Parenting practices in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago: Connections to preschoolers' social and cognitive skills

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Abstract

This report presents the findings of two studies that examined the degrees of parental warmth and control and their associations with children's social and intellectual skills in two groups of Caribbean families. In Study 1, 139 Indo Guyanese mothers reported on their use of maternal warmth and control, and in Study 2, 180 mothers and 180 fathers from diverse ethnic groups in Trinidad reported on their use of warmth and control in parenting their preschool-aged children. In both studies, preschool teachers provided assessments of children's prosocial behaviors, anger, and cognitive skills. Analyses revealed two clusters of Guyanese mothers: one group was high in warmth and low in control and the other was high in warmth and moderately high in control. Identical clusters were found for Trinidadian mothers and fathers as in the Guyanese sample. Trinidadian mothers and fathers were then cross-classified within couples by cluster pattern. Seventy-one percent of couples were similar in their parenting patterns. Only among Guyanese families did children fare differently on social and intellectual skills based on cluster pattern. Data are interpreted in terms of the use of both warmth and behavioral control as prevailing practices in Caribbean cultural communities and their implications for childhood developmental outcomes.
Keywords: parental practices; Guyanese families; children

Las prácticas de crianza de los hijos en Guyana y Trinidad y Tobago: Conexiones a las habilidades sociales y cognitivas preescolares
Resume

Este informe presenta los resultados de dos estudios que examinaron los grados de afección y el control parental y sus asociaciones con las habilidades sociales e intelectuales de los niños en dos grupos de familias caribeñas. En el Estudio 1, 139 Indo madres de Guyana informó sobre el uso de calor y el control de la madre y en el Estudio 2, 180 madres y 180 padres de diversos grupos étnicos de Trinidad informaron sobre el uso de calor y el control en la crianza de sus hijos en edad preescolar. En ambos estudios, los maestros de preescolar proporcionan evaluaciones de las conductas pro-sociales de los niños, la ira, y las habilidades cognitivas. Los análisis revelaron dos grupos de madres de Guyana: un grupo fue alto en el calor y bajo el control y el otro era alto en el calor y moderadamente altos en control. Grupos idénticos se encontraron resultados para las madres y los padres trinitarios como en la muestra de Guyana. Madres y padres trinitarios fueron cruzadas clasifican en parejas por patrón de clúster. Setenta y uno por ciento de las parejas eran similares en sus patrones de crianza. Sólo las familias guyaneses tenían hijos les fue diferente en las habilidades sociales e intelectuales basadas en el modelo de clúster. Los datos son interpretados en términos de la utilización de ambos calor y el control del comportamiento como las prácticas que prevalecen en las comunidades culturales del Caribe y sus implicaciones para los resultados del desarrollo infantil.
Palabras claves: practicas parentales; familias Guyanesas; niños

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Two meta-analyses (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012a; 2012b) of 66 studies conducted in 22 nations across five continents attest to the powerful role of parental warmth and control in the development of social adjustment in childhood and adulthood. A highly endorsed premise in parenting theories and frameworks (Baumrind, 1967, 1996; Rohner & Kaheleque, 2005) is that parental sensitivity expressed in the form of warmth and affection promotes cognitive and social development in children, whereas extreme parental control, indifference, and neglect impede or assault developmental processes during childhood. Although the body of work on parental acceptance and rejection includes families in developing economies, we are some distance from understanding issues tied to parenting and childhood development in the Caribbean region. Moreover, much of what we know about early parent-child socialization in English-speaking Caribbean communities has been confined to Jamaican families of African ancestry with little attention given to other ethnic groups in the region or to the parenting skills of fathers.

In this report, we present two studies on parental warmth and behavioral control and their relationships to children's social and cognitive skills in the developing Caribbean nations of Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Families in these two countries are the focus of our investigations because they have similar socio-historical experiences of slavery or indentured servitude and, unlike other Caribbean nations, have almost equal percentages of African- and Indo-Caribbean families and increasing numbers of individuals of Mixed-ethnic parentage. However, the two countries differ in economic status, with Trinidad and Tobago enjoying a higher standard of living, whereas Guyana has been mired in decades of stagnant economic growth and increasing poverty rates (UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012). These studies permitted us to extend our knowledge of within country parenting practices and their associations with children's social and cognitive skills in two additional groups from different socioeconomic backgrounds in the southern Caribbean.

Conceptualizing Parenting Practices

Researchers have consistently described parenting practices with young children in the Caribbean region as reflecting a mixture of indulgence and punitive control (e.g., Leo-Rhynie, 1997; Leo-Rhynie & Brown, 2013). The cultural specificity of such a characterization of both positive and negative attributes of parenting practices co-existing runs contrary to most well established frameworks on parenting in many developed and developing societies. For instance, the well-researched parenting typologies of Baumrind

(1967, 1996)—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—place parents in distinct categories that are defined by behaviors that fall along varying degrees of warmth and control. Building on this parenting framework, others have examined parental physical (e.g., physical punishment, physically restricting child), psychological (e.g., making the child feel guilty, worthless), and behavioral (e.g., limit setting, restriction, structure, clear and consistent rules) control and their impact on internalizing and externalizing behaviors in children in a wide range of cultures (e.g., Finland, China, different ethnic groups in North America) (Anoula & Nurmi, 2005; Barber, 1996; Carlo, Mestre, Samper, Tur, & Armenta, 2011). In these two related strands of research, it has been found that the authoritative parenting style has more favorable cognitive and social outcomes than the authoritarian or the permissive styles across most cultures (see Sorkhabi, 2005 for a review) and that high levels of physical, psychological, and behavioral control are associated with negative childhood outcomes (e.g., Anoula & Nurmi, 2005; Creveling, Varela, Weems, & Corey, 2010). The cultural relevance of these conceptual frameworks and constructs for examining parenting practices and childhood outcomes in Caribbean countries is not clear.

