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Cultural Behavior in Post-Urbanized Brazil:

The *Cordial Man* and Intrafamilial Conflict

by

Thais La Rosa

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
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Abstract

Cultures, subcultures, and individuals occupy different positions in the low-context/individualistic and the high-context/collectivistic spectrum, and they shift due to factors such as urbanization, economic development and cultural globalization. In this study, I examine Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's theory of the *cordial man* and how it illustrates qualities of the high-context Brazilian culture. Within the framework of grounded theory, these qualities are evaluated from the perspective of intergenerational dyads—fathers and sons—that have been exposed to an urbanized and globalized environment in order to determine whether and how a shift from high-context to low-context is occurring. The participants were interviewed to explore perception of self, upbringing, decision-making process within the family, father and son relationships, intrafamilial communication, ways to influence and be influenced, history of conflict, and urbanization and globalization. Their responses revealed the extent to which their values were individualistic or group-oriented and if the *cordial man* behavior was also present in the intimacy of their homes. In sum, I reach three conclusions: technological and cultural globalization propagates low-context values and behaviors; sons are in a transitional state, in which individual goals are relevant enough to challenge parental expectations, but still cause guilt when pursued; and, the *cordial man* still exists in the urban and globalized world. Implications for families, family therapists, counselors and mediators are discussed.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family. Thank you for your continued support throughout my educational growth.

I thank my life partner—Pablo—for the endless dialogues about this research topic and the valuable input you have given me. Your quest for the truth inspires me. Thank you for your love and care while I was working on completing this study.

I thank Chris Dahlgren for the steady support throughout this process. Thank you for being a friend on whom I could rely while pursuing this degree. Your advice has been beneficial and appreciated.

I also would like to thank Cynthia Kenyon for sharing her home with me. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your life. I will always cherish our talks while sitting by the fire.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents—Evanilz and João —for giving me a solid foundation on which to stand. I thank you for your unconditional love and for believing that nothing is impossible to me.

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Chapter 1: Cultural Behavior in Post-Urbanized Brazil: The *Cordial Man* and

Intrafamilial Conflicts

The purpose of this study is to explore whether Brazil's younger generation,

raised during and after massive urbanization in the early 1970s and influenced by U.S.

cultural globalization in the 1990s, is experiencing a shift within the low-

context/individualistic and the high-context/collectivistic spectrum—slowly moving from

high towards low—and whether this shift is affecting intrafamilial dynamics between

generations that identify with contrasting systems.

According to Edward T. Hall (1976), human interaction shaped by low-context

(LC) communication occurs when the message conveyed to the receiver is explicitly

manifested, mainly through words. The receiver is not expected to add contextual

information such as structured moral rules of conduct, societal and religious expectations,

social roles or pre-conceived behavioral norms. Conversely, human interaction shaped

by high-context (HC) communication happens when part of the message being delivered

is implicit, and words do not carry the same weight as the context does. The interpreter

has the responsibility to decode the full message by reading cultural and nonverbal cues.

The contrast between LC and HC communication is illustrated by a scene in Alain

Corneau's (2003) film *Fear and Trembling*, where there is a misunderstanding between a

European woman—Amélie—and her Japanese boss. Amélie had been given verbal

instructions, by her superior, Mr. Saito, to behave properly and to never speak to the

president of the company. However, Amélie failed to comprehend the non-verbal cues

inherent in Japanese society, especially with regard to the importance given to hierarchy.

One morning, while serving coffee to executives of a sister company, Amélie greeted

each person in perfect Japanese. After such incident, Amélie was reprimanded by her

boss and asked to never speak Japanese again. The negotiation was called off since the

executives did not feel safe to discuss secret matters in the presence of a Japanese-

speaking foreigner. Amélie was immediately identified as an outsider.

Hall (1976) explains, "high-context cultures make greater distinctions between

insiders and outsiders than low-context cultures do. People raised in high-context

cultures expect more [knowledge of expected behavior] of others than do the participants

in low-context systems" (p. 113). In the case presented in *Fear and Trembling*, despite

Amélie's true desire to blend into Japanese society, her ignorance of cultural

idiosyncrasies jeopardized her capacity to perform well in a Japanese company. "It is

very seldom in Japan that someone will correct you or explain things to you. You are

supposed to know, and they get quite upset when you don't" (Hall, 1976, p. 112). If this

scene portrayed a Japanese woman greeting low-context executives, such as Americans

executives, in their native language while she was serving coffee to them, one could

assume that she might have been praised for her good knowledge of the English

language, since "in the U.S. culture, we encourage individuals to 'sell themselves and

boast about their achievements' " (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 192).

"…[The purpose of using an example of a LC individual immersed in a HC

culture is to illustrate that misunderstandings] are what happens when high- and low-

context systems meet in the same setting, when the unspoken, unformulated, inexplicit

rules governing how information is handled and how people interact and relate are at

opposite ends of the scale" (Hall, 1976, p. 112). Therefore, conflict, heretofore defined

as "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals" (Wimot & Hocker, 2007, p. 9), easily emerges when the interacting parties identify with different systems.

Low-context systems present individualistic values, self-face concern, linear logic, and verbal-based understanding. In addition, its style is characterized as direct, person-oriented, self-enhancement and speaker-oriented. Countries such as Germany, Switzerland, the United States and Canada fall within this system. In contrast, high-context systems have collectivistic and group-oriented values, mutual-face concern, spiral logic, and context-based understanding. Its style is characterized as indirect, status-oriented, self-effacing, and listener-oriented. Japan, Saudi Arabia, Latin American countries, and China embody the HC system (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Both systems are presented in more detail in the literature review chapter. While LC and HC characteristics are interchangeable with Geert Hofstede's (1980) work on individualistic and collectivistic societies, Hall's theory is more suitable to this research project due to its focus on communication patterns and cultural values, and its flexibility that allows a researcher to work with cultural differences on an individual level.

Although cultures are defined according to predominant characteristics as LC or HC systems, one should not assume every individual within a culture is consonant with the majority of the population. Cultures, subcultures and individuals occupy different positions on the LC/HC spectrum and they also shift due to factors such as urbanization,

economic development, and cultural globalization, as well as in different conversational

situations where there is conflict or power imbalance.

Brazil is one of the countries that fall within the HC system and, along with its

neighbors in Latin America, has undergone dramatic economic and social changes due to

massive urbanization in the 1970s and accentuated globalization with the end of the Cold

War. In this study, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's theory of the *cordial man* illustrates

qualities of high-context Brazilian culture. These qualities are examined and evaluated

from the perspective of intergenerational dyads that have been exposed to an urbanized

and globalized environment in order to determine whether and how a shift from HC to

LC is occurring.

According to Hall (1976), "the level of context determines everything about the

nature of the communication and is the foundation on which all subsequent behavior rests

(including symbolic behavior)" (p. 92). Therefore, the concept of high-context Brazilian

culture described in this paper not only refers to the way people communicate with one

another (verbally or silently), it also encompasses cultural behaviors such as rationality

versus emotion, individuality versus collectivism, straightforwardness versus

indirectness, and trust in self versus trust in the community. This is reflected via Brazil's

diverse and mixed society, in terms of its founding cultures and peoples. Brazil's

miscegenation encompasses a variety of stereotypes, including: the Portuguese emotional

lyricism as an influence for the emotional tone permeating relationships; the innocence of

the indigenous Indians leading to the trusting human nature; and, the forced compliance

of African slaves, influential in the artificial pleasing nature. They shaped what

superficially seems to be the cultural identity of a nation. These stereotypes prompted the

Brazilian poet Ribeiro Couto (1932) to informally conceptualize the *cordial man*.

Briefly, Couto described the *cordial man* as "hospitable and filled with credulity" (p. 3),

which referred to Latin American people and their tendency to expose their emotions and

cordiality when interacting with others, in contrast to European suspicion and selfishness

(1932).

It was not until 1936 that Holanda (1995) provided the notion of the *cordial man*

with a theoretical foundation based on a purely Brazilian perspective. Couto and

Holanda agree on the existence of an overflow of emotions and cordial behavior, such as

hospitality, generosity and delicacy of treatment, permeating communication and

interpersonal relationships in Brazil. However, while Couto believes that these traits

defined the *cordial man* and were genuine, Holanda argues that such traits served the

practical purpose of concealing the *cordial man*'s real intentions, since interactions can

be cordial even when the underlying drift is the opposite. Basing his argument on the

etymology of cordial, derived from the "Latin *cordis* and means heartfelt" (Rocha, 2003,

p. 207), Holanda explains that cordiality not only encompasses congenial feelings, it also

permeates interactions based on disagreeable feelings. Therefore, Holanda argues that

cordiality, in Brazil, is a set of mannerisms used to obtain what is desired and to protect

an individual from showing his true feelings and intentions when they are not in

accordance with the high-context cultural, societal and familial expectations. "To the

cordial man, life within society is, in a certain way, a real liberation from his fear of

living with himself, of counting on himself in every circumstance of his existence…. It is

like a life lived through others" (Holanda, 1995, p. 147). Thus, if the *cordial man*, born

in the bosom of rural and patriarchal family tradition, can only navigate within society

without being ostracized and thrive by maintaining the customary norms of conduct

expected by his and older generations, can he survive in an urbanized and culturally

globalized society influenced by individualism and other low-context characteristics?

  This thesis focuses on the Holanda's version of *cordial man*, and not on Couto's

interpretation. To this date, both definitions still cause confusion among writers and

scholars. The word cordial, as popularly used in the Brazilian-Portuguese vocabulary, is

directly connected to the behaviors Couto describes, such as welcoming, pleasant, and

polite. For a Brazilian to read Holanda's theory, one must be prepared for critical self-

reflection on virtuous cultural behaviors.

  Due to its profound relevance and influence as a sociological paradigm that

mirrors certain aspects of the Brazilian society, Holanda's theory has been studied and

connected to various disciplines, including history by Ronaldo Vainfas (*Colonização,

Miscigenação e Questão Racial: Notas Sobre Equívocos e Tabus da Historiografia

Brasileira* [Colonization, Miscegenation and Racial Matters: Notes About Errors and

Taboos of Brazilian Historiography], 1999); sociology by Antônio Cândido (*Sérgio

Buarque de Holanda e o Brasil* [Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Brazil], 1998); language

and literature by Fred Ellison (*Alfonso Reyes e Ribeiro Couto: Uma Correspondência

Cordial* [Alfonso Reyes and Ribeiro Couto: A Cordial Correspondence], 1984); Oswald

de Andrade (*Do Pau-Brasil à Antropofagia e às Utopias* [From Brazil wood to

Anthropophagi and Utopias], 1978); and, João Cezar de Castro Rocha (*O Exílio do*

Homem Cordial [The Exile of the Cordial Man], 2004). However, there are no studies

relating the *cordial man,* as a representation of a high-context element of the Brazilian

society, to intrafamilial and intergenerational conflict.

This study aims to augment information about intrafamilial conflict due to the use

of different communication styles and context assimilation. Mediators, facilitators,

counselors and therapists can utilize the information gathered here to work with families

in conflict who present the same patterns of behavior. In addition, scholars of various

disciplines who are interested in Holanda's *cordial man* can be exposed to the field of

conflict resolution, which is not yet a well-known field in Brazil. There is also a hope

that the participants of this study will benefit from engaging in a reflective thought

process while telling their stories and gaining new perspective regarding their

intrafamilial conflicts. This research project poses three principle questions. First, is

Brazil's younger generation—born or raised after massive urbanization in the early 1970s

and influenced by U.S. cultural globalization in the 1990s—experiencing a shift within

the LC/HC spectrum? Second, does this shift affect intrafamilial relationships between

generations that identify with different systems? Finally, who is the *cordial man* now

and can he adapt to a world that is becoming more dissimilar to his rural and patriarchal

native habitat?

Research Design

There are no studies relating the *cordial man,* as a representation of a high-context

element of the Brazilian society, to intrafamilial and intergenerational conflict.

Therefore, in this qualitative study, grounded theory was the strategy of inquiry, since

according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 23) "one does not begin with a theory, then

prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is

allowed to emerge." Building on a literature review of academic research on the roots of

the *cordial man*, high- and low-context systems, urbanization and cultural globalization, I

conducted a qualitative study aiming to develop a theory. Data was collected through

interviews with semi-structured open-ended questions. I interviewed five father-son

dyads about their experiences and opinions regarding intrafamilial dynamics, discipline

methods for children, impact of globalization on conflict management and relationship

between father and son. Their responses, guided by their value system, were helpful in

revealing how group-oriented or individualistic these values were and if the *cordial man*

behavior was also present in the intimacy of their homes. The gender of the participants

was chosen based on the use of the word man in the term *cordial man.*

　　　　The balance of the thesis is composed of chapters two through seven. Chapter 2

explores the role and biases of the researcher. I address my interest in this topic and

share valuable experiences, including any personal idiosyncratic beliefs that could have

affected the study. Chapters 3 and 4 contain the literature review, in which different

works are commingled in order to create a theoretical foundation that addresses the

research questions of this study, with chapter 4 particularly focused on intercultural

communication in Brazil. Chapter 5 explores the methodology of this research, by first

reviewing the research questions and how it relates to the methodology. I also clarify the

purpose for choosing grounded theory as the strategy of inquiry. I then outline the design

of the study and describe the data collection method, the sample size, population and the

main data analysis techniques employed in the research. Finally, the validity, reliability

and generalization of the study are addressed. Chapter 6 discusses the findings through

thematic analysis. The final and seventh chapter identifies the limitations of the study

and offers recommendations for further research.

As humans strive to communicate in order to meet their needs and minimize the

occurrence of conflict, it is paramount to understand individual and social communication

patterns and systems. The theory of low- and high-context societies illuminates the

reasons people behave and communicate differently. Japan, being at the upper extreme

of the high-context scale, illustrated how conflict can develop when LC and HC

individuals meet in the same setting. Brazil, another HC culture, has been more flexible

throughout the years with its moral and societal values than Japan; therefore, Brazil

occupies a less extreme position in the HC scale when compared to Japan. As cultures do

not occupy a steady position in the LC/HC scale, there is a need to understand if Brazil is

shifting from HC to LC due to urbanization, globalization and the absorption of

individualistic values by the younger generation. If this shift is happening, conflict

between generations that identify with different systems may also be happening and

former values considered virtuous may be becoming outdated.

