family configurations in Spain.

The first project (2010-2012) is a large multi-sited ethnographic study focused on the construction of single-parent families by choice in Spain. The study targeted single women and men who formed or planned to form their family projects through assisted reproduction, adoption or permanent foster care (in the case of single men). We recruited participants in three regions in Spain (Madrid, Valencia and Catalonia) and conducted semi-structured interviews with 104 single-parents (91 women and 13 men), 34 professionals and consultants of various types in the fields of adoption or assisted reproduction and gathered visual materials and conducted interviews with 15 children. The study also involved extensive participant observation in virtual spaces where single-parents participated, collective activities of single-mothers-by-choice associations and institutional activities in assisted reproduction clinics and public or non-profit adoption agencies. It also examined in detail legislative, technical and research documents relevant to single-parenthood in Spain, as well as various media reports that covered this topic in Spain during the years of the study. Finally, the study included the collection of audio-recordings and photographs of spontaneous daily interactions in five families who had participated in previous parts of the project.

A second project (2013-14) is a small comparative study of adoptive families in the metropolitan areas of Madrid (Spain) and Chicago (USA). The participants were eight families, four in each country, that reflect the diversity of adoptive family projects in each of the regions of the study. In this study, at least one adult and child from each participating family completed a semi-structured interview supported by, at least, ten photographs of the family album chosen by each participant centered on reconstructing their family experience and history (cf. Kolb, 2008; Brown, Reavey and Brookfield, 2012). Additionally, the Spanish part of the study includes observations, video-recordings and focus group discussions with adopted children during collective reunions of adoptive families. Data from Spain includes three single-parent families and one two-parent heterosexual family who have adopted internationally in Nepal (three families) or Ethiopia (one family) - in this paper we will not examine the United States data but will refer to aspects of it in the final discussion.

The third project (2013-2015) is a large multi-sited ethnographic study on processes of disclosure of children's origins in families formed through assisted reproduction involving gamete donation (i.e.

sperm, egg or embryo donation and surrogacy). This project involves focused fieldwork in three regions (Madrid, Valencia and Catalonia) but has recruited participants throughout Spain. The study involves in-depth interviews with a large sample of families (of various types), professionals working in the field of assisted reproduction, workshops with children from these families, participant observation in virtual -including forums and personal blogs- and organizational spaces where the types of families under study interact and detailed analysis of legislative, technical and media documents on assisted reproduction and gamete donation in Spain. Also, as part of this project, we have set up a literary contest and interactive website to collect narratives and stories on children's origins produced by families formed through some form of gamete donation (<https://relatosorigenes.wordpress.com>). At the moment, the data collected from this project relevant to this paper includes: (a) the story contest website, formed by eight participating stories and multiple commentaries to each of them and two workshops organized with the children and mothers who participated in the contest; (b) various personal blogs identified as relevant by participants and/or maintained by the participants we have interviewed and; (c) so far, close to 70 interviews with adults in various types of family configurations formed through donated gamete, including male homosexual couples (surrogacy), lesbian couples (involving sperm, egg cross-donation or embryo donation), single women (involving all combinations of gamete donation) and heterosexual couples (involving all combinations of gamete donation and surrogacy).

In short, our joint analysis of the data across projects draws from a large and diverse sample of families in Spain. In terms of the family structure and sexual orientation of parents, the sample includes a wide array of compositions. However, in terms of the full variety of non-traditional family configurations, we focus particularly on family projects formed through intense investment in complex, time-consuming and costly bureaucratic (adoption) or biomedical (assisted reproduction) procedures. The data collected for the participating families is rich and multi-layered, often involving interviews with various family members (adults and children), systematic and sporadic observations (including virtual spaces) of these families and the collection of various types of written, multimodal and visual materials from the families. Table 1 summarizes the participants and data sources from each project that relevant to the discussion and analysis of this paper:

Study	Participants	Data sources for current analysis
Study 1: 'Single-parent-by-choice families'	104 Parents (mothers and fathers) 15 Children	Multi-sited ethnography: interviews, observation (including on-line spaces), visual materials, workshops, recordings of daily interaction
Study 2: 'Adoptive families in Madrid-Chicago'	4 families (Madrid): 5 parents 5 children	Case studies: Photo-interviews, home observations, observations in collective meetings.
Study 3: 'Disclosure in assisted reproduction families with gamete donation' (on-going)	70 parents (mothers and fathers) 7 children	Multi-sited ethnography: interviews, observations (including on-line spaces), documents and artifacts (photographs, blogs), written narratives, workshops.