Most attempts to systematically examine the nature of parenting practices in English-speaking Caribbean nations have either focused on behavioral expectations of children (e.g., Durbrow, 1999; Wilson, Wilson, & Berkeley-Caines, 2003) or rates of harsh physical punishment (e.g., Brown & Johnson, 2008; Samms-Vaughan, Williams, & Brown, 2005; Smith, Springer, & Barrett, 2011). However, a handful of studies have explored parenting styles in English-speaking Caribbean societies. Using Baumrind's parenting framework, Ramkissoon (2002) found that over half of Jamaican fathers in her sample adopted an authoritative style, and Payne and Furnham (1992) reported that Barbadian mothers and fathers in non-manual occupations offered more nurturance and were less restrictive than those in manual occupations. In a comparative study of parenting and depressive symptoms in adolescents in Jamaica, the Bahamas, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent, the most prevalent parenting styles experienced by children across groups were authoritative (32.6%) and neglectful (28.4%). Only 20.3% of adolescents experienced an authoritarian, and 18.7% experienced a permissive parenting style. However, the predominant parenting style in St. Vincent was neglectful (Lipps et al., 2012). This mixed pattern of parental emotional investment was also observed in a national representative sample of African-Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean, and Mixed-ethnic families in Trinidad and Tobago; Indo- and Mixed-ethnic herit-

age Caribbean families engaged in higher levels of positive parenting and rule setting and offered more material rewards compared with African-Caribbean families. The latter used more physical punishment than Indo- and Mixed-ethnic heritage Caribbean families (Roopnarine, Krishnakumar, Narine, & Logie, 2012). These findings suggest a broader range of parenting practices than has previously been acknowledged.

A few of the aforementioned studies have also examined the associations between parenting practices and childhood outcomes. In this regard, the emphasis has been on the negative consequences of physical punishment and harsh parenting on children's social adjustment (e.g. Rohner, Kean, & Cournoyer, 1991). But some researchers have established associations between different aspects of positive and negative parenting practices and childhood development. For example, Lipps et al. (2012) noted that an authoritative parenting style was associated with lower depressive symptoms, and that neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms among adolescents in Jamaica, the Bahamas, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent. Similarly, Roopnarine et al. (2013) found that the relationship between positive parenting and prosocial behaviors in preschool-aged children was mediated via ethnic socialization and that rule setting was positively related to prosocial behaviors in families in Trinidad and Tobago. From such a small group of studies, it is difficult to make firm statements about the pathways of associations between parental warmth and control and social and cognitive skills during the early childhood years in Caribbean societies.

Data on other ethnic groups can help affirm the prevalence of the use of both positive and negative parenting practices with young children in Caribbean cultural communities. At the same time, focusing on the childrearing practices of mothers and fathers can help unravel the separate and joint contributions of parents to childhood development. An increasing body of work on father-child relationships in diverse cultural communities has focused on relationships between maternal and paternal acceptance and rejection (Putnick et al., 2012) and has demonstrated associations between levels and quality of father involvement and children's intellectual and social functioning during infancy and early childhood (see volumes by Cabrera & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013; Shwalb, Shwalb, & Lamb, 2013). Few, if any, studies have examined the joint contributions of mothers and fathers to childhood development in Caribbean countries. For instance, the focus has been on paternal instability and cognitive performance in Jamaican preschoolers (Samms-Vaughan, 2005) and on the associations between authoritarian parenting

by fathers and language skills among preschool-aged children of Caribbean immigrants in the United States, after controlling for maternal parenting behaviors (Roopnarine, Krishnakumar, Evans, & Metindogan, 2006). Because mothers and fathers parent within a couple system, they are likely to influence each other's input into childrearing. If parents are congruent in their efforts at displaying warmth and control, the associations to childhood development may be different than if one parent is warm and less controlling and the other is warm and highly controlling.

We used Baumrind's (1967) parenting typologies and Rohner's PARTheory (Rohner, 1986; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005) as a basis for examining parenting practices and their associations with preschool-aged children's cognitive and social skills among Indo-Guyanese and Trinidadian families of diverse ethnic backgrounds. In both frameworks, levels of warmth and control differentiate optimal from non-optimal parenting, and Rohner (1985) draws parallels between his theory and Baumrind's authoritative parenting style, which is considered the ideal for childrearing in Western societies. Basically, Rohner suggests that all children across cultures experience varying levels of parental warmth and control that fall along a continuum—from acceptance (warmth, care, comfort) at one end to rejection (absence of and withdrawal of feelings of affection and care) at the other (Rohner, 1985; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). PARTheory argues that how children perceive and interpret parental control, expressed in the form of rejection, will ultimately determine its influence on childhood development. Research indicates that too little (e.g., lack of structure, low limit setting) or too much (e.g., overprotective) control has negative implications for children's behavioral development (Anoula & Nurmi, 2005; Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000).

Taking into consideration that high degrees of parental control are not uncommon in developing societies (e.g., India, Turkey) where it may be perceived by young children as "care" rather than in negative terms (Kagitcibasi, 1996; 2007; Sarsawati & Dutta, 2010) and that high levels of control do not occur in the absence of warmth in some cultural communities (Chao, 1994; Kagitcibasi, 1996; 2007; Putnick et al., 2012; Rudy & Grusec, 2006), we focused on the warmth and behavioral control dimensions in our investigation of parenting practices in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. In these two studies, we were interested in warmth and behavioral control because they closely match behaviors in the authoritative parenting typology that is deemed more desirable for raising children (see Baumrind, 1967) and because it has been suggested that both high levels of warmth in the form of indulgence

and high levels of behavioral control aptly characterize Caribbean parenting (Leo-Rhynie & Brown, 2013) . Furthermore, warmth and control have been reliably assessed in mothers and fathers across cultural communities (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; 2012a; 2012b; Putnick et al., 2012). Existing descriptive accounts suggest that Indo-Guyanese mothers are indulgent but also harsh (Pant, Roopnarine, & Krishnakumar, 2008) and that families in Trinidad and Tobago endorse a mixture of negative and positive parenting practices (Roopnarine et al., 2012). If this and other assertions about parenting young children in the Caribbean are true (e.g., Leo-Rhynie, 1997), it could be that some Caribbean families display high levels of control in the context of warmth during parenting, a possible departure from Baumrind's and Rohner's conceptual frameworks. This may bring into focus the developmental implications and applicability of these frameworks for use with Caribbean families. Moreover, some (e.g., Dwairy & Achoui, 2010) have argued that parental control and the expectations behind it are culturally situated and that mothers and fathers display different levels of warmth across cultures (Dwairy, 2010).