Chapter 2: Personal Stance

My first encounter with the concept of collectivistic/high-context *and* individualistic/low-context cultures was puzzling. I recall feeling uneasy about learning that my native Brazil was considered, alongside other Latin American and Asian countries, a HC culture. At that point, I did not understand that countries, cultures, individuals and situations occupied different positions in the LC/HC scale, nor did I understand that this concept was created to explain cultural patterns that people choose to express in most situations and not in all of them. At that time, I was confident that there was something wrong with this theory. How could ritualistic Japan, formal Mexico and relaxed and welcoming Brazil all fall within the same category?

As my understanding of Hall's (1976) theory of HC cultures deepened, I became aware that Brazil occupied a lower position in the HC context scale when compared to countries like Japan and I needed to understand why. I initially thought that the legacy from the colonization period had implications on the cultural behavior of societies. On the one hand, the U.S. had a developmental colonization, such that the colonizers were hoping to develop the land in order to succeed. Their goals, mainly based on Calvinist Protestant values, focused on personal growth and individualism. On the other hand, Brazil had an exploitative colonization; the settlers were interested in collecting wealth to be invested in Portugal. Native Brazilians were converted to Catholicism, which emphasizes feelings of remorse, guilt and shame.

Ribeiro (2000), when discussing the formation of the Brazilian civilization, notes that upon the arrival of the caravels to the new land, Portuguese colonizers encountered

native inhabitants on the coast of Brazil and were bewildered by their beauty and

innocence, but were also terrified by their demoniac and anthropophagic rituals and

uninhibited sexual practices. Apart from being a source of labor and sex to the

colonizers, the native Indians became a target for forced religious indoctrination, which

modified the way the natives perceived the world around them and made familiar

behaviors seem wrong and out of synch with the catholic goal of salvation.

Although comparative colonization seemed an interesting starting point to

partially explain the diverging communication patterns developed in different societies, I

decided I wanted to stay closer to home. I began noticing that my father, more often than

not, chooses to communicate through HC means, such as delivering indirect messages,

more than his daughters do. Additionally, he is the one who worries the most about the

image of his family. I wondered if the same was happening to other Brazilian families—

where parents identify themselves with the HC system while their children shift towards

a more LC approach.

One day, while talking to my father on the phone, I asked for advice concerning a

family with whom I had been working as their family coach. There was a male teen

involved with gangs and alcohol and his father was displeased with such behavior. Their

connection was damaged and the father was only willing to reconnect based on the

condition of behavioral changes. I asked my father what he would do, to which he

promptly replied: "I would not try to tell him directly what to do. Instead, I would try to

make him feel bad. I would tell him: Do you really want to disappoint me? Do you

really want to make me sad?" I translated this response as emotional manipulation. As

we finished the conversation, I was left with feelings of anger and surprise. There it was; the confirmation of what he had done successfully over the years to control me without really engaging in a productive conflict, without giving me logical explanations for matters that were questionable to me. The surprise came from the fact that once he explicitly told me his disciplinary method of choice, he implicitly affirmed that he was aware of how effective it was in raising me. I saw in him the *cordial man* described by Holanda (1995). He was using his calm and loving—or cordial—manners to mask his real intention of convincing me to do what he thought was the best for me. Instead of convincing me to act differently by giving me rational motives that would allow me to decide for myself, he blinded my ability to think by making me feel guilty for hurting his feelings, even though my actions did not affect him directly and were only affecting me. Although my father learned to use his emotions in a strategic way, I knew his reactions were based on genuine emotions in response to my actions. Thus, it was very difficult for me to separate rational from emotional reasoning when dealing with my father since his emotions were important to me and needed to be considered.

As I was growing up, it was paramount to my family to maintain the "structured family" appearance and to be considered honorable above all else, like a good high-context family should. My siblings and I made few choices that disappointed my parents, since before we acted, even as adults, we had to think about how my father would handle the shame and the deception. As the *cordial man* described by Holanda (1995), it was my father's choice to live his life and control our lives according to the morals and rules

of conduct of the group we were a part of, even when these rules did not represent what we wanted as individuals.

While I went to graduate school in the United States, I felt it was easier to make choices based solely on my needs and wants. I still thought about how these choices would affect people around me and I pondered before I acted. Nevertheless, to this date, I still have to remember that I am the one responsible for actions and that my choices may not please everyone at all times. My one-year experience in the U.S. as an adolescent exchange student taught me that not all families are like mine. In the United States, the concept of individuality and privacy is highly regarded, as many parents help their 18 year olds slowly transition from their protective shelter to a life of independence and responsibility.

I still regard my father as the *cordial man* who now faces intrafamilial dilemmas brought by his children who were molded by an urban and culturally globalized society. One of the reasons that compelled me to pursue this research topic is the fact that I, being 10 years younger than my siblings, have seen the changes in the *cordial man* of our family, and these changes have not come about without major conflicts. Therefore, I wondered if there are other families experiencing conflicts that stem from a patriarchal figure being challenged by lower-context children.

My experiences with a *cordial man* as my father made me emotionally invested in this study. However, throughout the process I was aware of my subjectivity and maintained a critical view in all directions. I was committed to performing constant

revision of my own biases and to abide by a set of procedures guided by grounded theory

to ensure objectivity while coding and explaining data retrieved from subjects.

As a Brazilian, I was also aware that is more difficult to be critical of customs and

rules of conduct of a high-context society that has contributed to my personal view of the

world. Then, again, I aimed at being a neutral observer, knowing that cultures should not

be viewed dichotomously. My experience abroad expanded my horizon on the

differences between both cultures, which would not be possible if I had not left my

comfort zone in Brazil. My international experience in a low-context culture gave me the

lens I needed to keep my biases at a safe distance.

The *cordial man* is a well-known concept for historians, philosophers,

anthropologists and sociologists in Brazil. Nonetheless, it has not been connected yet to

the family arena. My interest in family conflicts stems from two factors: I am part of a

large caring family and, therefore, family values are paramount to me; and, I have

worked with struggling families as a family therapist.

For several years, in-home family mediation occupied an important role in my life

and it also influenced my decision to focus on family dynamics as the subject of this

study. My professional training and interpersonal skills were positive attributes that I

brought to this research. I am accustomed to listening to people recount their experiences

with pain, deception, hatred, acts of horror and negative feelings without being

judgmental or pitying. I am empathetic but I strive to remain neutral. Interviewing the

subjects of this study in their homes was as comfortable to me as it was going to work

every day. I also strived to connect with the families I interviewed in the same way that I

connected with the families that I used to work with—by being open, honest and

respectful. Reminiscing about my own high-context experiences gave me insight into

other families' experiences and helped me to understand differences in communication

patterns and how these disparities lead to conflict. By believing that I was emotionally

invested in this study, I chose to be aware of my subjectivity instead of pretending it did

not exist. I followed the premise that subjectivity is a "… unique, useful, personal quality

of a researcher" (Jansen & Peshkin, 1992, p. 682). We are only capable of explaining the

world outside by reflecting on our own experiences. As Dilthey (Jansen & Peshkin,

1992, p. 690) claims: "Of course we know nothing about any real world which lies

outside of our consciousness. We know of reality (i.e., an external world) only insofar as

our will and our positing of goals are determined." My experience as a part of a family

system has sculpted the way I perceive the world and because I am conscious of that I

make a constant effort to put my perceptions aside so I can absorb what is still foreign to

me.

Chapter 3: Review of the Literature I: Intercultural communication

This chapter interweaves literature pertinent to cultural variability and intercultural communication. Concepts found in relevant literature are synthesized and interlaced to create a theoretical foundation that sustains the development of the proposed research. First, the concept of cultural variability is explained. Second, two important cultural variability frameworks—being one of them Hall's low-context/high-context approach—are examined and compared in order to explain the researcher's choice to work with Hall's theoretical model. Then, the two attributes from Hall's theory that are important to this research are examined: the ability to work with the concept of LC/HC on an individual level and the relationship between communication patterns and cultural behavior.

Cultural Variability

Hall (1976) states: "One of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective screen between man and the outside world. In its many forms, culture therefore designates what we pay attention to and what we ignore" (p. 85). The process that one goes through to acquire a mother tongue is similar to the process of learning and being a part of his or her native cultural habitat, in the sense that, generally, no major effort has to be made for both of these acquisitions to take place. As it is with language, culture is naturally learned by observation and repetition at early stages of childhood. As the individual matures and intellectually develops, the environment in which this individual is immersed emits a series of approving or disapproving signals. When a word is pronounced properly or a behavior is displayed according to the rules of what is

considered socially expected within the group, the child is encouraged to progress in this same direction. Otherwise, what others view as wrong or inappropriate restrains the impulses of the child.

Differences in the way people's minds are culturally and collectively programmed is what allows for cultural variation to occur between different groups, as well as among members of the same group (Hofstede, 1991). Cultural variation has ignited the curiosity of a multidisciplinary and theoretically diverse group of researchers. Some from more obvious fields such as anthropology (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohavy, & Sanders, 1990; Hofstede, 1991; Hofstede, 2001), psychology (McCrae & Terraciano, Personality profiles of cultures: Aggregate personality traits, 2005), conflict resolution (Rummel, 1966), business management (Fang, 2003), ethology (Van Der Vliert, Schwartz, Huismans, Hofstede, & Daan, 1999), marketing (Brodowsky, Granitz, & Anderson, 2008), languages (Kowner & Wiseman, 2003); and others from fields where cultural variation is not the most common focus of research such as nursing (Eubanks, McFarland, Mixer, Munoz, Pacquiao, & Wenger, 2010), medicine (Hallenback, 2006; Torres & Rao, 2007) and information technology (Usunier & Roulin, 2010).

Different frameworks have been developed to understand values across different cultural groups. Two of these frameworks are widely known and are considered landmarks in the study of intercultural relations. For comparative purposes, both frameworks will be introduced in this study in order to clarify their similarities and differences and to justify the researcher's preference for using the first approach. The first framework is Hall's (1976) work on the relationship between communication

patterns and cultural values, specifically the low-/high-context approach and, the second is Hofstede's (1980) cross cultural work-related value dimensions, specifically the individualism-collectivism dimension.

Low-Context and High-Context Systems. Hall's work on concepts such as time, nonverbal language and context has popularized and conceptualized the idea of intercultural communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; Rogers, Hart, & Miike, 2002). Before introducing the concept of low- and high-context systems, Hall (1976) introspects the feelings of instability and information overload that westerners, including himself, experience in modern days. He warns that if westerners, who mostly function in a LC system, want to cope with a complex, fast-paced, and information-processing way of living, they must understand that there are other ways of creating reality. If westerners want to deal with the inability to keep up and process changes and new data, they must learn to use the context in which they are immersed to gather information, relying more on a holistic approach than a compartmentalized view of a given process.

Context "refers to the nature of how meaning is constructed differently across cultures using different ratios of context and information" (Kittler, Rygl, & Mackinnon, 2011, p. 65). Throughout his book, the reader is challenged to reevaluate his/her own cultural framing to understand how others perceive the world. Hall (1976) states that "It is important for the reader to come to grips with his own model of culture in its manifest as well as its latent forms, because my purpose is to raise some of the latent to conscious awareness and to give it to form so that it can be dealt with" (p. 16).

Although cultural observations seem to demonstrate the author's admiration for a system that is different from his own, he also outlines problems faced by people living in high-context systems, such as the slow-moving bureaucracy and the importance of political connections in the public administration environment, such as the case of Brazil. Hall (1976) recalls that one system is not better than the other and that his intention is to delineate their differences and congruencies.

Hall suggests that individuals combine preprogrammed culture-specific contexts and information in different proportions to create meaning (Kittler, Rygl, & Mackinnon, 2011). When describing some of the attributes that define low- and high-context systems, Hall (1976) notes that LC systems are prone to constant changes; therefore, they can be unstable. People in LC systems exchange information in an explicit manner and do not need to spend much time interpreting what is left implicit by the interlocutor, since it is not expected of him/her to decode what the other person is really thinking. Low-context people are expected to take responsibility for their actions and are less prone to ostracizing individuals who do not belong to the same cultural group. They also have a tendency to compartmentalize several aspects of their daily lives: from their relationship with time to the linear way information is processed.

Conversely, high-context systems are slow to change, and thus more stable. People in HC systems are preprogrammed to notice contextual information, thus are more equipped to understand beyond what is being said through words and "read between the lines." High-context people are more prone to taking responsibility for actions performed by those who are dependent on them, either in the family or professional realm, and are

more discriminative of outsiders. Their way of thinking, instead of being logically linear, is more comprehensive, and their relationship to time is less valued than their relationship with people. Thus, HC people would rather choose to be late than leaving an activity unfinished or a person in need.

      Hall (1976) utilizes a writing style that may be considered informal and empirical. His cultural observations draw from his own experience living with the Navajos and his research on different cultural systems. He builds his conceptual framework on contrasting information gathered from the same issues present in LC/HC-systems. He claims, "while I do not exclude philosophical systems, religion, social organization, language, moral values, art and material culture, I feel it is more important to look at the way things are actually put together than at theories" (p. 16). While Hall (1976) chooses to approach cultural differences between LC and HC systems in a descriptive manner, Ting-Toomey (1999) summarizes Hall's work by creating dimensions that are representative of both systems. In order to fully understand the LC/HC concept, we use Ting-Toomey's (1999) dimensions in the following subsections.

      Low-context systems. According to Ting-Toomey (Communicating Across Cultures, 1999), people from a low-context culture, in most situations, choose to exhibit the following traits when interacting with others: individual values, self-face concern, linear logic, direct style, person-oriented style, self-enhancement style, speaker-oriented style and verbal-based understanding. People with individualistic values favor freedom of action based on individual needs over collective needs. Independence and self-reliance are relevant concepts to this individual. Poasa, Mallinckrodt, and Suzuki (2000)

affirm, "individualistic people define their sense of self according to how they are different from others" (p. 33). Cultural, moral, behavioral or aesthetical differences are welcomed and respected in this system.

Self-face concerns can be exemplified through a situation in which loss of face is imminent. The low-context communicator is solely responsible for his actions and not for the actions of others. Thus, if honor and integrity are in jeopardy, the person is likely act on it, even if this means the loss of face to others. Relationships due to moral disagreements or other differences are terminated without relevant social consequences.