Table 1: Summary of relevant data from each project

For this paper we have re-examined and compared previous analyses from each individual study on socialization strategies in an effort to find general patterns regarding how Spanish non-conventional families confront shared family developmental tasks. Consequently, the processes and strategies we have identified and discuss in this paper meet one or more of the following conditions: (1) are present across data sets; (2) are reflexively identified and discussed by parents as socialization strategies; (3) explicitly make family diversity/the particular family project the interactional topic. Based on this

focalization and conditions, the socialization strategies we discuss can be grouped into three interrelated sets of social practices: normalization through contact with similar families, narrative socialization and management of the interactional order.

FAMILY ORGANIZATIONS AND NORMALIZATION OF THE FAMILY PROJECT

A first strategy that is emphatically stressed by many Spanish parents is the creation of socialization events where their children can meet other children and families with similar characteristics. This strategy is pointed out more explicitly by families with structures that depart more visibly from the conventional family model (i.e. single-mothers-by-choice and homo-parental families) and translates into two interconnected forms of collective activity, which are especially important for non-conventional families in Spain: (a) the creation of family organizations/associations; and (b) organized gatherings of families (*kedadas*).

Creating and participating in organizations focused on a particular type of family configuration (i.e. adoptive families, single-parents by choice, homo-parental families, etc.) is pointed out as something very relevant for the family project of a number of participants. As said, this is underscored more clearly by members of less conventional families, and this effort is structured around two arguments. On one hand, there is a largely political goal: acting through organizations facilitates advocacy, collective interaction with media and associative activity in different arenas (e.g. with other family associations, political parties, educational activities, etc.). This political objective, among other things, explains why within larger associative movements specific organizations have emerged with a focus on the needs of families. The extract below illustrates this dynamic well by recounting the origin of an association focused on gay and lesbian families as an outgrowth of a larger LGTB association (we use pseudonyms for all participants and organizations, also unless stated otherwise all materials were originally collected and produced in Spanish and have been translated into English for this paper):

Extract 1: Interview with Miguel, current president of an association of LGTB families (July 2014)

(...) We were a group of people who had children or were trying to have children and were within the "family work-group" of VLGTB in Valencia, which is a very important collective with strong activity. But then within the "family work-group" we felt that VLGTB was not the space where we could develop. It does not have the facilities for children to play while we meet, it's interests are not exactly ours, VLGTB as a strong organization of the LGTB movement fights for the rights of LGTB people. We are fighting for the rights of children of LGTB families, whatever they turn out to be (...) we don't care what they turn out to be (...) the majority will probably be heterosexual but will live LGTB discrimination (...)

On the other hand, participation in the activities of associations plays a much more direct socialization role for children, which is described across families as *normalization*: creating multiple opportunities for children to see that many other similar non-conventional families exist and that these families face similar daily issues. Associations regularly organize activities for children and families such as fieldtrips, picnics, annual celebrations, vacation getaways, etc. that allow families to meet and parents and children to establish friendships and personal networks within the association. These meeting spaces are pointed out as relevant by families even when parents feel that most of the issues related to their family project are well worked out with their children or more substantial involvement in the organizational life of family associations is not very high.