In an effort to broaden our understanding of parenting practices with young children in the Caribbean, the goals of Study 1 were: (a) to determine whether mothers in Guyana fall into distinct clusters based on the degrees of warmth and behavioral control displayed in the course of parenting their preschool-aged children, and (b) to assess whether there is any differentiation in children's cognitive and social skills by these clusters. Given data on the presence of high levels of positive and negative parenting practices in some Caribbean cultural communities across socioeconomic groups (e.g., Lipps et al., 2012; Roopnarine et al., 2013) and on the associations between parental warmth and acceptance, behavioral control, and childhood outcomes in other cultural communities around the world (Anoula & Nurmi, 2005; Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005), we predicted that:

(1) Indo-Guyanese mothers will fall into distinct clusters that differentiate them by varying levels of warmth and behavioral control; these clusters will not vary by child age, parental age, family income or parental education.

(2) Children from clusters in which mothers report the use of high levels of warmth and low levels of behavioral control will show better cognitive and social skills than children from clusters in which mothers report lower levels of warmth and high levels of control.

Study 1
Method

Participants

The respondents were 139 low-income Indo-Caribbean mothers and their preschool-aged children from three rural coastal communities in the northeastern part of Guyana, South America. These communities were chosen because they reflect the socio-economic characteristics and structural composition of most Indo-Guyanese families that reside along the northern coastal villages of Guyana. The families were recruited through the head teachers of three nursery schools. These nursery schools were chosen because they served rural families and shared similar characteristics in terms of program size, classroom composition, teacher training and qualifications, as well as process and structural qualities (e.g., teacher-child ratios, educational materials, and so on). All families whose children attended the three preschools were invited to participate regardless of family composition and employment or socio-economic status. Each family was given a brief written and verbal description of the study by the head teachers after which each indicated their willingness to participate. Mothers also gave their assent for childhood assessments. An attempt was made to gather data on both mothers and fathers. However, only a small number of fathers filled out the questionnaires and as a result were excluded from the study. Families who requested additional information met with the first author who answered questions they had. Seventy-seven percent of families originally contacted agreed to participate. Mothers' mean age was 31.58 years (SD = 7.84 years). Forty-eight percent of mothers attended high school, and 38% completed elementary school as their highest level of education. Only 4% of mothers were employed outside of the home. The median family income was between $20,000 and $30,000 per month (US $150). Seventy percent of the families were married; 22% lived in common-law relationships; 2.2% were single-parent mothers; and the rest were widowed or in no current relationship with a male partner.

There were 66 boys and 68 girls (Mean age = 4.84 years; SD = .68 years). The children were enrolled in early childhood programs administered by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Guyana, offered free to all preschool-aged children in the country. Typically, children between 3 years 9 months of age spend two years in preschool before moving on to elementary school. The children attended highly structured programs that focused on the development of language skills, literacy knowledge and skills, mathematics knowledge and skills, creative arts expression, knowl-

edge of family and community, personal health and physical development, social and emotional development, and logic and reasoning. The teacher-child ratio was 1:18. Most of the preschool teachers were high school graduates, some of whom were seeking additional training in teaching practices at the University of Guyana or the nation's Teachers' Training College.

Procedures

Mothers were asked to complete two questionnaires—a sociodemographic sheet and the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ/Control) (Short Form) (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). Teachers provided assessments of children's social skills using the Child Rating Questionnaire (Strayer, 1985) and assessments of children's cognitive skills using the Child Development Index Card, a developmental profile instrument developed by the Ministry of Education, Guyana (Guyana Nursery Education Programme [GNEP], undated). All instruments were administered in English. Because of literacy levels, three mothers received assistance from head teachers in filling out the parenting instrument.

Sociodemographic Questionnaire. Mothers provided basic information on the following: ages of each parent and child in the family, family income, marital status, family composition, maternal education, child gender, number of years child was in preschool, region of residence, employment status, and type of employment of mothers and fathers.

Measures

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ). Each mother filled out the Parental Acceptance-Rejection scale (PARQ/CONTROL-Short Form) (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). The PARQ/Control short version is made up of 29 Likert-type items (from 4 = almost always true to 1 = almost never true) that measure perceptions on five parenting dimensions: *parental warmth and affection assessed* by 8 items (e.g., "I treat my child gently and with kindness"), *hostility and aggression* assessed by 6 items (e.g., "I hit my child, even when she/he does not deserve it"), *indifference and neglect* assessed by 6 items (e.g., "I pay no attention to my child"), *undifferentiated rejection* assessed by 4 items (e.g., "I see my child as a big nuisance"), and *control* assessed by 5 items (e.g., "I control whatever my child does"). The construction of the PARQ/CONTROL was influenced by personality subtheory, coping subtheory, and sociocultural subtheory (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005) and has been used in 66 nations and ethnic groups across the world with a weighted alpha of .89 and a test-retest reliability of .62 (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; Rohner &

Khaleque, 2012a; 2012b). In a cross-national study of acceptance-rejection (Putnick et al., 2012) across nine cultures, the alpha for maternal acceptance-rejection and warmth was .81, for maternal warmth and hostility-aggression/rejection/neglect-indifference was .75, for paternal acceptance-rejection and warmth was .79, and for paternal hostility-aggression/rejection/neglect-indifference was .73. Because of the extensive use of the PARQ across different cultural communities and its ease of use, it was judged to be culturally relevant for use among English-speaking Caribbean families. The standardized Cronbach's alpha for warmth was .66 and for control was .32.