Individuals using linear logic have a tendency to believe only what they observe and perceive as truth. When attempting to give meaning to ideas, expressions or events, the individual moves precisely from one point to the next using selected pieces of information without considering complementary data and inputs which would allow for a more comprehensive and inclusive outcome. To have a direct style means that individuals choose to be assertive in most situations. Eye contact and objectivity are valued, since they aim for straightforwardness. A person-oriented style regards hierarchy loosely. When interacting with people, rituals and ceremonies are avoided since people ought to be treated equally and respected for their individuality. "Low-context cultures value facts and 'hard data', that is, statistics, quantitative information and absolute, objective truths…. People from low-context cultures admire candor and directness" (Dozier, Husted, & McMahon, 1998, p. 113).

The self-enhancement style is common in some LC cultures in which individuals are rewarded for highlighting their accomplishments. In societies where vocal inputs are

valued rather than tacit perception and observation, people may have the desire to appear strong, eloquent, and capable. According to Sedikides and Gregg (2008), one of the characteristics of self-enhancement is that people tend to inflate their abilities, such as in the case of "university students in the U.S. and Europe [which] regard themselves as above-average drivers (Svenson, 1981), and even drivers hospitalized after causing accidents persist in believing they are no worse than regular drivers (Preston & Harris, 1965)" (p. 104).

The speaker-oriented style emphasizes rhetoric. The act of speaking is, usually, more important than listening. In a case I had as a family coach, an American school recommended my services to a girl, whose family was of Mexican heritage, due to her lack of verbal input in the classroom. This girl, Silvia, received good grades and was capable of focusing on tasks while in the classroom. She was bullied by her peers and misunderstood by her teachers due to her shyness and quiet manners. As I began to work with the family and look for signs of family conflict, trauma or abuse, I learned that she had a tightly knit family who happened to be very quiet. During our sessions, family members were concise in speech and often used nonverbal messages. Silvia demonstrated to be at ease while in the company of her family and laughed often while we played family games. The conclusion was that Silvia, who had moved to the US when she was 7, was experiencing a cultural shock within a low-context school. She was accustomed to speak less and listen more.

Finally, verbal-based understanding refers to the message's denotation that is regarded as the most relevant information to be processed and considered. What is said is

what counts and there are no expectations between the communicating parties that

implicit messages must be decoded. The German, Swiss and North American cultures

represent, at different levels on the LC scale, the styles described above.

Pekerti and Thomas (2003) examined the communication styles of East Asians

and Anglo-European New Zealanders. Ninety-six students (48 representing the Asian

sample and 48 representing the Anglo-European sample) participated in the study.

Results showed that Anglo-Europeans, mostly New Zealanders, Europeans and North

Americans displayed more idiocentric behavior when communicating to Asians. Anglo-

Europeans were by far more expressive, dominant, aggressive, preoccupied with

finishing the task given, opinionated and logical. Asians, mostly Chinese, scored high on

being more accommodating, averted to argument and more inclined to shift opinion. The

idiocentric behavior found by Pekerti and Thomas (2003), when examining people from

low-context cultures, is congruent with the following dimensions developed by Ting-

Toomey (1999): individualism, linear logic, and direct and speaker-oriented styles.

In another study, Croucher et al (2012) investigated the relationship between

national cultures and conflict styles. The sample included 1,972 individuals (657 from

India, 311 from Ireland, 232 from Thailand and 592 from the United States). Results

confirmed, in accordance with Hall (1976) and Ting-Toomey (1999; 2005), participants

from LC nations (the U.S. and Ireland) prefer to put their interests ahead of others in

conflicting situations when compared to HC individuals. Additionally, HC nations (India

and Thailand) prefer to withdraw from conflict to maintain harmony and will sacrifice

their needs for the needs of others. Their findings also coincide with the dimensions of individualism and self-face concern.

Interestingly, against previous research, Croucher et al (2012) found that HC individuals were more inclined to compromise and conciliate diverging interests than LC individuals. The authors speculate that this shift might be due to the growing economies of India and Thailand, and the possible acquisition of individualistic values. These speculations are directly related to this study, since the effects of urbanization and globalization in Brazil are analyzed in order to determine its relationship to a possible cultural shift among younger Brazilians.

High-context systems. HC cultures display the following behavior: group-oriented values, mutual-face concern, spiral logic, indirect style, status-oriented style, self-effacement style, listener-oriented style and context-based understanding. Group-oriented values refer to individuals who consider social, moral, religious and cultural norms of their family, group and society before reaching a decision or taking action. People with group-oriented values define themselves in terms of their relationship to others and choose not to separate their individual selves from their group.

Mutual-face concern can be found in situations where two individuals or families are engaged in a conflict that involves shame, honor or loss of face. This impasse tends to yield partial benefits to both parties and saves face within the environment they are in. Even when the outcome of the conflict does not please everyone, the ultimate goal is to preserve relationships intact. Facts are not as important as the outcome.

In a high-context culture such as Spain, there is a "public truth" which preserves everyone's face, and the "real truth" which is understood by all, but not verbalized. Among people of the same high-context culture, there is little confusion between the public truth and the real truth. The meaning of the message is interpreted in light of the context of the parties' relationship. (Dozier, Husted, & McMahon, 1998, p. 114)

Spiral logic is the ignition of a thought process to give meaning to ideas or facts, which in most cases considers information acquired holistically. This style of logic emphasizes the importance of gathering information from multiple sources, rather than from fragmented parts.

The indirect communication style occurs when there is a great power distance between the interacting parties or when there is a need to express discontent or disappointment. The message is cautiously and indirectly expressed. The sender uses selective words to guide the receiver to the point; however, it is the listener's responsibility to understand the cues and decipher the connotation behind the message. Indirect communication serves diverse purposes in HC cultures, especially in Brazil. On the positive spectrum, indirect communication empowers the listener since he/she is responsible for decoding the message, it helps the involved parties to maintain face, and it can give a friendly tone to any sort of conversation, thus keeping harmony at all costs. Conversely, indirect communication can be dubious and generate confusion; it may be understood as dishonest and it may fail to deliver messages of great relevance and urgency in a non-ambiguous way. When HC indirect communication is combined with

status-oriented values, or high power distance, in a LC setting, the consequences may be

lethal. The case of Avianca-052's airplane crash, which is addressed at the end of this

section, is an unfortunate illustration of cultural unawareness between a HC and a LC

communicator.

The status-oriented style highly regards hierarchical respect and obedience.

Generally, relationships are based on power, demand formality, and the utilization of

adequate rhetoric to emphasize the power distance. In Brazil though, formality is

avoided as often as possible since individuals will try to narrow the distance between

them, including strangers, through the use of diminutives and by attempting to create a

superficial personal connection with one another. Thus, Brazil confirms Hall's theory

regarding the existence of great power distance in HC cultures. However, Brazilians try

to behave in an informal manner to navigate within such a socially discriminative system.

The self-effacement style can be perceived in a professional or social situation,

when an individual does not divulge his/her accomplishments knowing that others will

realize them based on the results. When one is praised in public, the compliments are

received with humility and embarrassment. The receiver then reassures the speaker that,

circumstances, such as collaboration from peers, guidance from superior and wisdom of

family members contributed to his or her success.

The listener-oriented style is when listening is considered an act of wisdom, since

one always learns from others' experiences. Silence between sentences is also perceived

as a needed pause to reconnect with the inner self.

Context-based understanding means that communication bases itself not only in what is being said, but also in what can be read "between the lines." The connotation of the message is highly valued and it is used to comprehend the entire communication. Japan, China, Brazil and Thailand are some of the countries that well represent this characteristic in the HC system.

In a study by Poasa et al. (2000), 73 students were surveyed (23 U.S. Americans, 25 American Samoans and 25 Western Samoans) regarding their individualistic/collectivistic cultural beliefs and their attributions about family problems and resolutions. Qualitative findings confirm that Samoan students share collective cultural beliefs, while American students share individualistic cultural beliefs. Five themes emerged that are interchangeable with Ting-Toomey's (1999) high-context dimensions: spiral logic, status-oriented style, group-oriented values, indirect style and mutual-face concern. More specifically, the findings show that:

> … (b) Samoan students tend to distribute attributions of blame in a nonlinear
> fashion and view family problems as having multiple causes; (c) Samoan
> students' responses emphasized the influence of social status and power hierarchy
> differences—they used the word *should* very frequently and placed more blame
> on high-status actors who failed to conform to the social obligations of their role,
> whereas they tended to absolve low-status actors from blame; (d) in-group/out-
> group status was very important to Samoan students, in part because the actions of
> in-group members were viewed as reflecting directly on themselves; (e) when
> Samoan students did voice attributions of blame to an individual (especially to

high-status, in-group actors), they used third-person grammatical constructions or abstracted references to general religious or legal proscriptions that tended to insulate them from a direct, person-to-person expression of blame; (f) Samoan students suggested resolutions for problems targeted at external, situation-specific aspects and resolutions with the goal of preserving relationship harmony. (p. 52)

An example of cultural variation in a multicultural society can be found in a qualitative study regarding cultural differences in self-enhancing versus self-effacing perspectives, in which Suzuki, Davis, and Greenfield (2008) observed and read the journals of 34 American high school students that were representative of four major ethnic groups: African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Euro-Americans and Latin Americans. The study aimed at understanding if students interpreted praise or criticism in a self-enhancing or self-effacing manner. Results show that Euro-Americans and African-Americans displayed a self-enhancing (low-context) frame of reference, while Asian American and Latin American participants shared a more self-effacing (high-context) perspective. Tammy, an African-American volleyball player, after winning the "Most Valuable Player" award, writes in her diary, "All I know is that I earned my trophy and I'm very proud of it and myself… Smiling, people adoring you, getting awards and walking in front of hundreds of parents, it just felt good" (p. 88). Conversely, Nicole, a second-generation Korean-American player, who was also disputing the same award with Tammy, writes, "I kind of didn't like it when people told me that I'll be the MVP because I didn't know how to respond…. I find myself afraid of what others might think of me. I don't want to have the reputation of being conceited in any way" (p. 88).

Suzuki, Davis, and Greenfield (2008) recall that cultural variability studies are not constrained to cross-national investigations. Currently, cultural differences are not a matter of interest of governments or businesses alone. Educational institutions, religious settings, neighborhoods and even families must be prepared to respond appropriately to cultural differences and conflicts.

In order to illustrate the serious consequences that may originate from unsuccessful communication between LC and HC individuals, the plane crash of Avianca-052 will be briefly examined. Malcolm Gladwell (2008) explores the surrounding phenomena that enable successful outcomes in diverse arenas. In the book *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Gladwell reviews the relationship between plane crashes and cultural values to show how Korean Air turned itself around and became a successful enterprise after several accidents. Based on an investigative process performed by Korean Air, it was concluded that cultural values, such as power distance, played a major role in times of crisis. First officers and flight engineers were having difficulty in pointing out mistakes that were being made by pilots, their superiors, in situations of crises, ultimately leading to disaster.

In the study *Culture in the Cockpit: Do Hofstede's Dimensions Replicate?*, Helmreich and Merritt (2000) measured the Power Distance Index of pilots worldwide and ranked South Korea the second highest, following Brazil. In 1990, Avianca-052, a Colombian airplane, was flying in adverse weather conditions to New York (JFK). Air traffic control was holding up 716 airplanes upon landing. As a standard procedure, all airplanes arriving at their destination should have a small quantity of fuel since its fuel

tanks need to be almost empty to ease the landing process. Thus, all airplanes that were

being held up near JFK were concerned with the amount of fuel they had and for how

long it would last. It was no different with Avianca-052. It was held up for one hour and

seventeen minutes until its engines stopped due to the lack of fuel. Although weather and

minor malfunction in the airplane were a problem, there was evidence that the pilot was

tired and the communication between the Colombian pilot and the Colombian first

officer, and between the Colombian first officer and the American air traffic control

officer were the main causes of the crash (Gladwell, 2008).

According to Gladwell (2008), the pilot had been working for more than 12 hours

and was, at that instance, operating an older airplane that required extreme physical

strength, thus he began to make minor mistakes that affected his decision-making

abilities. His first officer, also from Colombia, which is a high power-distance and

status-oriented society, not only expected clear orders from his superior, but also failed,

out of respect, to suggest alternatives that could have saved their lives, keeping quiet

most of the recorded time. Besides the fact that the pilot had clouded judgment and both

workers were unable to communicate in a direct and equal manner, a third aspect

contributed to the unfortunate outcome: the misunderstandings between a high-context

Colombian and a low-context American professional. Throughout the several instances

when Klotz, the first officer, attempted to communicate that they were running out of

fuel, he only used mitigated speech to convey the urgency of their situation and was

unable to be assertive, positioning himself in a lower-rank position compared to the air-

traffic controller, who sounded too direct and intimidating to Klotz. Based on an

investigative report, Gladwell concludes that the air traffic controller did not understand

the urgency of the matter since Klotz only spoke in a calm manner about fuel, and since

everyone in that situation was running out of fuel, the controller was unable to decode

Klotz's message. The shocking and saddening part of this communication disaster is that

just minutes before the crash, the pilot asks Klotz, one last time, about the response the

control tower had given him regarding their fuel situation, to which Klotz solely

responds: "the guy is angry."

Hall's work on LC/HC cultures allows us to contrast cultural values and

behaviors. Due to the similarities found in Hofstede's work on individualistic and

collectivistic cultures and Hall's LC/HC cultures, Hofstede's work is presented in the next

section as well as an explanation as to why his theoretical model was discarded as the

most suitable approach for this thesis.

Individualism-collectivism dimension. Geert Hofstede's (1980) "Culture's

Consequences" is an influential work in the study of cross-cultural management. After

surveying a total of 116,000 managers and employees of a large multinational

corporation with subsidiaries in 50 countries and 3 regions, Hofstede (1980, 1991)

identified four organizational value patterns across a diverse range of cultures. First,

individualism-collectivism, as the most relevant dimension, measures if a national culture

was more inclined to emphasize individual needs before group needs, or vice-versa.

Second, power distance assesses the tolerance individuals had towards the inequality of

power distribution. The third dimension, uncertainty avoidance, considers people's

relationship with ambiguity, and the fourth dimension, masculinity-femininity, gauges the

interchangeability or inflexibility of a society toward sexual roles. In a later research

project (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) Hofstede and his colleagues identified a fifth

work-related dimension, which they called Confucian Dynamism due to its values

stemming directly from the religious teachings of Confucius.