The popularized term across associations and families to describe these informal leisure gatherings is *kedada* 'get together'. These events facilitate participation by a large pool of similar families who may chose or not to participate in other associative activities. That *kedadas* can be important socialization

spaces independently from a commitment to broader organizational structures is especially visible in Spanish international adoptive families. Many of these families recurrently organize gatherings for families who have adopted children from the same country but do not necessarily cluster around a strong organizational movement. Among other things, this is so in this particular case because Spanish international adoptive families build as a specific developmental task working through their adopted child's "cultural origins" (Alonso, 2012; Poveda et al; 2014) and *kedadas* with families who have adopted children from the same region/country is considered as a way to accomplish this, as the following personal photograph from one of these meetings illustrates:



Figure 1: Personal photograph from a *kedada* of Spanish families with children adopted in Nepal (no date available, collected in 2011)

NARRATIVE SOCIALIZATION

Another strategy that emerges across family models involves the use of various forms of storytelling and narrative as socialization tools. Children are socialized through narratives (Miller, Koven & Lin, 2012; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2012) into particular understandings of their type of family model and project. They are also presented with family stories and narrative artifacts that often delve into very intimate details of the personal and emotional circumstances parents experienced when forming their family.

Across the families we have worked with children interact with a variety of narrative artifacts with different semiotic and material designs (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). These narratives can be grouped into three categories based on their content, design and origin: (a) children's literature books; (b) multimodal family artifacts such as photo-albums, scrapbooks (and, more recently, blogs and diaries); (c) origin narratives in families formed through assisted reproduction.

A first resource that practically all families with small children make use of are children's illustrated books that have as the story topic particular family experiences or configurations (i.e. international adoptions, homo-parental families, single-parent families, children conceived through assisted reproduction, etc.). The current perception is that there is a market niche for this type of literature and various books in several languages and translations of these are available - and if they do not exist, they are produced and commercialized by associations and/or professionals in the field. These books are recommended and discussed through parent networks, organizations, support blogs and informal contacts (Poveda, Jociles and Rivas, 2011; Jociles, Rivas and Poveda, 2012) and allow

families to build home libraries of books that deal with their own particular family project, as the following collection from a homo-parental family illustrates:



Figure 2: Children's book collection in the summer home of a homo-parental family (taken by researchers, July 2014)

Debates around commercial children's fiction also illustrate some of the discussions taking place among non-conventional families and especially in organizations that are more politically committed to legitimizing all forms of family diversity. While the type of books shown above have as their story focus particular family models, some organizations believe the time is ripe for a second generation of children's stories in which family diversity is normalized and incorporated as the setting of children's stories within other story-lines that do not have family diversity as the central theme of the story:

Extract 2: Interview with Miguel, current president of an association of LGTB families (July 2014)

(...) We were looking for stories in which homosexuality was not part of the conflict but was part of the ecosystem. I mean, the important thing in 'Teo's stories' is not that Teo has a father and a mother, it's that Teo goes to the zoo... So, our first problem was that there wasn't any literature for children between 3-6 years of age where homosexuality was captured naturally. So a bunch of members of the association got together and wrote the book, one wrote it and another illustrated it and we were lucky and the got a contract with a publisher, so the book was published and is out there (...).

Beyond works of fiction, many families have created individual and personal stories and family artifacts in which their particular biography and children's place in their family project is the center of the story. These materials form a heterogeneous set of narratives produced in different media (textual, visual, audio-visual, digital, hand-made, professionally printed, etc.) and become or have the potential to become highly significant and emotional objects for children and families.

Very frequently adoptive families, in Spain the vast majority of which are international adoptions (Selman, 2009), create detailed scrapbooks and photo-albums of the adoption process and the early years of their family life - which is what, among other things, led to the use of visual approaches in our studies. Given that formalizing an international adoption necessarily involves one or more trips to the

country where the adoption was completed, these visual narratives often include photographs of emblematic settings in the country of origin, of other children and adoptive families in the country of origin and journey highlights such as the hotel, the plane trip, the reception upon arrival, etc. These family artifacts, composed minimally of a single photograph or piece of memorabilia and more often an elaborate album or collection, are created by parents to be manipulated and interpreted by/with children since very early in their family experience. As a result, within families, adults and children may build different understandings and have particular stories around the visual artifacts and photographs they share.