Children's social skills. Teachers provided assessments of children's social skills using the Child Rating Questionnaire (Strayer, 1985). This assessment was conducted at least three months after children had settled into preschool. This 47 item Likert-type questionnaire is rated on a scale of 1 = not at all characteristic to 5 = extremely characteristic and provides an overall indication of children's social skills in preschool. Teachers' ratings of children's social skills were submitted to maximum likelihood factor analysis using oblimin rotation. Items that did not load well (factor loadings < .30) were dropped from the analysis. Results indicated the presence of two discrete factors explaining 50.5% of the variance: prosocial (38.5%) and anger (12.5%). The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value was .86. The items and their corresponding coefficients for prosocial behaviors and anger are presented in Table 1. The Cronbach's alphas for prosocial and anger were .92 and .73, respectively.

Cognitive skills. The Child Development Index Card developed by the Ministry of Education, Government of Guyana (GNEP, undated) was used to assess children's cognitive skills. The instrument contains 34 items on psychomotor (9 items), socio-moral (13 items), and intellectual functioning (12 items) that are assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale (from 1 = weak to 5 = very good). It was chosen as a desirable instrument to assess children's early cognitive skills because it subscribes to a developmental format that is appropriate for preschoolers, because such assessments have been recommended by prominent early childhood organizations (e.g., the National Association for the Education of Young Children; Copple & Bedekamp, 2009) as providing good information on general patterns of development, and because it avoids potential difficulties associated with using standardized instruments developed in North America and Europe that may contain items not culturally valid for young Caribbean children (Logie, 2013). All teachers had at least two years of experience in conducting developmental assessments

Table 1

Items and Corresponding Loadings for Prosocial Behaviors and Anger

	Loading
Prosocial	
If there is a fight or quarrel, tries to stop it	.47
Expresses feelings openly is easy to "read" emotionally	.68
Invites bystanders to join in a game or activity	.70
Goes to the help of someone who has been hurt	.74
Cares about other people	.76
Shares play, food or other materials with others	.65
Is generous in donating own time or contributing towards purchase of gifts for other class peers	.73
Can work easily in small group	.78
Is aware and considerate of the feelings of others	.78
Offers to help people who are feeling sick or in trouble	.78
Volunteers to clean up a mess someone else has made	.47
Is generally sensitive and responsive to others' emotions	.77
Offers to help other people who are having difficulty with a task or activity	.73
Is generally cooperative	.64
Shows concern and sympathy for others' feelings	.76
Seems to be emotionally affected by others' display of feelings	.37
Anger	
Behaves aggressively with other children	.78
Expresses anger or hostility directly	.63
Displays anger frequently and sometimes inappropriately	.73
Gets into fights or arguments frequently	.79

using the GNEP Index Card. Again, assessments were conducted three months after children entered preschool to avoid the potential of adjustment difficulties interfering with their cognitive performance.

For this report, we focused on children's overall cognitive skills in two key domains that are indicative of preschoolers' early intellectual functioning: convergent (e.g., use of oral language) and divergent (e.g., creative imagination). These two constructs were conceptualized along Sigel's (2006) theory of psychological distancing that considers children's approaches to engaging the object world through play and logical thinking. The items in this construct represent early childhood education curriculum objectives broadly (e.g., artistic expression, language use, problem solving, logical thinking, etc.) and are commonly employed to assess children's developmental progression in

early childhood settings. Factor analysis indicated that seven of the items loaded on a single factor to provide an overall indication of one area of children's early cognitive functioning (response to oral language [.90], use of oral language [.92], symbolic play and imitation [.91], creative imagination [.90], expression of ideas and thought [.94], logico-mathematical thought [.95], and artistic expression [.93]). The Cronbach's alpha for overall cognitive functioning was .97.

Analytic Strategies

The analyses were conducted in three stages for both studies. The data were cleaned, and because missing values across instruments were less than 5% of the responses provided by adults and teachers for each item on the different instruments, mean imputations were used for missing values. The data met assumptions for

conducting cluster analysis and t-tests. First, Pearson correlations were computed between the parental variables and children's cognitive and social skills. Next, cluster analysis was used to establish subgroups of mothers (Study 1) and mothers and fathers separately (Study 2) who possess similar characteristics in terms of parenting behaviors. According to Rietveld and van Hout (1993), the process involves grouping those cases within a cluster that have smaller distances (or similarities) than cases between clusters which would have larger distances (or dissimilarities). Two types of cluster analysis methods were used—hierarchical clustering and nonhierarchical clustering. In hierarchical clustering, we utilized Ward's hierarchical algorithm and Squared Euclidean distance as an exploratory strategy to identify the number of possible parenting clusters. In hierarchical clustering, a random sample of participants (20%) was used to differentiate groups of mothers based on their parenting practices. Following the establishment of the cluster solution using the hierarchical algorithm, we used nonhierarchical clustering, also referred to as K-means iterative cluster analysis, to test the cluster solution obtained from the hierarchical cluster analysis. The two-cluster solution was accepted because it provided a clearer distinction between groups based on size and a meaningful char-

acterization of Caribbean parenting practices given the scales of measurement we employed in these studies. Third, we computed cross-classification analysis within couples in Study 2 to determine commonality in parenting patterns. Finally, we conducted independent t-tests to determine differences in parental warmth and behavioral control and children's cognitive skills, prosocial behaviors, and anger scores by parental clusters.

Results

Table 2 displays the means, standard deviations, range of scores on the different measures, and correlation coefficients for the relationships between these measures. As can be seen, the use of maternal warmth was quite high (a mean of 3.61 out of a possible 4), while maternal use of behavioral control was moderately high (a mean of 1.62 out of possible 4); teachers' ratings indicated that children demonstrated good prosocial skills but also exhibited moderately high levels of anger during social encounters in their preschool classrooms. On average, these rural children were judged to be below the mid-range of 3 on overall cognitive abilities. Maternal warmth and maternal behavioral control were inversely related (*r* = -.29).