In order to identify the individualism-collectivism dimension, Hofstede (1980)

interviewed employees utilizing questions such as:

1) Do you have challenging work to do—work from which you can get a personal

sense of accomplishment? 2) Do you work with people who cooperate well with

one another? 3) Do you have training opportunities (to improve your skills or

learn new skills)? 4) Do you have considerable freedom to adapt your own

approach to the job? 5) Do you have a good working relationship to your

manager? 6) Do you have a job that leaves you sufficient time for your personal

or family life? (Hofstede, 1980, p. 239).

After gathering data over forty countries, he then developed the Country

Individualism Index (IDV), which basically "opposes in particular the importance of time

for personal life on the high IDV side versus the importance of being trained by the

company on the low IDV side" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 213). Coming from employees'

organizational opinion toward IBM, Hofstede (1980) extrapolates the meaning of the data

to other arenas of a nation state such as social, religious and ideological, as he claims

below:

It also appears that IDV is correlated with several country-level indicators: it

correlates 0.82 with GNP per capita, and also with geographical latitude, with the

size of the HERMES [IBM] subsidiary, and with various characteristics of

political and economic systems (such as occupational mobility, sectoral equality,

and press freedom). From this, a picture of the Individualism-Collectivism

dimension of societal norms can be drawn, as well as some inferences about its

origins and consequences. The latter are separated into consequences (1) for

society at large; (2) for religion, ideology, and theory; and (3) for organizations.

(1980, p. 213)

Hofstede's main focus was the analysis of a cross-national cultural relationship

between man and the organization that provided him with an income. He even warns his

readers that the IDV "index is not suitable for distinguishing among occupations, sexes,

age groups or individuals" (213). This study diverges from Hofstede's cross-national

business-oriented analysis in the sense that its focus is on the cultural differences between

fathers and sons, who identify with distinct cultural influences in a single country—in

this case, Brazil. The impact of low-context/individualism versus high-

context/collectivism on an individual level within the family realm is at the center of this

investigation.

Additionally, this study explores the relationship between cultural values and

communication styles (Ting-Toomey, Communicating Across Cultures, 1999) suggested

by Hall's (1976) approach. From the data collected through interviews with fathers and

sons, this research seeks to grasp the underlying cultural values enmeshed in their low-

/high-context communication patterns.

Although this research discards Hofstede's theory as the most suitable approach, due to its business-oriented origin and its inflexibility to be applied at an individual level, note that the social consequences drawn by Hofstede (1980), based on the IDV of a country, are interchangeable with Hall's (1976) description of low-context/high-context cultures.

The tables below, the first on Hofstede's (1980) individualistic-collectivistic approach and the second on Hall's LC/HC framework, show that both authors interpret and generalize cultural aspects of groups in a similar manner. While Hofstede describes social behavior of people based on their organizational values, Hall focuses on the way people communicate and he correlates their communication patterns to their individualistic-collectivistic values.

Table 1: The Individualism Societal Norms

Low IDV	*High IDV*
• In society, people are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty	• In society, everyone is supposed to take of him or herself and his or her immediate family
• "We" consciousness	• "I" consciousness
• Collectivity-orientation	• Self-orientation
• Identity is based on the social system	• Identity is based on the individual
• Emotional dependence of individual on organizations and institutions	• Emotional independence of individual from organizations or institutions
• Emphasis on belonging to organization; membership ideal	• Emphasis on individual initiatives and achievement; leadership ideal
• Private life is invaded by organizations and clans to which one belongs; opinions are predetermined	• Everyone has a right on a private life and opinion
• Expertise, order, duty, security by organization or clan	• Autonomy, variety, pleasure, individual financial security

• Friendships predetermined by stable social relationships; but need for prestige within these relationships	• Need for specific friendships
• Belief in group decisions	• Belief in individual decisions
• Value standards differ for ingroups and outgroups; particularism	• Value standards should apply to all; universalism

Note: Table from Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International differences in work-related values*, 1980, p. 213.

Table 2: The High-Context Communication (HCC) and Low-Context

Communication (LCC) Frameworks

HCC characteristics	LCC characteristics
• Group-oriented values	• Individualistic values
• Mutual-face concern	• Self-face concern
• Spiral logic	• Linear logic
• Indirect style	• Direct Style
• Status-oriented style	• Person-oriented style
• Self-effacement style	• Self-enhancement style
• Listener-oriented style	• Speaker-oriented style
• Context-based	• Verbal-based understanding

Note: Table from Ting-Toomey, *Communicating Across Cultures*, 1999, p. 101.

In line with Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, and Chua (1988), this researcher believes:

That the dimensions of low-high-context communication and individualism-collectivism are isomorphic. All cultures Hall (1976) labels as low-context are individualistic, given Hofstede's scores, and all of the cultures Hall labels as high-context are collectivistic in Hofstede's (1980; 1983) schema. It, therefore, appears that low- and high-context communication are the predominant forms of communication in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, respectively. (p. 44)

Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, and Chua (1988) add that "in developing hypothesis for future research, investigators, therefore, could substitute individualistic for low-context and collectivistic for high-context" (p. 57).

Hofstede's work on individualism and collectivism has a business-oriented origin and it was designed to compare cultural values at a national level. Therefore, Hall's theory on LC/HC communication is better suited to compare cultural values at an individual level. In the next section the reasons for choosing Hall's work are examined.

Choosing Hall's low-context/high-context approach. When choosing Hall's approach, two attributes stand out: 1) the ability to work with the concept of LC/HC on an individual level, and 2) the relationship between communication patterns and cultural behavior.

Although Hall's (1976) theory on low-/high-context systems is based on differences in communication patterns and cultural behavior across nations, he does not advise his reader against LC/HC concepts on an individual level. He acknowledges the existence of cultural individuality by stating that there are "differences [within each system] at all levels between people ranging from the interpersonal to the national" (p. 113). To Hall, differences among individuals are not seen as an error; instead, they are seen as a natural occurrence within large cultural groups. In fact, the cultural difference between a father and a son is the main focus of this study. By observing the occurrence of the slightest cultural shift on an individual level, we may be able to speculate on the cultural future of a nation if enough individuals experience similar shifts.

In order to compare different cultural values of fathers and sons, we must consider their interpersonal communication as an intercultural encounter (Singer, 2000). Singer has been advocating that every individual must be considered culturally unique once "no person is a part of all and only, the same groups as anyone else and because each person ranks the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the groups to which he or she belongs differently" (p. 28).

Within this conceptual view of intercultural encounters, fathers and sons gain their cultural uniqueness that is of utmost importance to this study, since this uniqueness allows us to contrast and compare cultural values that, in turn, inform communication patterns, that consequently, inform cultural behaviors of each of the participants. In this sense, Hall's (1976) approach of LC/HC systems will provide the necessary framework that will allow us to determine if younger individuals in Brazil are becoming more low-context when compared to an older generation.

Several scholars have engaged in individual cultural values studies (Mischel, 1990; Schwartz, 1992; Oishi, 2004; McCrae, 2000) in order to understand how personality is influenced by culture and how this interaction generates certain behaviors in individuals or social groups (McCrae, 2000). An example that blends personality and cultural psychology to contrast individual cultural behavior is the culture versus person versus situation (CuPS) approach (Cohen & Leung, 2010; 2011). This approach aims at combining cultural shared beliefs (such as honor, face, dignity) to individual viewpoints/behavior in a given situation.

Cohen and Leung (2011), in a study involving 119 American students that

identified with three different cultural values—dignity (Northern Anglo), face (Asian

Americans) and honor (Southern Anglos and American Latinos)—have found "that the

same 'type' of person who was most helpful, honest, and likely to behave with integrity

in one culture was the 'type' of person least likely to do so in another culture" (p. 507).

The first part of the study compared students from honor and nonhonor cultures with

regard to their belief of endorsing violence and with regard to their actions in two

different types of situations: favor versus no favor to repay. Each participant was invited

to watch four film clips regarding payback in the "form of honor-related violence" (p.

515). With each participant there were two individuals covertly collaborating with the

researcher. One of them offered some pieces of candy to the participant before the

movies started and the other did not. The same cooperating individual that offered the

candy, also dropped a disk labeled as important at the feet of the participant and at the

end of the movies, she or he, left the disk behind giving an opportunity to the participant

to return the favor by returning the disk.

The study found, among other findings, that:

Among participants from an honor culture (Southerners and Latinos), those who

most endorsed payback in the form of honor-related violence also went the

furthest to repay the confederate [cooperating individual] who had given them a

gift of candy, compared to those who rejected honor-related violence….

Conversely, among nonhonor groups (Northern Anglos and Asian Americans),

those who rejected violence expended the most effort to repay, compared with

those who endorsed violence. (p. 515)

Thus, individuals from different cultural backgrounds within the same nation with

opposing viewpoints on violence-related issues have behaved the same way in a given

situation. Similar to the CuPS approach, this present study has the objective of

comprehending how individuals internalize, accept or reject the cultural values they are

immersed in.

The second reason for choosing Hall's (1976) LC/HC approach is the relationship

between communication and cultural behavior. Hall sees communication patterns as a

tool to identify low-context/high-context cultural behavior. Dimensions such as direct

versus indirect communication style, linear versus spiral logic in thought processes and

speaker versus listener-oriented style demonstrate Hall's interest in connecting

individuals' cultural values to the way they choose to communicate.

In this study, five dyads of fathers and sons are asked 14 semi-structured open-

ended questions about their experiences with their father-son relationship in conflicting

situations. There are two important aspects of language—being the most reliable tool for

data gathering—that need to be quickly addressed: the evolving nature of word meaning

and verbal thought; and the mutual influence that the social/historical context and

language have on one another.

In this thesis, language plays an important role, both theoretically and

methodologically. The interviews' transcripts will be analyzed inductively following the

recommended steps of grounded theory, which are finding words that represent concepts

for each phenomenon and gathering similar concepts into categories. These steps will

constantly remind this researcher to carefully interpret the meaning of the words each

participant chooses to use to express their thoughts.

Vygotsky (1986), in the midst of a theoretical debate about word meaning being a

phenomenon of speech or a phenomenon of thought, concludes:

Word meaning is a phenomenon of thought only insofar as thought is embodied in

speech, and of speech only insofar as speech is connected with thought and

illuminated by it. It is a phenomenon of verbal thought, or meaningful speech—a

union of word and thought. (p. 213)

Most importantly, Vygotsky (1986) concluded that although words have a more

static characteristic, word meaning and verbal thoughts are dynamic processes influenced

by the social-historical-cultural context where the individual is immersed. If the concepts

are reached as a result of the constantly evolving social and intellectual experiences of

participants, it may be easier to understand what each participant is conveying when we

take into consideration his cultural values, and the meanings of his words. Participants

may be using the same word to describe a concept. However, the word meaning may

vary depending on the cultural context. With data analysis, cultural shifts may be spotted

through differences in their thought processes, and therefore, communication patterns.

In describing his belief that individual cognition is socially and culturally

mediated, Vygotsky (1978) suggests:

Like tool systems, sign systems (language, writing, number systems) are created

by societies over the course of human history and change with the form of society

and the level of its cultural development. Vygotsky believed that the

internalization of culturally produced sign systems brings about behavioral

transformations and forms the bridge between early and later forms of individual

development. Thus, for Vygotsky, in the tradition of Marx and Engels, the

mechanism of individual developmental change is rooted in society and culture.

(p. 7)

In accordance to Vygotsky's (1978) belief that language and history are mutually

influenced by one another, Hall (1976) illustrates this when talking about China, a high-

context culture, which by definition, is deeply rooted in tradition and resistant to changes.

Hall explains that if one needs to look up a Chinese word in the dictionary, he or she has

to know the significance of 214 radicals. Therefore, contextual information is needed.

"For example, to find the word for star one must know that it appears under the sun

radical. To be literate in Chinese, one has to be conversant with Chinese history" (p. 91).

If individual cognition is mediated by society, one can assume that

communication patterns and cultural behavior will vary to some degree if the participants

of this study have been exposed to cultural influences that were strong enough to change

their understanding of the world. It is only by acknowledging how limited our own

cultural framing is that we can step out of our comfort zone to begin understanding how

others inform and create their realities. Thus, by grasping other realities and learning

from them, we can return to our own world to reinterpret it.

Horizontal theories. Horizontal theories, such as Hofstede's and Hall's, used to

compare and contrast cultural values, are openly criticized by scholars, namely Triandis

(1972), Tayeb (1988; 1994; 2000; 2001), Lowe (2001), Yeh and Laurence (1995),

McSweeney (Hofstede's Model of National Cutlural Differences and their Consequences:

A Triumph of Faith -- A Failure of Analysis, 2002; The Essentials of Scholarship: A

Reply to Geert Hofstede, 2002), Roberts and Boyacigiller (1984), who believe these

theories can be dichotomous, generalized, oversimplified and theoretically insufficient.

As such, these common criticisms will be addressed here, defining the stance of this

researcher and the scope of this study.

The two extremes of the LC/individualistic versus HC/collectivistic continuum

can easily be interpreted as the only available possibilities to measure the cultural values

of a group or an individual. However, most importantly, Hall (1976) and Hofstede

(1980) intend to use the continuum as "a conceptual grid in explaining why the meaning

of self-conception varies across cultures" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 69) and that "although

no culture exists exclusively at one end of the scale, some are high while others are low"

(Hall, 1976, p. 91). Along the same lines, Gary Weaver (2000) refutes the dichotomy of

such horizontal models by arguing that:

> Cultures might be placed along a continuum ranging from the abstractive low-
>
> context and urban to the associative, high-context and rural. Most cultures tend to
>
> fall on one side of the continuum or the other. However, no single culture falls
>
> completely within any one category. Differences between cultures are a matter of
>
> degree. (p. 74)

With regard to generalization and oversimplification, it must be clear that

individuals within a given cultural group or nation will shift along the continuum

according to the situation, the ways of interacting and with whom they interact. One may

choose to use low-context communication at work, when the majority of the information

has to be explicit, while at home, one is—naturally—a high-context communicator since

the majority of the information needed can be found in the context (Hall, 1976; Ting-

Toomey, 1999). Although individuals of the same cultural groups may not occupy the

same position, at all times, within the LC/individualistic versus HC/collectivistic

continuum, the fact is that most people from a given cultural group probably behave in a

similar manner most of the time (Singer, 2000) and thus are "representative of the culture

and consistent with everything else" (Hall, 1976, p. 108) allowing us to understand "how

the various "I" identity or "we" identity orientations influence our communication

behaviors across cultures" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 69).