This polyphony is powerfully illustrated in the family photograph in Figure 3. As narrated by a participating mother in the study it is a photograph of her, her newly adopted child and another Spanish mother - adopted child couple they met in the country of origin (in this case Nepal). For this mother, this was a very significant and "happy photograph"; which she had in her kitchen refrigerator for several years as it captured the moment when she was finally a mother and completed the lengthy adoption process. However, during the research she began to reflect on this, she shared these thoughts with her child and discovered that for her son it was a picture that brought about "sadder memories". For him it recalled when he was told that that he was going to be picked up by his mother but then came "the lady in the photograph who was not his mother". Further, from our perspective, this contrast in emotional significance and meaning attached to the moment captured in the photograph may be similar in the other mother-child couple: The photographs depicts both mothers smiling as opposed to the two children frowning.



Figure 3: Personal photograph of Spanish adoptive families in Nepal (not date available, collected in 2011)

More recently, our on-going project on disclosure processes in families formed through various forms of assisted reproduction has also uncovered other personal narrative artifacts that might serve as socialization tools to work on disclosure processes. On one hand, Spanish families formed through a surrogacy arrangement -which given legislative constraints in Spain is necessarily an international endeavor- also create personal documents such as video-collages or albums of the surrogate pregnancy which, similarly to adoptive families, are shared and manipulated from very early by/with the children in the family, as the following extract shows:

Extract 3: Interview with Guillermo and Tomás, Spanish homosexual couple with a 3 years old daughter born out of a surrogate arrangement in the USA (July 2014)

(...) She has a DVD that she watches, a DVD of when we arrived, the second trip, of when the surrogate was pregnant, with photographs, with music. She recognizes the music, I don't have the DVD here, and it's short, about eight minutes, of when we went there, the trip, when she was born, everything. She sees it and says "that's me as a baby, that's me Cristina". So in a sense we treat this naturally, as she asks questions (...).

Other families have also written personal diaries, whether as 'conventional' paper diaries with other objects or as web-blogs, focused on their experiences during their assisted reproduction treatment and beyond. However, in contrast to the above, these narrative documents are not immediately shared (if they are ever) with children. Here, parents explain that writing these texts provides an emotional outlet during processes that are very complex, stressful and draining and primarily work as self-narratives or as accounts that might be relevant to other parents/mothers going through similar experiences (in the case of web-blogs). Rhetorically, these diary entries are often written as addressed to the child, even if the message is not immediately (or ever) shared with its apparent recipient. For example, the following blog entry -adapted to protect participants- was signed by the father of a heterosexual couple who conceived their daughter through egg donation and who, as explained in a lengthy interview does not plan to disclose this origin to their daughter at any moment in the future:

Extract 4: Entry by father in the web-blog written by both parents (originally posted September 2013)

I look at you while you sleep... I still remember those first nights trying to put you to sleep and you cried as if it was the end of the world, you were so small, so fragile...You've grown! And the way you sleep has changed. We changed hours and hours of walking up and down the room, when only you decided when you would fall asleep to having our own nightly routine...

In some cases, families/mothers do plan to share these documents with their children but consider that this is something that will take place in the future, when their children are 'mature' enough to understand and confront these personal stories. Consequently, children and parents do not construct parallel interpretations and manipulate synchronically the materials. Rather, the strategy is to delay the sharing of these narratives until parents and children can converge in their meaning - more specifically, children can understand in similar terms to their parents these materials.

Extract 5: Interview with Luisa, single-mother-by-choice through egg donation (July 2014)

M: (...) that diary I started to write when I made the decision, I continued writing it until she was three years old. And the diary begins: "To my daughter, who I still don't know how you will be named"

R: And that diary, do you think you will give it to her at some point?

M: Yes, yes, that diary has the 'Predictor' of when I was pregnant, the first time I cut her hair, that diary is hers.

R: So that diary might be a way to work on... and when do you plan to give it to her?

M: When will I give it to her? When I see her sufficiently mature to understand it, this might be when she is ten, when she is twelve, eighteen! (...)