Table 2

Means, SDs, Ranges, and Correlation Coefficients Between Variables Used in the Indo-Guyanese Study

	Mean SD)	Range	Warmth	Control	Child prosocial skills	Child anger	Child cognitive skills
Warmth	3.61 (.40)	1.75 – 4.00	-				
Control	1.62 (.43)	1.00 – 3.00	-.289**	-			
Child prosocial skills	3.40 (.68)	1.88 – 4.69	-.048	-.023	-		
Child anger	2.17 (.84)	1.00 – 4.75	-.025	-.097	-.016	-	
Child cognitive skills	2.00 (.98)	1.00 – 5.00	.056	-.060	.388**	-.007	-

Note. **p < .01.

There were no significant relationships between maternal warmth or maternal behavioral control and children's overall cognitive skills, prosocial behaviors, and anger.

Two clusters emerged for Guyanese mothers' parenting behaviors: Cluster 1 was characterized by high warmth and moderately high behavioral control, whereas Cluster 2 was characterized by high warmth and lower behavioral control. The Euclidean distance (index of dissimilarities) between the two clusters was .77, which was large enough to form two separate

clusters. Fifty (36.0%) mothers' parenting practices were grouped into Cluster 1, and 89 (64%) into Cluster 2. Despite the fact that both groups of mothers were high in warmth, mean comparisons of parenting practices between clusters indicated significant differences for warmth, *t*(137) = -4.48, *p* < .001 and for behavioral control, *t*(137) = 14.55, *p* < .001, supporting the notion of two distinct parenting clusters (see Table 3). No significant differences were found between the two clusters with respect to maternal age, education, child age, and family income.

Table 3

Cluster Means of Parenting Practices and Child Outcomes by Cluster Membership in Indo-Guyanese Families

	Cluster 1 Mean (SD)	Cluster 2 Mean (SD)
	(*n* = 50)	(*n* = 89)
Warmth	3.39 (.47)	3.72 (.29)
Control	2.06 (.29)	1.36 (.26)
Child prosocial skills	3.24 (.66)	3.48 (.68)
Child anger	2.22 (.87)	2.15 (.83)
Child cognitive skills	1.83 (.76)	2.10 (1.08)

The t-tests conducted to examine whether children's social (i.e., prosocial and anger) and cognitive (i.e., convergent and divergent) skills differed as a function of mothers' parenting clusters showed that children of mothers in cluster 2 (i.e., high warmth and lower control) (*M* = 3.48, *SD* = .68) were rated by their teachers as having better prosocial skills than children of mothers in cluster 1 (i.e., high warmth and moderately high control) (*M* = 3.25, *SD* = .66; *t*(137) = -1.98, *p* = .049). There was also a tendency for children of mothers in cluster 2 (*M* = 2.10, *SD* = 1.08) to be seen by their preschool teachers as having better overall cognitive skills than children of mothers in cluster 1 (*M* = 1.83, *SD* = .73; *t*[137] = -1.75, *p* = .08). No significant difference was found between the two clusters on child anger (*p* > .05).

Study 2

To examine the stability of the patterns of parenting and outcomes noted in Study 1, in Study 2 we gathered identical data on a diverse sample of families in Trinidad that included responses from mothers and fathers with better material resources and educational attainment. Although the questions and hypotheses were similar to those posed in Study 1, we conducted two additional sets of analyses. We first examined mother and father data separately in the cluster analysis and determined whether children differed in their cognitive and social functioning based on the maternal and paternal clusters that were established. Next, to control for interdependence in parenting practices, we cross-classified couples within families based on parenting patterns. Thus, there were two additional questions: (a) What distributions emerged when mothers' and fathers' parenting patterns were cross-classified? and (b) Did children's cognitive and social functioning differ by the groups that emerged from the cross-classification? Noting the few findings on homogamy

in parenting practices (e.g., Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007) and that there is a moderately strong relationship between mothers' and fathers' parenting behaviors in other cultural settings (Winsler, Madigan, & Aquilino, 2005), we predicted that:

(1) There will be a high degree of similarity in parenting patterns between couples;

(2) Children in a mother-father constellation pattern of high warmth and low behavioral control will be rated more favorably on cognitive and social functioning than children in other couple constellation patterns (e.g., mother high in warmth and low in behavioral control and father high in warmth and moderately high in behavioral control or mother and father high in warmth and moderately high in behavioral control).

Method

Participants

The respondents were 180 mothers and 180 fathers and their preschool-aged children from lower- to upper-middle income backgrounds in four communities in northern, central, and southern Trinidad. Ninety mothers and 92 fathers were of Indo-Caribbean background, 62 mothers and 60 fathers were of African-Caribbean background, and 19 mothers and 28 fathers were of Mixed-ethnic parentage (mainly from African-Indo Caribbean marriages or unions). These four communities were selected because they contain varying percentages of Indo-Caribbean, African-Caribbean, and families from Mixed-ethnic ancestry, as well as families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The families were recruited through the directors of seven nursery schools. They were invited to participate regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, employment status, or family composition. Families were given a brief written description of the study by the directors of the centers,

after which they indicated their willingness to participate. They also gave their assent for childhood assessments. Families in a southern community in Trinidad also met with the first author who further described the study to them and answered questions they had. About 66% of families contacted agreed to participate. The mean age of mothers was 31.40 years (*SD* = 5.37 years), and the mean age of fathers was 36.41 years (*SD* = 5.81 years). Eighty percent of the families were married; 13.9% lived in common-law relationships; 2.8% were single-parent mothers; and the rest were widowed, single parents or in no current relationship. Sixty-four percent of mothers had completed high school or had trade/technical school training, and 20.5% completed University or had post-graduate training. Sixty-nine percent of fathers had completed high school or had trade/technical school training, and 17.8% completed University or had post-graduate training. The median family income was $20,000 per month (US$ 3,333).

There were 100 boys and 80 girls (Mean age = 3.82 years, *SD* = .62 years). The children were enrolled in diverse early childhood programs: privately operated centers, University preschools, community-supported preschools, and government-supported preschools. This patchwork of preschool services offered to young children is characteristic of the early childhood system in Trinidad and Tobago where the Ministry of Education is currently in the process of gaining oversight of all preschool education programs (Logie, 2013). This notwithstanding, most of the programs children attended were highly structured in their approach to learning and focused on the acquisition of basic language and mathematics skills. The teacher-child ratio varied from 1:14 to 1:24. Most of the preschool teachers were University graduates or were currently enrolled in early childhood teacher training programs.