Additionally, a group of individuals, such as American women, may be

considered more collectivistic than American men. However, when compared to

Japanese women, U.S. females will still be fairly individualistic (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Thus, "these contrasts are oversimplifications and generalizations, but they allow us to

consider the differences and similarities between cultures" (Weaver, 2000, p. 74).

Finally, to address theoretical insufficiency, Hofstede (1983) argues that

researchers must have reliable research methods that are capable of showing, empirically,

"that (1) they can be operationalized at the level of nations, that is, related to something

measurable or observable and (2) they then appear as, indeed, separate dimensions on

which nations can be shown to differ" (1983, p. 291). This present study does not aim at

analyzing and comparing cross-national cultural values and, therefore, will not attempt to

fulfill the requirements to address theoretical insufficiency suggested by Hofstede. Using the logic of qualitative inquiry, the interest of this researcher is in comprehending in depth the experiences and perspectives of diverse individuals than being able to generalize those experiences to a large population. This study aims at understanding if shifts in cultural values, at an individual level, are generating conflicts among a small sample of fathers and sons and how the influence of the cultural and social context is affecting their relationship.

Not nearly as severe as cultural misunderstandings can be in a life-threatening situation, they, indeed, can be the reason of problematic interactions in an array of circumstances. Cultural values are deeply ingrained and it is only by developing a strong sense of cultural awareness that individuals can operate adequately in different contextual settings. Stemming from a broader picture of the meaning of LC/HC systems, we can then look at the case of Brazil and its aspects of a HC culture in order to determine if a cultural shift from HC to LC is taking place in the context of the unprecedented exposure of a large number of people to urban and globalized values.

Chapter 4: Review of the Literature II: Intercultural communication in Brazil

The *Cordial Man*: the Face of a High-Context System

This chapter focuses on Brazil and it brings together literature pertinent to various disciplines, such as, history, anthropology, Brazilian literature, sociology, and urbanization and globalization theories. First, aspects of Brazil's history that are pertinent to this study are examined in order to highlight some of the elements that contributed to the formation of the Brazilian society. Second, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's theory of the *cordial man,* which illustrates qualities of the high-context Brazilian culture, is contextualized and defined. Then, two devices used to mediate conflict within the Brazilian society are presented in order to create a broader picture of the society in which families are immersed. Next, the issue of intrafamilial hierarchy is addressed. The two final sections focus on literature pertinent to urbanization and globalization theories in order to understand if the changes caused by these phenomena have affected the way the younger Brazilian generations perceive themselves and the society they live in, and if they are experiencing a shift from the high-context toward the low-context of the cultural spectrum.

In the same manner that Hall (1976) had an insider perspective on a low-context society and was able to identify issues that could be improved through the assimilation of high-context values, Holanda (1995), through a historical, political, and sociological perspective, examined the national identity of the Brazilian society with critical eyes and suggested remedies associated with values of impersonality and rationality, which are common traits in low-context cultures. In order to understand the concept of the *cordial*

man, as developed by Holanda, one must understand the context in which the concept is immersed.

Historical Background. Four works published between 1928 and 1942 have unarguably achieved a status of academic consensus (Morse, 1995; Borges, 1994; Armstrong, 2000; Vainfas, 1999; Rezende, 2008; Cândido, 1998) with regard to the formation of a Brazilian national identity: *Retrato do Brasil* (Portrait of Brazil) pusblished in 1928 by Paulo Prado (1981); *Casa-grande & Senzala* (The Masters and the Slaves) (1933) by Gilberto Freyre; *Raízes do Brasil* (Roots of Brazil), published in 1936 by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1995); and *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo* (Formation of Contemporary Brazil), published in 1942 by Caio Prado Junior (1967). Themes such as miscegenation, sexuality, emotionality, culture, slavery and patriarchalism were addressed in order to understand the origin of the social behavior and the composition of the Brazilian society. Moreover, some of these works (Prado, 1981; Holanda, 1995) pointed to characteristics of the Brazilian people, such as luxury and emotionality, which were seen as an impediment to the expected development of the nation. Note that the ideal of "the country of the future," which is present in the Brazilian society to this date, can, in a similar manner, be read in the literature then. In *Raízes do Brazil* (1995), Holanda, stripped off of any sentimental idealism or patriotism, suggests that the Brazilian people and, thus, its institutions need to be more rational and less emotional, more egalitarian and less discriminatory, if the intention is to develop into a genuine democratic nation based on liberal values. Although the author does not focus nor endorses the concept of the flourishing of the nation—which is the disseminated

rationale that Brazil has not fully developed into its full potential—his criticisms relate to this rationale. Holanda (1995) highlights non-functional aspects of the Brazilian society via critical analysis.

A few aspects of the Brazilian colonial history are briefly illustrated to explain how the early stages of Brazil's formation were deeply influenced by an Eurocentric worldview, and thus how it was necessary for the artistic modernist movement in the 1920s and the intellectuals—such as Holanda—in the 1930s to redefine the nation through a purely Brazilian perspective.

The colonial period (from the 1500s to 1822) outlined the economic, political, social and cultural formation of the country's national character. According to Freyre (1933), the colonization of Brazil was unique when compared to other territories in two aspects: the implementation of *sesmarias* and miscegenation. A third aspect is added in this study to characterize the uniqueness of Brazilian colonization: the migration of the royal family to Brazil in 1808. These three characteristics frame the investigation of country-specific issues, such as nepotism and the importance of personal connections in the public and private sectors, and the delayed formation of a national identity. These issues are key to the understanding of Holanda's (1995) *cordial man*. Furthermore, these issues are directly related to the thriving of the patriarchal family in Brazil. Patriarchalism guided all levels of interactions, as it came with dynamics of favoritism and particularism, and thus, gave birth to the constant struggle to separate the private from the public interest.

The policy of *sesmarias* allowed Portuguese citizens to establish ownership and cultivate large sections of land, and therefore, it transplanted several families from Portugal to Brazil making the new world their new home. According to Prado Jr. (1967), people were chosen based on their financial stability and their connections to the Court or the Portuguese state apparatus. Due to the abundance of land in Brazil and the distance between each property, it was difficult for the Portuguese crown to maintain strict control over landowners' activities. Over the years, preference was given to individuals who could maintain large properties to produce large-scale export commodities, such as sugarcane. The Portuguese occupation strategy contributed to social inequality and originated the formation of latifundia, which remains a problem to this date. Holanda (1995) affirms: "In the rural domain, the land owner authority was never challenged. Everything was done according to his will, and often, in a capricious and despotic manner" (p. 80). Additionally, these vast territories were self-sufficient and were not under the scrutiny of public law. Food, clothing, furniture, religious and general education were available within the property and provided by the patriarchal family. Thus, the need for common individuals to have personal ties to these families was highly important to their survival. Freyre (1933) notes:

> The family—not the individual, not even the state or any commercial company— has been, since the 16th century, the greatest colonization factor; the productive unity; the capital that works the soil, installs the farms, buys slaves, cattle, tools; the social force that transforms itself in politics; the most powerful colonial aristocracy in the Americas. Above the family, the king of Portugal almost reigns

without truly reigning. The politicians—as an expression of this political

familiarity—would soon limit the power of the king, and later [through the

independence from Portugal] limit imperialism, or economic parasitism, that has

extended its tentacles over the Brazilian colony. (p.19)

According to Fausto (2001), measures regarding fiscal policies were attempted in

order to establish a clear separation between what was public and of common interest,

and what was private and represented the interests of the king and the ruling elite.

Rosenn (1995), after analyzing contradictory Brazil-related legal documents from the

colonial period, was surprised that the Portuguese "administrative machinery functioned

at all" (p 25). Rosenn discovered:

The Portuguese did bequeath the Brazilians a canon of statutory interpretation that

is but a step removed from the *jeito* [the action of bending the rules]. The *Lei da

Boa Razão* (Law of Good Sense), enacted on August 18, 1769 … directed the

judiciary to apply Roman law to fill legislative lacunae only when it accorded

with "good human sense." … It encouraged judges and lawyers to look to

common sense and the spirit of the law as the basis for decision…. Thus, the

Brazilian custom of reinterpreting laws in the light of good sense has enjoyed a

respectable and long-standing heritage in Portuguese positive law. (p.25)

When referring to the general pattern of relations between the Portuguese state

and the colonial neo-Brazilian society, Fausto (2001) claims:

There was a reciprocal movement of the state toward society and society toward

the state, which ended up blurring the boundaries between public and private

space. If on the one hand private interests influenced the state, on the other hand the state's domain was not clearly drawn. Indeed, people (or subjects) had no rights as individuals. The traits of the Portuguese patrimonial state, where everything, after all, belonged to the king, were readjusted to the needs of a colonial society. Family solidarity [meaning personal connections] was more relevant than class interests (p. 33).

Despite racial segregation and extermination, Freyre (1933) affirms that the colonization process in Brazil contrasted the colonial experience in Mexico, Peru or North America since the native population were not only used as a work force, they were also used to establish Portugal ownership of Brazil through family formation, known as *cunhadismo* or through procreation strategies. Although such miscegenation was, primordially, a product of dominative ideals, the lack of white women and the desire of native women to bear children they believed were of racial superiority contributed to the ethnic enmeshment (Abreu, 1924).

Due to the absence of a socially structured and an economically organized society prior to colonization and the ethnic melting pot that resulted from such process, feelings of racial, social, and intellectual inferiority in comparison to Portugal and later to other societies pervaded Brazil's formation of a national identity for the years to come and, to an extent, still exists today through the ideal of Brazil being the nation of the future. Ribeiro (2000) draws attention to the fact that during the colonization period intellectual knowledge was strongly held by the few who were responsible for the European-based acculturation of others. Additionally, Ribeiro states that the artistic production mirrored

the aesthetics and what was in vogue in Europe. This necessity to mimic the European

lifestyle magnified when the Portuguese royal family moved to Brazil in 1808. Brazil is

the only former colonial territory to which the royal family, its court and a large portion

of the Portuguese state apparatus, adding up to between 10,000 to 15,000 people

(Wilcken, 2004), emigrated.

During the royal family's period of rule in Brazil, personal connections gained

significant importance. The neo-Brazilian elite was helpful in welcoming the Portuguese

court upon their arrival and provided homes, offices, money and other assets to *protégés*

of Dom João VI. Gomes (2007) reports that, over the thirteen years Dom João stayed in

Brazil, he issued more nobility titles than the Portuguese kings had in the last 300 years.

In exchange for financial support, Dom João justified the arbitrary distribution of titles

and public offices to this elite who was occupied in taking advantage of the situation to

enlarge its patrimony. Fausto (2001) states:

> The family or the allied families of the ruling class appear as networks formed not
>
> just by blood relatives, but by godfathers and godchildren, as well as supporters
>
> and friends. As far as the crown was concerned, the state was a royal patrimony,
>
> and the governors should be chosen from men loyal to the king. Conversely, the
>
> dominant sectors of colonial society tried to break through the state machinery or
>
> they tried to curry the governors' favor to benefit the family network. Through
>
> different routes, the end result was a government run not according to impersonal
>
> criteria based on obedience to the law, but according to loyalty. (p. 33)

Affective logic and the dynamic of favor permeated Brazil from the beginning of its development and still permeate its society to this day (Rocha, 2004). As the early childhood of adults is important to understand family dynamics later in life, the same connection between the early formation of the Brazilian state and its present dynamics can be made. The affective reasoning, the family ties that trespass the private realm, and the traits of the *cordial man* criticized by Holanda (1995) result from an ongoing process that rewarded personal connections and status and avoided rationality and impersonality.

The *cordial man*: origin and definition. In 1932, the Brazilian poet Ribeiro Couto used the expression "*cordial man*" for the first time in a letter addressed to Alfonso Reyes, a Mexican intellectual and diplomat stationed in Brazil. Couto (1932) characterized the *cordial man* as a sentimentally available individual who had resulted from the fusion of the Iberian colonizers and the new world with its primitive races. The *cordial man* was seen as the common denominator that connected the nations of Latin America and distinguished the region from the rest of the world:

> (How good it is in the villages of our America, either in my Brazil or your Mexico, when there is a French salesman selling fabric or a German engineer who is studying the local geology, and we invite them for lunch! When they get to our door, we immediately yell: - Kill another chicken!) … We are people that like to talk, smoke mindfully, listen to the sound of the guitar, sing folkloric songs, invite foreigners for some coffee at our houses and recite poetry to the moon. This sentimental availability is ours; it is Iberian-American. (Couto, 1932, p. 3)

When Couto was writing the letter, Brazilian intellectuals, artists, and liberal politicians were supportive of a movement to instigate political autonomy and regionalist initiatives to emphasize a national and sub-continental identity. Couto was purposively establishing a separation between "us and them"—Latin America and the rest of the dominant world. When Couto uses the word "cordial" to refer to the behavior of Latin American people, especially Brazilians, he chooses to specifically observe what surfaces in daily human interactions without carefully analyzing what underlies this apparent warmth, sentimentality, sensitivity, and friendliness.

In *Raízes do Brasil*, which was originally published in 1936, Holanda entitled a chapter the "*Cordial Man*." Finding the term used by Couto appropriate since it delves into the realm of the Brazilian affective reasoning, Holanda deepens and broadens the concept of the *cordial man* through the exploration of the social dynamics of the Brazilian society. To him the *cordial man* was the epitome of the average Brazilian and was seen as an impediment to the development of a truly democratic and liberal nation, which bases itself in values of equality and principals of neutrality and abstraction, instead of particularisms.