Finally, there is a particular narrative genre that emerges in families formed through assisted reproduction and want to disclose children's origins, shaped as a fictionalized story of children's origins (cf. van Parys, Wyverkens, Provoost, de Sutter, Pennings & Buysse, 2014) We have examined in some detail the organization and co-construction of these narratives in single-mothers by choice

who have opted for some form of assisted reproduction (sperm, egg or embryo donation) (Jociles, Poveda and Rivas, 2013; Jociles, Rivas and Poveda, 2014) and are currently investigating this across a range of family models and assisted reproductive procedures. These narratives are heterogeneous, vary in length, plot complexity, personalization, may involve or not illustrations and other elements, etc. Yet, they have in common that they are specifically written to provide an account that can be presented from early on to their children on their origins (e.g. as early as two years of age) and can be incorporated to family routines: read during story-time, repeated and re-read on demand, modified through time, etc. Also, these narratives seem to share a certain grammar with recurrent components, such as the strong desire to be a parent/mother, the presence of an obstacle to achieve this and the existence of a "magical entity" and/or "magical seeds" that helped solve the obstacle and rewarded maternal/parental persistence. The following extract from a story submitted to the story contest we organized illustrates some of these elements:

Extract 6: Fragment of story created for her son by a mother in a same-sex relationship (April 2014)

Zina and Talia lived in the country of "Real Things". They had a house in a mountain where they could see most of their kingdom. Talia worked the land and took care of flowers. Zina liked to collect fruit and then cook delicious meals that they later shared with friends and family.

They were very happy until one day Zina woke up with a terrible pain in her heart that made her cry all winter long. She did not know what was wrong until one day she told herself "I know what's wrong, I want to have a baby with Talia".

So they went to the cave of the Great Wizard, where all wishes were granted or denied to citizens of the kingdom. When Zina told him what she wanted, the Great Wizard look at her sadly and explained "You two cannot create a baby. A baby comes from the magic that happens when you put wands and hats together, and women only have hats! And only men have wands! So your wish cannot be granted".

Zina was heartbroken, but Talia was determined and ready for adventure so she told Zina they should travel to the country of "Possible Things" and see if they had more luck there (...)

MANAGING THE INTERACTIONAL ORDER

Socialization processes are always realized through social interaction and all the examples and strategies we have discussed so far involve different forms of face-to-face interaction between adults and children. So, talking about management of the interactional order as a specific socialization strategy reflexively construed by parents would appear redundant. However, in this section we discuss and illustrate how adults co-manage daily interactions to socialize their children into their non-conventional family project by focusing on interactional opportunities that are distinct from what we have discussed so far in, at least, two aspects. First, the strategies presented above take place in relatively planned social events (e.g. *kedadas*) or utilize pre-designed narrative artifacts (scrapbooks, diaries, photo-albums, etc.). In contrast, here we focus more on how parents opportunistically use spontaneous and unplanned episodes of interaction for socialization purposes. Second, the sequences we discuss here work as socialization events precisely because they strategically exploit the emergent organization of relationships between participants present and/or referred to in interaction - what Goodwin (1990) and other linguistic anthropologists call the conversational participation framework. In other words, socialization opportunities emerge as a result of how participants (and particularly mothers/parents) co-manage ongoing interaction in one way or another to construe particular roles in relation to family members and other social figures that might be relevant to understand their particular family project.

Using the type of participation framework that parents co-construct as classification criteria, there are two types or interactional sequences that are relevant to our discussion. On one hand, a strategy used by parents in non-conventional families corresponds with the process described by Hochschild (2008) in which children become third party overhears (cf. Goffman, 1981) of interactions between their parents and other interlocutors of issues that are relevant to their family project and identities. But, in contrast to the episodes described by Hochschild -often drawn from two-parent conventional families- adults can be quite explicit about the meaning of these socialization opportunities. Parents in non-conventional families are aware that they will often be asked about -and occasionally harassed- about their family circumstances by a variety of interlocutors (e.g. other children, teachers, professionals, friends, strangers, etc.). Many of these episodes will take place in the presence of their children and lead to an interactional arrangement in which parents have to explain/answer questions to non-family members but are aware that their children are present and are also recipients of the messages. Thus, as socialization strategy, they work on developing accounts that are also productive for their children (Poveda, Jociles and Rivas, 2011; Jociles, Rivas and Poveda, 2014), as the following example from a single-mother by choice illustrates:

Extract 7: Interview with Maripaz, single-mother-by-choice of two children through assisted reproduction (June 2014)

In my daily life, if something comes up with someone I don't know I also explain it easily. I mean it's not that I go proclaiming it but if one day something comes up like "and your husband?" "do they look like your husband?, because he is very blond [referring to her youngest son]. And if they insist I don't care, even in the butcher line I will just say "No, no I had them on my own". (...) So, I do this so they [her children] can also see how I answer these questions, so they can learn how to answer naturally and to give them tools because later on they will have to explain it on their own if they want to. You can always ignore it and let it pass (...) but they know how to answer (...) At my oldest son's birthday my brother was there so a kid asked "Oh, so that's your father?", "No, no", "So who is he?", "He's my... I don't have a father!" and they continued playing, so it is something that just comes up (...)

The second way in which ordinary interactions may be turned into socialization opportunities occurs in daily conversations and routines in the family. Particularly, given that families change over time, conversations that deal with transitions in the family can turn into opportunities to discuss issues that are relevant to the particular non-conventional project. Changes in relationships between adults (break-ups, new partners) or the process of adding new children/siblings to the family create opportunities for parents and children to converse about and discuss the complexities and challenges of their own family project. When the situation arises, new siblings frequently become a conversation topic between parents and children who are engaged in this transition and, thus, an interactional framework is created in which a "future sibling/child" provides an opportunity to socialize "current" children into aspects of their non-conventional family experience.

For example, single-mothers-by-choice who after having one child begin the process of having a second child, most often through the same procedure as the first time (i.e. adoption or assisted reproduction), involve quite intensely their children in the transition. This done both to make children participants of the family project and so they can witness first hand some of the processes through which they came to be part of the family: visits to the clinic, follow-up of the reproductive procedures and pregnancy, dealing with adoption bureaucracy, travelling to the country where the adoption will take place, making arrangements alongside mothers for the coming siblings, etc. (Poveda, Jociles and Rivas, 2014). For example, the following extracts drawn from a conversation while preparing to go to school between a single-mother and her five-year-old son illustrate how the child is involved in many issues related to the mother's current pregnancy and his future siblings:

Extract 8: Conversation between Elena (mother) and Raul (5 year old son) about Elena's second pregnancy through assisted reproduction (Spring 2011)

Setting: Morning at home while having breakfast and getting ready to go to school. The sequences transcribed below take place during a conversation that shifts to many topics related to on-going practical tasks and other concerns (not transcribed here).

Elena: (...) Tomorrow morning-no-tomorrow afternoon since we are going to IVI to get an 'ultrasound' and we are going with Dani and Grandma, we could tell Grandma that after, she should invite us to have a chocolate snack in an incredible place! you have to tell her, ok?

Raul: Ok

Elena: It's called Embassy, ok?

Raul: Yes

(...)

Raul: Why are they recording us?

Elena: For a study, to study families without fathers (...)

Tonight I dreamed again that I was a dancer and I was dancing in a musical (...)

Tomorrow's photograph, after you can take it to school

Raul: The one we have

Elena: But tomorrow's is better because tomorrow we will be able to see the head, legs, arms and everything and maybe we will know if they are Miguel and Andrea or if it's two boys or two girls

Raul: Or four thousand boys or four thousand girls

Elena: Or the Dalmatians, the Dalmatian dogs that they put inside me (...)