Procedures and Assessments

As in Study 1, mothers and fathers were asked to provide information on two questionnaires--a sociodemographic sheet and the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ/Control) (Short Form). All parents filled out the questionnaires in their homes. Mothers and fathers were instructed not to consult each other when filling out the instruments. The Cronbach's alpha for maternal warmth was .73, maternal control was .25, paternal warmth was .74, and paternal control was .39. Teachers provided assessments of children's social skills using the Child Rating Questionnaire (Strayer, 1985) and children's cognitive skills using the Child Development Index Card developed by the Ministry of Education, Government of Guyana (GNEP, undated), also used in Study 1. Teachers in Trinidad were trained

to administer the Child Development Index Card. All had extensive experience in conducting similar developmental assessments on preschoolers. Assessments of preschoolers were conducted after they had settled into preschool. The Cronbach's alpha for prosocial behaviors was .93 and for anger was .79. The Cronbach's alpha for cognitive skills was .96.

Results

Before proceeding with our analysis of these data, we determined whether there were any significant differences in parenting practices among the three ethnic groups. Two sets of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted on the warmth and behavioral control scores for mothers and fathers separately across the three ethnic groups. There were no significant differences across the three ethnic groups on paternal warmth, paternal control, or maternal control. However, there was a significant main effect for maternal warmth, $F(2, 177) = 4.05$, $p = .05$. Post hoc tests indicated that African-Caribbean mothers reported significantly lower warmth than mothers from Mixed-ethnic backgrounds. Given that the one significant pair-wise comparison that emerged out of a possible twelve could be due to chance alone, the data were aggregated by ethnicity.

Table 4 displays the means, standard deviations, range of scores on the different measures, and correlation coefficients for the relationships between these measures. Again, the use of maternal (a mean of 3.78 out a possible 4) and paternal (a mean of 3.71 out of a possible 4) warmth was quite high, while maternal (a mean of 1.76 out a possible 4) and paternal (a mean of 1.88 out a possible 4) use of behavioral control was moderately high. Mothers and fathers did not differ in their overall levels of self-reported warmth or behavioral control ($p > .05$). Maternal and paternal warmth were significantly correlated. Maternal warmth and maternal behavioral control were inversely related ($r = -.38$), as were paternal warmth and paternal behavioral control ($r = -.24$). Teachers' ratings indicated that children demonstrated good prosocial skills but also exhibited moderately high levels of anger during social encounters in their preschool classrooms. Children's cognitive skills on average were judged by teachers to be well above the mid-range level. There were no significant relationships between maternal warmth or maternal behavioral control and children's overall cognitive skills, prosocial behaviors, and anger or between paternal warmth or paternal behavioral control and children's overall cognitive skills, prosocial behaviors, and anger.

Table 4

Means, SDs, and Intercorrelations between Variables Used in the Trinidadian Study

	Mean (SD)	Range	Maternal warmth	Maternal control	Paternal warmth	Paternal control	Child prosocial skills	Child anger	Child cognitive skills
Maternal warmth	3.78 (.31)	2.12 – 4.00	-						
Maternal control	1.76 (.41)	1.00 – 3.20	-.382**	-					
Paternal warmth	3.71 (.37)	2.12 – 4.00	.495**	-.152*	-				
Paternal control	1.88 (.49)	1.00 – 3.40	-.167*	.388**	-.241**	-			
Child prosocial skills	3.05 (.67)	1.19 – 4.00	-.032	.055	-.057	.075	-		
Child anger	1.86 (.79)	1.00 – 4.00	.006	-.020	.058	.021	-.293**	-	
Child cognitive skills	3.26 (.87)	1.00 – 5.00	-.007	.102	.030	.067	.385**	.031	-

Note. $* p < .05; ** p < .01.$

As in Study 1, two clusters emerged for Trinidadian mothers' and fathers' parenting behaviors: Cluster 1 was characterized by high warmth and moderately high behavioral control, and Cluster 2 was characterized by high warmth and lower behavioral control. The Euclidean distances (index of dissimilarities) between the two clusters were .77 and .88 for mothers and fathers respectively, which were large enough to form separate clusters for mothers and fathers. Fifty-four (30%) mothers' and 57 (31.7%) fathers' parenting practices were grouped in Cluster 1, and 126 (70%) mothers' and 123 (68.3%) fathers' parenting practices were grouped in Cluster 2. Mean comparisons of parenting practices between clusters indicated significant differences for maternal warmth, $t(178) = -5.13$, $p < .001$; maternal behavioral control, $t(178) = 16.96$, p < .001; paternal warmth, $t(178) = -6.42$, $p < .001$; and paternal behavioral control, $t(178) = 13.92$, $p < .001$, supporting the notion of two distinct parenting clusters. With the exception of child age, no significant differences were found between the two clusters in parental age, education, and family income. Children of fathers in cluster 1 were significantly younger than children of fathers in cluster 2.

T-tests conducted to determine whether children's social (i.e., prosocial and anger) and cognitive (i.e., convergent and divergent) skills differed as a function of mothers' and fathers' parenting clusters failed to reveal any significant differences (all $p > .05$).

To address issues of interdependence in parenting patterns, couples were cross-classified. The analysis revealed good congruence in the parenting patterns of couples; 71% had similar parenting patterns. The most common pattern was mothers and fathers with high warmth and low behavioral control (Cluster 4; $n = 97$; 55%), followed by mothers and fathers with high warmth and moderately high behavioral control (Cluster 1; n = 28; 16%); mother with high warmth and low behavioral control and father with high warmth and moderately high behavioral control (Cluster 3; $n = 24$; 14%), and mother with high warmth and moderately high behavioral control and father with high warmth and low behavioral control (Cluster 2; $n = 23$; 13%).

As was the case with the independent analysis of mother and father data, a series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) indicated that there were no significant differences in children's cognitive, anger, and prosocial scores by couple parenting pattern group.