Holanda (1995), in line with Weberian rationalization, believed that nepotistic family dynamics, specifically the notion of particularism, inherited from the agrarian patriarchal family, permeated all levels of interactions within the Brazilian culture and, thus, handicapped individuals to develop independent thought and an ethical and impartial mind frame. Note that Max Weber argued that rationalization of a sociopolitical system would detach a society from the personal and emotional ties,

allowing for impersonal interaction and the rule of law to govern. Richard Morse (1995) notes, "patriarchalism formed an indivisible whole whose members were linked by sentiments and duties… whereas in political theory, Sérgio held, the birth of the state requires suppressing the family order and producing citizens responsible to public law" (p. 54). In conformity with the dichotomous relationship between the patriarchal family—along with its heir, the *cordial man*—and Weberian rationalization of the political and economical system, Rocha (2004) states:

> The patriarchal family sees itself as self-sufficient. The limits of conduct of its members are set by the parameters of the domestic circle. At the same time, a large network of friendships guarantees the expansion of the circle and reiterates its power and its functionality. Stemming from the rural dynamics, this circle only obeys its rules and codes. In short, the patriarchal family is about particular historical contexts, which diverges from the classical models of modernity characterized by the predominance of rationalized and impersonalized relations. (p. 53)

Holanda (1995) agrees with Couto on the existence of an emotional abundance permeating interpersonal relationships in Brazil. However, he explains that cordiality not only encompasses congenial feelings, it also permeates interactions based on disagreeable feelings. The constant need that Brazilians have to operate under the dominance of an emotional mindframe—instead of a rational and objective one—is at the core of Holanda's Weberian-influenced criticism. Thus, cordiality encompasses feelings that are negative as well, since it refers to the personal and impulsive manner people in Brazil

choose to resolve their issues. In *Brazilian Mosaic* (Azevedo, 1995), Fernando de

Azevedo addresses this impulsive behavior:

> Sentiment intervenes constantly in Brazilians' judgments and opinions and
>
> reasoning is emotional; they easily believe and spread news of all things strange
>
> and miraculous and are not interested in objectivity. All of these factors translate
>
> into a tendency to put and resolve everything in personal terms, as "friend" and
>
> "enemy." (p. 3)

William Lytle Schurz (1995) concluded that the same emotional intensity that

permeated the concept of Brazilian friendship—which was unknown to him and among

"the cooler temperaments of northern peoples" (p. 120)—was equally intense when the

issue to be solved was based on disagreeable feelings. He observed:

> The dominion of affective or emotional considerations complicates the conduct of
>
> serious affairs, and makes it hard to settle a question on its merits. It has a
>
> marked effect on the functioning of the will, and… people are liable to act on
>
> impulse, according to their emotional reflexes. These internal promptings or
>
> motivations may be very violent in their intensity, even if short-lived. Thus,
>
> crimes are generally passionate actions, committed on the spur of the moment and
>
> without plan or premeditation. (p. 121)

Violence is just one characteristic that represents the disagreeable side of the

multifaceted *cordial man* as seen by Holanda. Despite the naïve and stereotypical vision

of the Brazilian people found in the works of Freyre (1933), Couto (1932), Louis and

Elizabeth Agassiz (1995), Mouralis (1995), and Ricardo (1959), there is some truth that

"the ordinary, average Brazilians are a wonderful people, cheerful, sweet-tempered, witty, and patient" (Bishop, 1995, p. 129). In agreeable situations or in situations where honor-related issues are not at stake, Brazilians tend to smooth things over and speak in an indirect manner in order to respect hierarchy and maintain social relations intact (Rocha, 2004). However, it is sociologically inefficient to believe that Brazilians lack complexity in their character formation. The *cordial man*'s emotions as described by Holanda, the difficulty to resolve conflicts objectively, and the deeply rooted honor culture contribute to episodes of emotional distress and even violence, which is a force embedded in Brazilian society.

Rocha (2004), in response to those who insist in mistakenly seeing an incompatibility between cordiality and violence, states:

There is no contradiction with regard to the violence of the *cordial man*. Depending on the situation he can be *very* violent as he can be *exaggeratedly* agreeable, *very* loving and *extremely* rancorous. At times he can experience opposite feelings simultaneously, but always with great intensity. There is a perfect Spanish expression to describe the *cordial man*: *vivir de corazonada* or living as the heart commands. The reasoning of the heart follows a particular logic: the affective logic, which defines the private realm. How to conciliate the way of being of the *cordial man* and the European-standard public sphere seen as an impersonal dominion where every citizen must possess the same rights and duties? (p. 36)

In a study conducted in the Brazilian states of Distrito Federal and Bahia by the Sarah Kubitschek Hospital, out of 1,578 hospital admissions in 1999, 345 patients, or 20.6%, were non-fatal victims of firearm-related injuries (Rede Sarah de Hospitais de Reabilitação, 2012). Most of these cases were the result of intentional shooting. Looking further into the details, 32.3% of the perpetrators were known to the victims— acquaintances, friends or family—and in 25.5% of the cases the shootings were a result of non-criminal interpersonal disputes, such as fights and discussions. Recognizing that these results cannot be generalized to the entire Brazilian population and correlation does not mean causation, these numbers nevertheless show that easy accessibility of firearms to emotionally unbalanced people can be lethal. The National Report on Firearm-related Violence in Brazil (Peres, 2004) concludes:

> These data are consistent with, and support, an evolving awareness within Brazil that patterns of violence have changed in the country. Interpersonal disputes such as quarrels among neighbors, between families and in traffic disputes, all of which would most often be banal, increasingly culminate in grave injuries and death when the dispute escalates to involve a shooting, facilitated by the presence of a firearm. (p. 20)

The intention in presenting this data is to emphasize the lack of criticism when individuals choose to ignore the existing social inequality and violence, and see the Brazilian society as a "social oasis, indifferent to conflicts and revolutions" (Rocha, p. 65).

The romantic idealism that inhabits the Brazilian imagination is not limited to a particular social class. Rezende (2008) examined how Brazilian scholars, who have studied in Europe and the United States, related to the stereotype that sees Brazilians as warm, easy to make friends and very open people. He interviewed twelve middle class academics with regard to how they experienced the Brazilian emotionality when they were developing new friendships abroad. Results showed that subjects embraced these stereotypes and believed they were positive traits of the Brazilian national identity. Making local friends seemed to be the "most significant index of social adjustment" (p. 117) and most academics had difficulty in making local friends, and thus, felt excluded. The difficulties most subjects found in making friends were attributed to the unapproachable behavior of locals, while Brazilians were perceived as superior due to their openness and willingness to make friends.

It is a mistake to believe that Brazilians do not distinguish between insiders and outsiders. Similar to every high-context culture, Brazilians have a strong sense of community values, but they live in a society where laws that characterize the public sphere are inefficient and are overruled by personal connections. Thus it is pivotal to befriend as many people as they can to guarantee their survival. This can be confusing to foreigners who experience this "Brazilianess." They see Brazilians calling strangers "friends" and functioning in a seemingly cooperative environment. As a member of this large personal network, Holanda argues:

> [To the] *cordial man*, social life is to some extent true liberation from the panic
> that he feels from living with himself and from depending on himself under all

circumstances of life. His way of revealing himself to others continually reduces the individual to the social and peripheral part of life, which in the Brazilian—as in a good American—tends to be what matters most. Above all he lives through others. Nietzsche addressed this type of human being when he said: "Your inadequate love of yourselves turns isolation into captivity." (1995, p.147)

This apparent cordiality is confusing not only to foreigners, but Brazilians have also constantly misunderstood this antihero as portrayed by Holanda. Cassiano Ricardo, a Brazilian journalist and poet, wrote that he was confused by Holanda's definition of the word cordial, since "[Holanda] defines the *cordial man* as the contrary of polite, while, among us, cordial exactly means being polite" (Ricardo, 1959, p. 11). Ricardo is unique from other misled authors since he was the only one that received a "cordial" response from Holanda included in the second edition of his book.

Richard Morse illustrates the inclination for misinterpretation, as well, when he states, "Sérgio's often misunderstood "*cordial man*" is not an amiable *patrão* [patron] who oils the gears of oppression in the interest of "peaceful" accommodation" (Morse, 1995, p. 148). Elvia Bezerra complements by saying "after so many years and so many explanations [given by Holanda and others], many people insist in seeing the "*cordial man*" through the eyes of Ribeiro Couto" (Bezerra, 2004, p. 130).

 Several traits of the Brazilian character exposed by Holanda are in accordance with Hall's classification of high-context societies. The fear of distances that impersonality creates, the need to feel included, the concept of emotionality, the lack of objectivity and exactness, the indirect communication that keeps social interactions

undisturbed and the awareness that Brazilians have regarding the silent rules of their society are themes explored in Holanda's work and represent what Hall perceived as group-oriented values, spiral logic, indirect style, status-oriented status and context-based understanding.

Holanda (1995) speculated that a power shift from a centralized patriarchal family to a decentralized institutional structure would weaken the roots of the *cordial man*, and that within the rational urban nest, relationships based on impersonality and equality would overpower personal connections and favoritism. In the upcoming subsection, this study focuses on the devices used by the *cordial man* to navigate Brazilian society and mediate conflict, and questions whether or not the *cordial man* has been able to confirm his supremacy in an urban and globalized world.

Devices used to navigate through society and mediate conflict. This section describes the tools used within the Brazilian society to navigate the social and legal system when a situation is difficult or forbidding.

Brazil, as a high-context system, has been traditionally characterized by its high power distance and status-oriented style. In such societies, individuals have a higher tolerance for unequal distribution of power and, thus, must develop behaviors to help them navigate within this disproportionate system. Each HC society manages power distribution differently. For instance, Holanda (1995) compares the Brazilian cordiality to the Japanese politeness and formality, which are different ways to manage high power distance, and concludes: "No people are further from that ritualistic notion of life than the Brazilian. Our usual form of social relations is basically just the opposite of politeness.

It can be deceiving" (p. 147). The reasons to explain the differences in dealing with

hierarchy between these two high-context countries are varied, ranging from historical

background and religious orientation to gender issues and economic development.

Although this is not a comparative study between Japan and Brazil, there are two

differences that help to explain why Brazilians reject distances and formalities.

First, Brazilians live in a society where corruption is widely accepted. This is not

to say that Japan, or any other country, do not experience political or systematical

corruption. In Brazil, though, the acceptance of corruption—including the bending of

rules or acting immorally or illegally—is not the exception; instead, it is almost the norm.

This acceptance of corrupted behavior is directly related to the unequal distribution of

power, or social status, that permeates the Brazilian society. Individuals do not confront

the powerful party directly—unless a matter of honor is at stake—nor they will resign to

their fate; Brazilian people would most likely find a way to achieve what is desired

without disrupting the status quo. Thus, despite the generalized discontent expressed by

the population with the reoccurring political corruption in the Brazilian public arena,

people in their daily transactions may act in corrupt ways.

Silvia Cervellini (2006), of the Brazilian marketing research company IBOPE

Inteligência, surveyed a sample of 2,001 individuals that represented the Brazilian

national electoral poll. Participants were asked about illegal activities in their daily

lives—from bribing a police officer to avoid a parking ticket to using fake documents to

take advantage of something—and about their tolerance for corruption performed by their

elected politicians. The results showed that 98% of the subjects knew people who had

engaged in illegal actions and 69% admitted to acting illegally themselves. Additionally, 75% of the subjects believe that, if they were these politicians under the same conditions, they would also be inclined to performing the same actions of corruption.

Such high numbers support Holanda's view that the Brazilian politeness can be deceiving when compared to the Japanese society, and this is due to the existing gap between the reality of the Brazilian social practice and the ideal and artificial norm (Barbosa, 1992). Politeness can only be sincere if polite actions reflect the person's own feelings and thoughts about these actions. If a person does not believe that waiting in a queue is beneficial to the society overall, why would he or she dismiss the opportunity to cut in line when he sees an acquaintance with whom he can be cordial to accomplish what he wants? The same can be said about Brazilian laws, which appear to be an unwanted wall preventing people from living according to their level of appreciation for the common good: if the disabled parking spot is free, why should I not try to climb this unwanted wall just for ten minutes? Guerreiro Ramos, according to Livia Barbosa (1992), finds the root of this behavior in what he calls formalism, which is defined as "the existing discrepancy between our social, political and juridical institutions and our social practices" (p. 12). Ramos believes that "formalism is a global strategy of such societies [Latin-American countries] to overcome the social development phase in which they find themselves" (p.12). The second difference between two high-context countries, such as Brazil and Japan, regarding ways to manage power distance is related to the distinct concepts of honor and face.

Cohen and Leung (2011) discussed how societies of both groups behave regarding their social order and the problem of valuation. In both cultures, there is a preoccupation with others' perceptions of self and claim to virtue and prestige is common. However, the settings and the expectations are different in both cultures. In cultures of honor, such as Brazil, individuals cannot depend on the state to protect and be fair to them since the state fails to treat its citizens with equality. Therefore, people are not automatically trusting and, as a consequence, hierarchical organization suffers from a state of uncertainty. Hierarchy will not be fully respected—to your face or behind your back—until there is a trusting relationship between the parties involved. Before that, individuals from an honor culture will protect themselves by seeing others as competitors. In honor cultures, an individual may claim to have honor, but he or she only truly has it if others perceive him as such. "In the absence of state protection, self-protection through violence or the credible threat of violence is necessary: a reputation for toughness deters competitors who would enhance their own honor or claim to precedence by taking some of yours" (p. 510).

In face cultures, Cohen and Leung (2011) explain that hierarchy is settled, as individuals do not need to protect themselves as much as individuals in honor cultures. All people have face until they lose it, and one individual cannot take face away from another since this would not be a behavior that caused admiration of others. People are respected and have prestige based on their hierarchical positioning, and cooperation, instead of competition, is sought. According to Cohen and Leung:

If one person openly aggrieves another, it disrupts the harmony and order of the

system. And unlike in honor cultures, it is not incumbent on the victim to directly

redress the grievance him- or herself. Direct retaliation by the victim is

unnecessary because the group or a superior is able to punish the offender; in fact,

direct retaliation would be undesirable because it would further upset the harmony

of the system. (p. 510)

Thus, in face-culture Japan, formality and politeness are common behaviors to

display when interacting with others, especially if the interacting parties belong to

different hierarchical positions. Additionally, the level of civility of the Japanese society

has allowed individuals to live according to the laws established in the public arena.

In Brazil, the relationship in terms of power distance is ambiguous. Although

status—which is prone to change with the fluctuation of wealth and prestige—defines

one's positioning within the Brazilian society and trust-based hierarchy, mainly in the

professional and familial realm, is respected, Brazilians do not appreciate the

impediments that such power distance brings to their daily lives. When a Brazilian

individual does not obtain what he perceives as necessary, he does not accept a negative

answer easily. This *cordial man* may resort to creating an emotional connection with the

party that is denying him—such as by trying to befriend the person, finding a common

background they share, explaining difficult personal aspects of his life. He may even

resort to finding a way to bend the rules or finding a crack within the law that will allow

him to achieve what he desires; if necessary, he would be willing to use bribes. He will

always try to find a way: *um jeito.* If nothing works, the *cordial man* would try to boast

about this hierarchical positioning within society and use the infamous Brazilian

sentence: "*você sabe com quem está falando*? (Do you know with whom you are talking

to?)