CONCLUSIONS

Producing a synthesis of developmental outcomes of children raised in various types of non-conventional families is a complex and contentious matter. Yet, recent reviews tend to conclude that growing up in families that do not match the culturally hegemonic two-parent heterosexual family model does not necessarily hamper children's development (e.g. Golombok & MacCallum, 2003; Patterson & Hastings, 2007; Palacios & Brodzinsky, 2010). More fundamentally, while these reviews take family structure and family formation mechanisms as the starting point, in practice, the explanatory focus is moved to family dynamics and the contextual processes that come into play in the construction of children's developmental trajectories while less value is assigned *per se* to the shape of particular family configurations (e.g. Freistad & Strohschein, 2013; Bos and Gartrell, 2010). In this paper we put together data from several projects and identified a series of socialization strategies, the mechanisms they involve and their parental rationale, that non-conventional families of various types put into action to meet key developmental tasks connected to their family project (such as revealing children's origins, understanding diverse paths to parenthood/motherhood and the actors involved, de-problematizing the absence of the father, naturalizing family diversity, working with children's cultural/racial origins, providing tools to tackle homophobia or racism, constructing filiation, etc.). The data from the projects we combine is multi-layered and ethnographically rich and gives an idea of the spaces, semiotic resources and developmental moments in which parents work on socializing their children into particular understandings of their non-conventional family project. Thus, our findings and synthesis should contribute to understand how non-conventional families achieve these developmental outcomes and socialization goals. In a way, our data opens up the "black box" of family life and the processes that impact on children's socialization in non-conventional families. Opening up these socialization processes would be a way to understand the various ways in which diverse family systems build developmental trajectories for children that produce comparable outcomes, despite structural differences between families. In other words, we provide a qualitative and detail rich window to some of the family and extra-familial protective factors (Bos and Gartrell, 2010) that parents in non-conventional families build to meet what they have identified as additional demands of their family project.

The ambition behind combining data from different studies is to produce broader generalizations drawn from ethnographic materials that could lead to articulate models of socialization practices in non-conventional families. Certainly, we do not claim that we will be able to identify parenting universals for non-conventional families (cf. Quinn, 2005) and the data we discuss in this paper is restricted to the Spanish context. Yet, the family changes and new forms of kinship and family formation we discuss in this paper are the result of social, ideological, political, economic, technological, legal and moral changes taking place across the Western/Industrialized world (but affecting the whole planet). Additionally, the mothers and fathers who have participated in our studies define and perform their parenting work with similar socio-economic resources, interest in family policies, access to information and regard for expert advice that many other (middle-class) Western parents who are part of what is described as contemporary parenting cultures (Lee, Bristow, Faircloth & Macvarish, 2014; Faircloth, Hoffman & Layne, 2013). Thus, what we present and discuss in this paper should resonate with processes taking place across national contexts.

Given the size of our combined sample, its geographical diversity and our knowledge of existing research, we are rather confident that our data is representative of processes occurring in non-conventional families in Spain. From this, the immediate task would be to build a comparative reading of our findings and assess the degree to which the strategies and practices we have identified exist or play similar roles in other national and geographical settings. Based on our own (small) comparative research and the available literature -which given space constraints we can not review here- there are some points of contrast that are relevant to the conceptual goals of this paper. For example, practically all public discussions and policy concerns about adoption in Spain since the turn of the century have focused on international adoptions and its particular demands; so in other settings where adoption paths might be more varied probably other concerns and strategies emerge - in addition to the profound differences in how adoption is regulated in each national context (cf. Howell, 2006). Also, drawing on available research, it seems that the key importance given to parental organizations by various types of non-conventional parents (e.g. single-mothers-by-choice or homosexual parents) is something especially salient in Spanish families (cf. Hertz, 2006). Finally, given strict legislation in Spain protecting gamete donor anonymity, while families formed through assisted reproduction may disclose and discuss the reproductive procedure openly, issues regarding the identity of the donor play a minor role in parental discourses. In short, there might be processes particular to each national context defined by the social and legislative specificities of the region while other differences may be better understood as variations in the magnitude or intensity of a particular socialization strategy. Only more research can help clarify these differences and their implications for family socialization and its conceptualization.

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Número 8: *Strategies for Socialization into a Non-Conventional Family Project*

Versiones previas de este trabajo han sido presentadas en *Oxford Ethnography Conference* (15-17 Septiembre 2014) y conferencias en *Northeastern Illinois University* (Chicago, 25 Septiembre 2015) y la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (13 Enero 2015). Queremos agradecer todos los comentarios y preguntas recibidos en estas presentaciones que han servido para avanzar las ideas del trabajo.

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