Discussion

Parenting practices with young children in the English-speaking Caribbean have often been described as containing a mixture of warmth, indulgence, and control, with little specificity of the levels of each during childrearing (e.g., Leo-Rhynie, 1997). To verify these claims, we used parental warmth and behavioral control, operationalized and discussed in the parenting frameworks articulated by Baumrind (1967) and

Table 5

Cluster Means of Parenting Practices and Child Outcomes by Cluster Membership in Trinidadian Families

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Cluster 1 Mean (SD) ($n = 54$)	Cluster 2 Mean (SD) ($n = 126$)	Cluster 1 Mean (SD) ($n = 57$)	Cluster2 Mean (SD) ($n = 123$)
Warmth	3.56 (.44)	3.88 (.16)	3.42 (.47)	3.84 (.21)
Control	2.25 (.22)	1.55 (.26)	2.41 (.37)	1.64 (.31)
Child prosocial skills	3.03(.66)	3.05 (.67)	3.09 (.66)	3.02 (.67)
Child anger	1.87 (.81)	1.85 (.78)	1.76 (.72)	1.90 (.81)
Child cognitive skills	3.26 (.76)	3.27 (.93)	3.26 (.84)	3.26 (.90)

Rohner (Rohner, 1986; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005), to examine parenting practices and their associations with children's cognitive and social skills among families in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Both of these parenting frameworks emphasize the importance of parental warmth and care in the promotion of cognitive and social skills in children, and Rohner's PARTheory suggests that acceptance and rejection may be viewed in the context of varying degrees of warmth and care, regardless of cultural context. Following propositions in these frameworks, we employed cluster analysis to shed further light on how families in these two southern Caribbean countries were grouped along a continuum of warmth and behavioral control.

In keeping with prior claims about parenting in the Caribbean (e.g., Leo-Rhynie, 1997) and suggestions that families in other developing societies use high levels of warmth and control during parenting (Saraswathi & Dutta, 2010), these data revealed generally high levels of warmth and moderate levels of behavioral control in the parenting practices of Guyanese and Trinidadian families from diverse ethnic groups relative to parents in other cultural settings. For example, in a cross-national assessment of acceptance-rejection in nine cultures (China, Colombia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, the Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, and the United States), the overall mean level of maternal warmth was 3.67 (Range = 3.35 - 3.87) and of paternal warmth was 3.58 (Range = 3.07 - 3.86); the overall mean level of maternal rejection was 1.35 (Range = 1.22 - 1.59) and of paternal rejection was 1.34 (Range = 1.25 - 1.48) (Putnick et al., 2012). Similar to previous studies (e.g., Putnick et al., 2012), we also found that parental warmth and behavioral control were inversely correlated, further establishing the bi-dimensional aspects of warmth and control.

With these figures in mind and as per our hypothesis, analyses revealed that in both the Guyanese and

Trinidadian samples, parents fell into different clusters. Across the two samples, parents were more similar in levels of warmth but further apart in levels of behavioral control. In other words, it appears that in the context of warmth, one group of parents relied more heavily on behavioral control during parenting than the other, irrespective of socioeconomic status or parental age. These findings on emotional and behavioral involvement suggest a more complex pattern of parenting among southern Caribbean parents that may not fit easily into existing parenting typologies. As in Lipps et al.'s (2012) study, the most prevalent parenting strategy reported by parents (high warmth and lower behavioral control), regardless of socioeconomic status, may resemble the authoritative style developed by Baumrind (1967), but may be interpreted as indulgence as well—a characteristic often used to describe parenting practices in the Caribbean. Likewise, the high levels of warmth and moderately high levels of behavioral control reported by the remaining parents in our sample- those in Cluster 1- defy any kind of classification into either Baumrind's or Rohner's parenting framework. In fact, the parents in Cluster 1 demonstrated practices that are in line with those of families in the developing nations of India (Saraswathi & Dutta, 2010), Turkey (Kagitcibasi, 1996; 2007), and China (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000; Putnick et al., 2012), where high levels of warmth and behavioral control are not necessarily viewed as inimical to child training.

It is important to note that the parenting clusters were very similar across the two countries, as well as between mothers and fathers. In particular, levels of maternal and paternal warmth across ethnic groups were quite comparable to those obtained in other developed and developing societies. However, the degree of relationship between paternal and maternal warmth in Trinidadian families exceeded ($r = .50$) those obtained in the nine cultures examined by Putnick et al. (2012). In

fact, only in Jordan, Italy, Kenya, the Philippines, and the United States were levels of paternal and maternal warmth significantly related (r ranged from .18 to .38; Putnick et al., 2012). These levels of investment by Trinidadian men and women from diverse ethnic backgrounds and the consistency in warmth across the two countries indicate active emotional engagement with preschoolers and dispel myths about the emotionally distant and uninvolved father and the predominance of authoritarian parenting in the Caribbean, at least in two-parent families. Of added importance is the degree of similarity between couples in parenting patterns in the Trinidadian sample (71%). The degree of congruence in parenting patterns between couples in this study is in line with other findings on homogamy in support offered to young children by mothers and fathers (Martin et al., 2007). Because a significant number of mating relationships are not based on marriage or co-residence in some ethnic groups in the Caribbean, it would be beneficial to assess whether similar levels of emotional involvement between mothers and fathers are evident in diverse family constellations (see Roopnarine, 2013).