Rocha (2004) affirms that Holanda's cordiality should not be seen as a trait

unique to Brazilians, since such mannerism could blossom in any society where private

interests dominate the public sphere. Although such behaviors exist in every society,

they are often regarded as the exception. In Brazil, however, they are almost the rule.

Most—if not all—Brazilians are able to describe what *jeito* means. This cultural aspect

has been noticed by foreigners (Kellemen, 1995; Santos, 1995; Moog, 1995; Glenn,

2009) and studied by Brazilians, being the works of Roberto DaMatta (1991; 1994; 2004)

and Lívia Barbosa (1992) the most relevant guides in this matter.

Jeito. Lívia Barbosa (1992) researched the Brazilian *jeitinho* for her doctorate

dissertation in 1986. After surveying and interviewing 200 people from various cities,

professions, ages and backgrounds, she noted that all participants were familiar with the

jeitinho and not much definition variation was found:

> To everyone, in general terms, the *jeitinho* is a special way to resolve a problem
>
> or a difficult or forbidden situation; or it is a creative solution to some emergency.
>
> This creative solution may be in the form of breaking some rule or pre-established
>
> norm, or in the form of conciliation, or by being cunning or skillful. Therefore,
>
> for a situation to be considered *jeito* there needs to be an unforeseen and adverse
>
> circumstance that goes against the objectives of the individual. In order to resolve
>
> the problem, a special—efficient and fast—resolution is needed. Not any strategy

will work. The one to be adopted needs to produce short-term results…. It does

not matter if the chosen solution is definite or not, ideal or provisory, legal or

illegal. (p. 32)

Besides being a detailed and specific description, this definition also identifies the

existing ambiguity involving the *jeito*. On the one hand, the *jeito* pushes individuals,

against all odds, to pursue what they perceive as necessary. On the other hand, it

represents the belief that the end justifies the means and that rules are not equally applied

to everyone.

The Brazilian engineer Ramon de Paula sees the *jeito* as a positive trait. As a

NASA employee, he manages projects that, at times, involve more than 500 people under

his supervision. His specialty is solving bureaucratic and technical problems in all sorts

of missions. In an interview given to BBC Brazil (Puff, 2012), the engineer claims that

the Brazilian *jeitinho* was vital to his career. Paula states:

The fact that I am Brazilian has definitely helped. My job requires me to find

solutions to mission-related problems, and everything that I have learned in

Brazil, allied to our culture were decisive factors. My mantra here is: there is

always a *jeito* to solve the problem. Not every culture has that flexibility in the

face of challenges.

A diligent professional trying to think outside the box to solve problems of his

work environment—without any harm to others—is different from a person who tries to

use the *jeito* to his own advantage. Thus, diligence is dissimilar to *jeito* due to the latter's

connection to personal gain. However, there is a common denominator between

diligence and *jeito* in Brazil—which could be the reason for the confusion between both

terms—and that is the aversion that Brazilians have to the word "no." In high-context

societies, the way people deliver messages must be carefully considered. In Brazil,

messages are delivered indirectly—almost in a shy fashion, as Rocha (2004) observed—

in order to keep social relations undisturbed. The difficulty found by the *cordial man* to

say "no" to people in his private circle is the same that he experiences when people say

"no" to him in the public arena.

Barbosa (1992) has also differentiated the *jeito* from other similar categories such

as favor and corruption. The three categories are placed in a positive-negative continuum

in order to illustrate the participant's views of each one. Favor is at the positive end of

the continuum; corruption is at the negative end, while *jeito* is right in the middle.

Favor is identified as a situation where direct reciprocity is present and a

hierarchical relationship between the provider and the receiver is established.

Additionally, favors are usually asked to family and friends. To ask someone to give a

jeito does not imply that a direct reciprocal relationship is being established. The

reciprocity, in this case, is indirect, since the individual who was granted the *jeito* will—

most likely—be in a situation in the future where he will have the opportunity to give a

jeito in someone else's case. Moreover, the *jeito* differs from favor once it usually

involves the bending of some rule and it can be asked to strangers.

Regarding *jeito* and corruption, Barbosa (1992) argued that the difference resides

in the amount of money involved in the transaction: small sums of money or small

compensations—such as beer or coffee—is classified as *jeito*; larger amounts of money

or valuable compensation would characterize corruption. The differences between these

three categories became more precise as the level of education of participants increased.

Additionally, if the participant saw the *jeito* as a positive trait, he saw a relevant

difference when Barbosa compared it to corruption. If the participant considered the *jeito*

a negative tool, he found the two categories to be similar.

Although similar navigational tools are present in several cultures - such as in

Germany, Italy, India, Egypt and Russia (Duarte, 2006)—Barbosa (1992) claims that no

other culture uses the *jeito,* once there needs to be a social recognition and acceptance of

such mechanism. "In Brazil, the *jeitinho* not only characterizes a specific situation but it

is also an element of social identity" (p. 16).

Roberto DaMatta (2004) explains that the constant need to bend the rules—the

jeito—is the result of disequilibrium between the person versus the individual. The

person is represented by one's private life, while the individual is represented by one's

public life. The dichotomy created by the author is symbolically portrayed by the

conflict between two different social units: the home and the street. The author connects

the home to the heart, since within this social unit the rules are created based on

emotional ties. At home, there is a set hierarchy, thus, there are no rules that must be

followed by everyone equally. However, the street is impersonal. Rules are there to be

followed by every individual, thus the need for the *jeito*.

Você sabe com quem está falando? This well known expression translates from

Portuguese to "do you know who you are talking to?" and is used with the intention of

establishing a hierarchical differentiation between interacting parties. In such interaction,

the individual using this formula is focused on achieving a goal but finds a personified impediment. DaMatta (1991, 2004) has studied the subject in depth and explains that this formula may be used when the *jeito* has failed to work. *Você sabe com quem está falando?* can be seen as "an explosion of the *jeito*" once affective reasoning and emotional ties succumb to authoritative and hierarchical logic. The difference between the two navigational tools can be seen in the following anecdotal situation:

The laws regarding driving under the influence have been recently modified and have become stricter. The message sent by the government is that such laws must be applied to everyone equally. Throughout the carnival holiday of 2013 several incidents regarding this theme were reported by the media. A young man, who claimed to have had only one beer, asked a police officer if he would make an exception and finally asked for a *jeitinho* while offering the officer some cash. A woman was also stopped by a police officer. She was clearly drunk. As the police officer questioned her, and proceeded with the legal paperwork, she quickly appealed to her social status within society: "do you know who you are talking to? I am a judge. I could get you fired!"

Você sabe com quem está falando? is a practical representation of what Hall theorized as status-oriented communication style. Although such tool is unlikely to be used within familial dynamics, it is relevant to be addressed once family and society are mutually influenced and it shows the importance given to social hierarchy within the Brazilian society.

Intrafamilial hierarchy. The family is one of the most highly regarded social units in Brazil. Historically, Brazilian families were characterized by having a diverse

number of individuals as a part of it: parents, children, grandparents, sons, daughters, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, in-laws, religion-related members, servants and close friends. The patriarchal family model met the needs of a rural society in which large plantation properties functioned similarly to feuds. Besides being formed by large extended families, the patriarchal family model was characterized by set hierarchies in which the father represented the highest authority within the family (Freyre, 1933; Holanda, 1995).

Although families in Brazil are experiencing changes brought by modern challenges, the patriarchal family model is still regarded as a reference (Machado, 2001). In a masculine society, such as Brazil, the legacy of the patriarchal figure still contributes to the dynamics of families. DaMatta (2004) portrays the Brazilian family in a vertical manner, in which men are placed on the higher end of the hierarchical line, followed by children, and at last, by women.

Hierarchical authority in Brazil is present in three distinct arenas that are mutually influential: the social, the familiar and the religious. Although Brazilians will try to find ways to overcome the difficulties brought by hierarchical differences, the social environment is permeated by such differences. The navigational tool—*você sabe com quem está falando?*—is an example of the inclination that Brazilians have in placing themselves in a hierarchical order.

According to the 2010 Brazilian statistical bureau (IBGE), nearly 87% of the population is Catholic. Catholicism exerts a strong influence in the lives of citizens and it is responsible for shaping values that are absorbed by families. Hierarchy is an important

concept within the Catholic religion, which is illustrated by the several levels between humankind and God. In a society in which social and religious values abide to hierarchical positioning, it is only natural that families will have the tendency of structuring themselves hierarchically as well.

Urbanization and U.S.-Influenced Cultural Globalization

Theories of urbanization and cultural globalization in Brazil are analyzed to understand if the changes caused by these phenomena have affected the way the younger Brazilian generations perceive themselves and the society they live in, and if they are experiencing a shift from the high-context toward the low-context of the cultural spectrum.

Urbanization in Brazil after 1970 and the future of the *cordial man*. By 1970 more than fifty percent of the Brazilian population had emigrated from rural areas to urbanized centers (Wagner & Ward, 1980). In 2010, according to the Brazilian census bureau, out of around nearly 191 million inhabitants, 161 million lived in urban areas and 30 million lived in rural areas (IBGE, 2010).

Despite the massive regional transition and the consequential decline of the rural patriarchal family, the *cordial man*, in opposition to what Holanda had predicted, has been able to find shelter within an industrialized society (Barbosa, 1992; Rocha, 2004). "While constituting his codes and imposing his gestures, the *cordial man* created conditions to 'survive' in the urban universe, due to his indiscrete attachment to the power structures generated in the bosom of the patriarchal family." (Rocha, 2004, p. 300)

Within the public realm, a solid network of favoritism, in which the *cordial man* was able to successfully function, replaced the rural and dominant patriarchal family model. Families were also transformed by industrialization and urbanization. Their migration from a familiar and rural context to an urban reality changed their network of support. Instead of counting on a large extended family, the *cordial man* had his wife and children as his most trusted support web, followed by the individuals he had to befriend to guarantee his survival in the city.

In an article regarding the interdependence between family and society, Dias (2000) confirms that the industrial and urban processes influenced the decline of the large patriarchal family and supported the rise of the small nuclear family. In an urban environment, the child mortality rate decreased and life expectancy increased, therefore, families could afford to become smaller. Although the exile of the *cordial man* from the rural to the urban arena has been addressed, there are no studies about his relationship to his family living in a globalized society.

U.S.-influenced cultural globalization in Brazil after 1990 and the future of the *cordial man*. With the end of the Cold War in 1989, the international bipolar system came to an end. A new unipolar scenario—if U.S. military and strategic supremacy is considered—or a multipolar scenario—if the economic and influential power of some European and Asian countries is considered—emerged in the 1990s. This new scenario based itself on neoliberal ideas and the free market; and it functioned as an arena to the vertical and horizontal expansion of globalization. Post-Cold War globalization did not present itself as an alternative; instead it became the only and irreversible way for

countries to follow in order to maintain themselves connected to the international system.

Rodrigues (1994) argues that economic globalization proceeded in the context of a

competitive system, such that countries in debt did not have the power to protect their

industries and, therefore, were left with little leverage for bargaining.

In Brazil, mostly during the administration of President Fernando Henrique

Cardoso (1995-2002), there were two paradigm shifts that consequently influenced its

foreign relations. The first was related to the consolidation of democracy, which was a

process that had started in the 1980s but was still underdeveloped in the eyes of the

international opinion. The Cardoso administration worked diligently to adjust the

diplomatic discourse to the goals that had been internally established to promote

democratic values and practices. The second paradigm was achieving a greater

awareness of international markets and more openness in order to become a global trader

(Cardoso in Lampreia, 1999, p. 10).

Throughout the eight years of the Cardoso administration, the United States was

Brazil's closest political partner. Although both nations had been trade partners since the

1920s, their relationship has strengthened once it became evident that Brazil was shifting

toward democracy, embracing globalization, and adopting similar American values. The

United States during the Clinton administration was also interested in finding a partner to

share the onus of leadership in South America. Several bilateral projects were developed

in order to build on this renewed partnership, including the cooperation agreement in the

educational field, which was responsible for the exchange of hundreds of professors

between both countries. Additionally, the following factors also helped to strengthen the

relationship between Brazil and the United States:

> The decrease of deforestation in the Amazon, the increase of American direct
>
> investments in Brazil, the good news regarding the economic stability brought by
>
> the Brazilian monetary plan, the increase of American goods in the Brazilian
>
> market generating a surplus in the American balance of payments and the increase
>
> in the touristic flow between both countries. (Silva, 2002, p. 308)

Looking at globalization through a cultural standpoint, we need a comprehensive

definition of the phenomenon.

> First, globalization consists primarily of two major directional tendencies,
>
> increasing global connectivity and increasing global consciousness.
>
> Consciousness does not imply consensus, merely a shared sense of the world as a
>
> whole. Second, globalization (…) is focused upon four points of reference:
>
> nation-states; world politics; individuals; and humankind. Third, globalization is
>
> constituted by four major facets of human life—namely, the cultural, the social,
>
> the political and the economic. These dimensions are in reality heavily
>
> intertwined, one or two aspects being more prominent at any given time or place.
>
> For example, in the modern world the cultural and the economic are closely
>
> interpenetrative. (Robertson & White, 2007, p. 64)

Cultural globalization, therefore, is the increase of global connectivity and

consciousness that individuals experience regarding customs, arts, social institutions,

traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings and achievements. Without historical

precedents, the advent of cultural globalization has minimized the boundaries between

states and cultural groups. The Internet, communications media, and the increased

accessibility to international traveling have lead to a greater exposition of different

cultural values and traditions to a larger number of people.

Tomlinson (2007) claims that cultural globalization should not be seen as a

consequence of the interconnectivity of the international markets. Instead, it should be

comprehended as a reflexive process in which culture also influences the preferences of

the market, thus affecting the global economy. Although it is true that cultural fads

contribute to production and market demand, it is the forces of the market—through

marketing research or consumerist propaganda—that majorly influences the desires of

clients. By stating that economic and cultural globalization are mirrors of one another,

Tomlinson (2007) removes corporate responsibility and minimizes the power and impact

global enterprises have on people's lives. Both dimensions of globalization have

different roles and influential power.