Predictions regarding the associations between parenting practices and childhood outcomes were not supported across the two countries. Among the Guyanese parents, children whose mothers reported using high levels of warmth and lower levels of behavioral control were rated by their classroom teachers as having better cognitive and social skills than children whose parents reported high levels of warmth and moderately high levels of behavioral control. By contrast, the data on Trinidadian families failed to show any significant associations between parenting practices and childhood outcomes when mothers' and fathers' parenting patterns were analyzed separately or as a couple. We speculate that the inconsistency in associations between parenting practices and childhood outcomes across countries may be due to the lack of variability in Trinidadian children's scores on the social and cognitive skills measures, differences in the quality of programs and teachers' approaches to assessments across countries and communities, and perhaps to the low reliability of the parenting scale—particularly the control dimension of the Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire. The Trinidadian children received high scores on both measures of early functioning from their classroom teachers. Whether the children are uniformly skilled in the cognitive and social domains or this is an artifact of inflated assessments by teachers cannot be determined independent of more formal assessments and observations. Nevertheless, the find-

Figure 1: *Children's Mean Scores by Couple Parenting Patterns*
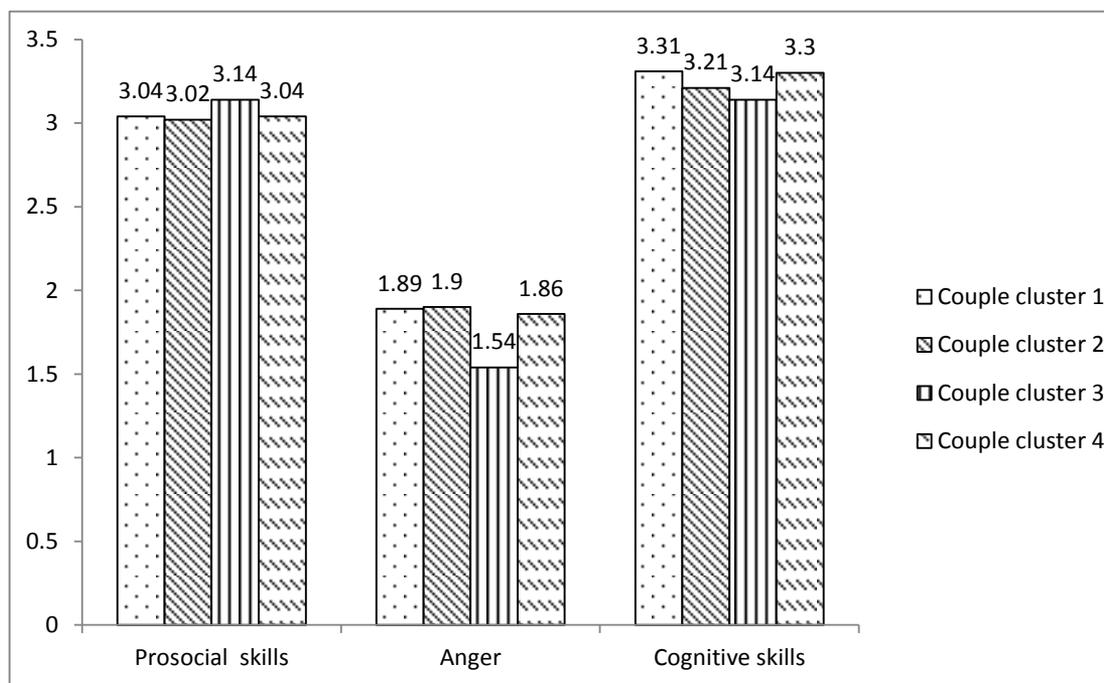
Note: Couple Cluster 1: Mother and Father High in Warmth and Moderately High in Control; Couple Cluster 2: Mother High in Warmth and Moderately High in Control and Father High in Warmth and Low in Control; Couple Cluster 3: Mother High in Warmth and Low in Control and Father High in Warmth and Moderately High in Control; and Cluster 4 Father and Mother High in Warmth and Low in Control.

ings on Guyanese families are in agreement with those of studies in different cultural settings around the world that have also demonstrated the positive benefits of maternal warmth and appropriate levels of behavioral control on childhood development (e.g., Carlo et al., 2011; Cheah, Leung, Tahseen, & Schultz, 2009; Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000; see meta-analysis by Rohner & Kahaleque, 2012).

Limitations

These studies have several limitations, and thus the findings should be viewed with caution. Our samples included relatively small numbers of families from different communities in the two countries who were invited to participate rather than being selected in a stratified random manner. The potential exists that our samples included individuals with highly similar characteristics in the respective countries that could have led to more homogeneous responses on the questionnaires and in teachers' assessments of children's social and cognitive skills. Moreover, we relied on parental reports of warmth and behavioral control. Reliability estimates obtained for the parenting practices measure in both countries tended to be low, illustrating the difficulty that might be encountered in measuring parenting practices in Caribbean countries within frameworks and with instruments constructed in the technologically developed world (see Berry, 2013, for a discussion). Observations of parenting practices in situ may provide more accurate assessments of warmth and behavioral control. Finally, although the Child Development Index Card showed good internal consistency across the two countries, standardized assessments of children's early intellectual skills may have yielded more comprehensive data on children's literacy and number skills.

Conclusions

Despite the weaknesses outlined above, these data and those of other Caribbean researchers (e.g., Lipps et al., 2012) begin to define parenting practices more broadly in Caribbean communities. Our findings indicate that there is a good deal of similarity in parenting practices across countries and between couples. They also suggest that varying levels of parental behavioral control may be used in conjunction with high levels of warmth as a childrearing strategy among Guyanese and Trinidadian families and call into question the general characterization of Caribbean parents as authoritarian and harsh. This deficit view may have risen out of an overwhelming focus on the use of harsh punishment among families who are economically stressed, without consideration of the diverse strategies and familial

resources (e.g., extendedness and community participation) that Caribbean parents draw upon to care for and guide young children. In the Caribbean, emphasis has been placed on discussing the merits of physically punishing children and the possibility of relinquishing control over children if parents were to use reasoning and induction in everyday socialization. For example, a qualitative study on low-income Jamaican families found that mothers saw the necessity for children "to grow up tough" as a way to learn survival skills, with physical punishment undergirding the process (Brown & Johnson, 2008). Whereas the influence of parental warmth may be culture-invariant, there is an obvious need to focus more fully on different control strategies (physical, psychological, and behavioral) and their meaning for acquiring notions of trust, empathy, cooperation, and sharing during childhood in different ethnic/socioeconomic groups in the Caribbean. It seems that, at least in the Guyanese sample, high warmth and lower levels of control were associated with better social and cognitive skills. Quite possibly, high levels of warmth could moderate the influence of high levels of control strategies on childhood development depending on how they are used and interpreted by parents and children alike in Caribbean countries.

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