Throughout history, dominant civilizations have served as reference for weaker or

less developed cultural groups. Since the First World War, the United States has been a

prominent actor in the global arena. U.S. traditions, values and products have been

exported to several countries in the world through the dissemination of movies, music,

books, food, clothing and other goods. The sociologist George Ritzer (1998) analyzes the

impact that U.S. fast food restaurants and credit cards have on foreign cultures by stating:

> The fast food restaurants are bringing to the rest of the world not only Big Macs
>
> and French fries, but more importantly the American style of eating on the run.

The fast-food restaurant brings with it the idea (and the structure to implement it) that eating is something to be completed as quickly and effortlessly as possible. Similarly, credit cards make it easier to purchase American goods…. Fast food restaurants and credit cards are beginning to flood the globe, and to bring with them the Americanization of local cultures. (p. 84)

With the advent of globalization, "Americanization" was intensified once individuals became more connected and more aware of the American way of living. Additionally, the expansion of U.S. enterprises to developing countries and the increase of multinational companies of U.S. origin have generated employment opportunities to thousands of people, thus directly exposing workers to low-context corporate practices. The local financial newspaper *Valor Econômico* reports that the four most powerful enterprises in Brazil—Google, Apple, Microsoft and Facebook—are of U.S. origin and are considered to exert strong influence on the lives of consumers (Malta, 2012).

In a qualitative study regarding the corporate culture in Brazil pre- and post-globalization, Chu and Wood (2008) interviewed 16 Brazilians and 9 foreigners with managerial experience. Results showed that the corporate culture is permeated by three main characteristics: transitory character, hybridized identity, and reassignment of values and practices. Their study showed that the corporate environment continues to be unpredictable and unstable since it lacks organization, structure and planning. Relationships are based on power distance, authority, personal connections and conflict avoidance, which are practices that tend to focus on people more than results. Furthermore, foreign references are still assimilated in an uncritical manner. On the other

hand, changes are happening due to economic globalization and the internationalization of businesses. The rise of multinationals and the adoption of foreign corporative practices are changing managers, who are becoming more cosmopolitan, modern and open-minded, as they adopt standardized and systematized managerial practices with focus on results and performance.

The characteristics presented in the study above illustrate how globalization is affecting the professional practices and cultural values of the professionals interviewed. The corporate environment is in a transitional phase where old habits—such as the *jeito* and the need to maintain personal relations undisturbed in order to be productive—are being challenged by low-context practices. Both HC and LC systems, after 20 years of globalized practices, still coexist and struggle to adapt to one another. Thus, if Brazilians are being exposed to American low-context values through various mediums—at work, at the cinema, when reading, when watching American TV series, when listening to music, when eating, when browsing the internet—how are these expositions affecting families, specifically fathers and sons who identify with different context systems?

Research Questions

The literature review and the findings of this study created the theoretical framework to investigate to the following research questions. First, is Brazil's younger generation—born after massive urbanization in the early 1970s and influenced by the U.S. cultural globalization in the 1990s—experiencing a shift within the LC/HC spectrum? Second, does this shift affect intrafamilial relationships between generations

that identify with different systems? Finally, who is the *cordial man* and can he adapt to

a world that is becoming more dissimilar to his rural and patriarchal native habitat?

Chapter 5: Methodology

Building on a literature review of academic research on high- and low-context

systems, the roots of the *cordial man*, urbanization, and cultural globalization, this is a

qualitative study that employs grounded theory as its strategy of inquiry. In this chapter,

reasons for choosing grounded theory as the strategy of inquiry are addressed. Then, the

design of the study – including sample access and selection, setting, protection and

procedures - is explained. The following section examines the ethical concerns related to

this study. After that, the methods utilized in this study to address the validity threats are

examined, and are followed by the perspective of this researcher on the generalizability

and representativeness of the present study. Finally, the steps that guide the data analysis

process are examined.

Choosing Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, among other strategies of inquiry within the qualitative

approach, was selected to frame this research due to its flexibility and ability to generate

theory according to findings from data. Flexibility and possibility of working with an

evolving theory are two important methodological aspects to consider in this research,

since the topic is relatively unexplored. The book, *Basics of Qualitative Research:*

Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), has been chosen

by the researcher as a reliable guide to develop an empirically strong and trustworthy

research mechanism. Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that "a well-constructed

grounded-theory will meet four central criteria for judging the applicability of theory to a

phenomenon: **fit**, **understanding**, **generality**, and **control** [bold by author]" (p.23).

A theory is fit when it is carefully derived from data that precisely represent the routine of the area or phenomenon being studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23). When applying the fit criteria to this study, it is logical to assume that a credible theory will only emerge if the data gathered from participants are as close to their realities as possible. Thus, what is felt and perceived by each participant allows for an intellectual explanation, a theory, of his experiences. In terms of theory, understanding is when participants and conductors of a study grasp the same meaning in the same fashion (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23). As mentioned in chapter 2, member checking is applied in this research to guarantee that the theory emerging from the data and from the perceptions of the researcher is also in compliance with the viewpoints of the participants.

A theory is general when "the data upon which it is based are comprehensive and the interpretations conceptual and broad, then the theory should be abstract enough and include sufficient variation to make it applicable to a variety of contexts related to the phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23).

The final criterion to develop a reliable grounded theory according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 23) is control. Even though the theory should be broad enough to explain diverse variables related to the same phenomenon, it should be specific enough with regard to taking action towards each variable of the phenomenon studied. There is a need to carefully outline the procedures and actions to be taken according to each specific situation—in other words, a need to deviate from the generality of the theory.

The Design of the Study

Sample access and sample selection. I used two types of sampling strategies to select ten to twelve subjects to participate in this study: snowball and criterion sampling. First, I sent an e-mail to people with whom I have a direct relationship, which could be of a professional nature or family or friends, and I asked them to forward the e-mail to people they know (snowball sampling). This e-mail (see Appendix A) briefly explained the purpose of my research, the general issues to be addressed during the interview, anonymity, length of interview, location of interview, and it informed participants that they could decide on what they wished to talk about and that they could stop the interview at any time. The e-mail also contained three criteria for participating in the study (criterion sampling): (a) subjects must be father and son; (b) sons must be 18 or older and be born in a large and urbanized city; and, (c) fathers must be born in small or rural towns.

Setting. The participants in this study were asked to choose a place where they felt most comfortable being interviewed. The researcher made transportation available to the participants. If participants chose to be interviewed in a public place, they were warned about the risks regarding confidentiality and were asked to sign an informed consent stating they were notified of the risks and chose to proceed with the interview. If participants expressed the wish of meeting in their own homes, the researcher asked the participant to choose a quiet time and place. Participants were asked to turn off their phones and avoid, when possible, interruptions of all sorts. Since participants might discuss their feelings and opinions about intrafamilial conflict, the researcher strongly advised participants to meet in a safe and private space.

Protection. The interviews were recorded in three ways: (a) on a minidisc player; (b) on field notes handwritten in a notebook at the time of the interview; and, (c) on field notes that were expanded in computer files after the in-person interview. All subjects remain anonymous in the thesis manuscript. I use pseudonyms to conceal identities, which participants created if they wished. All links between pseudonyms and real names are kept separately. There were no group interviews or focus groups. I am the only person with access to the research data, minimizing concerns about the identity of the subjects being disclosed. It was noted in the introductory script and in the consent form that I would be recording the interviews. All materials related to this thesis (interviews, recordings and notes) will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home for the duration of three years after the research is completed. The digital files on the computer are safeguarded by login and password only known to myself.

Procedures. Subjects were asked to individually participate in an in-depth interview with the researcher lasting no more than two hours. The purpose of the interview was to explore their experiences with their father-son relationship in conflicting situations. There were 14 semi-structured open-ended questions asked in a certain order. Questions addressed the following themes: perception of self, upbringing, decision-making process within family, father-son relationship, communication, ways to influence and be influenced, history of conflict and urbanization and globalization. Participants' responses—guided by their value system—were helpful in revealing how group-oriented or individualistic these values were and if the *cordial man* behavior was also present in

the intimacy of their homes. Participants were informed that if any question made them feel uncomfortable, they could skip it and move on to the next question.

In a study regarding solidarity and conflict in intergenerational households, the researcher concluded that using semi-structured questions to interview family members was helpful for two reasons. First, they "provided an opportunity to collect data on their shared as well as their differing perspectives" and, second, "they were suited for situations in which the researcher meets the respondent only once" (Lowenstein, 2002, p. 227). Since this researcher also interviewed two generations from each family and met each participant only once, semi-structured questions were a good fit for this study.

The interviews were recorded in Portuguese and later transcribed verbatim directly to English. However, participants could request an off-the-record conversation. If there is something they told the researcher off the record of particular significance, the researcher asked their permission to use it in general terms so they would not be personally identified. Before submitting the final research to Portland State University, the researcher contacted participants to share the findings and confirmed that their statements and viewpoints were unchanged and consistent.

Before each individually conducted interview, an informed consent form was presented to the potential participant. It clearly explained the purpose of the research, the potential risks and benefits to the subject and the expected use of the data gathered. Each participant was informed that his identity would be protected by a pseudonym, which could be created by him or by the researcher. Fathers and sons met the researcher individually and were informed that they would remain anonymous to everyone,

including each other. Participants had the option of withdrawing from the study at any time without any penalty.

Ethical Concerns

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to participants or identify them will be kept confidential. All comments, which could identify participants to their son or father, were obscured or omitted. Participation in this study is also being kept confidential to everyone, including the mutual acquaintances who identified individuals as potential participants for this study. If there was something of particular significance that could identify participants, the researcher came back to them and specifically asked for permission to include the material in the study.

None of the information the researcher gathered from the interview will be released to any other person or agency and will be used for the sole purpose of this study. Except for the data used in the thesis, all other transcripts and recordings from the interview are stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be kept confidential.

Validity

Two methods that have been utilized to increase the validity of the study findings are awareness of the researcher's bias and verbatim transcription of interviews. The first serves the purpose of reminding the researcher that the views of the participants are what the researcher is striving to comprehend and interpret, and not her own. The second functions as a protection tool for the participant and the researcher. The participant has the assurance that the words he has carefully chosen to convey his meanings are the same

ones used by the researcher, and the researcher can rely on the transcriptions to check on accurate information as often as needed.

There is no set formula that if followed thoroughly guarantees the validity of the conclusions of this study. As Maxwell (1996) explains, a reliable approach to increase the trustworthiness of any study is to address the "validity threats" (p.88), or the ways the researcher could be mistaken. In this study, this researcher used three additional strategies suggested by Maxwell to strive for trustworthiness in the conclusions: searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases, feedback, and member checks (p. 93-95).

The information was gathered and thoroughly analyzed. The researcher did not find any discrepant evidence and negative cases. Feedback from people who are familiar with this study as well as people who are distant from it was also used as a strategy to address validity threats. As data came in, the researcher shared her findings with her peers to maintain coherence in her thinking process and gain perspective from individuals who are not as close to this study as she is, and therefore are able to perceive relevant information or nuances that she may not have noticed.

Finally, since all participants of this study were Portuguese-only speakers and the transcript and findings are written in English, the researcher contacted the participants for a verbal member-check once the findings began to emerge to ensure their points of view have remained intact. In a study about maternal response to intrafamilial child sexual abuse, the researcher conducted member checking by giving "feedback to these mothers about interpretations of the interviews in order for them to elaborate further and to clarify

issues." The researcher adds, "the feedback loop between researcher, participants, and peers debriefers supported the interpretations of the data" (Alaggia, 2002, p. 44).

Generalizability and Representativeness

Using the logic of qualitative inquiry, I am more interested in understanding in depth the experiences and perspectives of diverse individuals than being able to generalize those experiences to a large population. Giampietro Gobo (2004) successfully attenuates the importance of generalizability in qualitative research by claiming that although qualitative sampling or non-probability sampling (convenience, purposive and snowball) lacks the ability to determine the occurrences to the total number of possible occurrences when comparing his sample to the general population, the qualitative researcher is capable of focusing on what is unique and particular to the population he or she is studying. Therefore, as long as the researcher is being as specific as possible on the sampling criteria and he or she is not claiming to generalize his findings beyond his sample, there should not be a risk of developing "empirically shallow research" (p. 443).

When discussing representativeness, Gobo (2004) advises the inexperienced researcher to "look at the variance of the phenomenon under the study. If it is high, you need many cases in order to include in your sample each category or class of your phenomenon. If its variance is low you need few cases; sometimes one case could be enough" (p. 444). Considering that this study has its focus on the correlation of urbanization and cultural globalization and father-son's intrafamilial conflicts, it is safe to affirm that the variance of the phenomenon being studied is low since the sample chosen will be able to represent the general public when it comes to people's exposure to urban

lifestyles and the existence of conflict in every household. Although this researcher is

not proposing to generalize the particular experiences of the families interviewed, such as

causes of conflict and ways to resolve it, it is the researcher's belief that other families in

the general population will share general experiences related to intrafamilial conflict,

such as the existence of post conflict feelings and structural changes in the family.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed inductively following the

recommended steps of grounded theory specialists Strauss and Corbin (1990). Following

the interviews and their verbatim transcription, the researcher used the method of "open

coding," which means finding concepts for each phenomenon present in the data, and

then the researcher grouped similar concepts together. The third step was to describe the

properties of each category and their dimensions. After the open coding process was

finished, the next step was axial coding, which is the process of establishing a

relationship between categories in order for a theory to emerge (1990). Chapter 6

combines the identified categories and develops into the main theory. The seventh and

final chapter identifies the limitations of the study and offers recommendation for future

research.

Chapter 6: Research Findings

The purpose of this study is to explore whether Brazil's younger generation, raised during and after massive urbanization in the early 1970s and influenced by U.S. cultural globalization in the 1990s, is experiencing a shift within the LC/HC spectrum—slowly moving from high towards low context—and whether this shift is affecting intrafamilial relationships between generations that identify with conflicting systems. The following research questions guided the study.

1) Is Brazil's younger generation—born after massive urbanization in the early 1970s and influenced by the U.S. cultural globalization in the 1990s—experiencing a shift within the LC/HC spectrum?

2) Does this shift affect intrafamilial relationships between generations that identify with different systems?

3) Who is the *cordial man* now and can he adapt to a world that is becoming more dissimilar to his rural and patriarchal native habitat?

Ten adults—five fathers (Francisco, Geraldo, Antônio, Tomaz and Saulo) and five sons (Haroldo, Eduardo, Paulo, Julio and Samuel)—were interviewed and, through open coding, 117 different themes emerged. Similar themes were merged and then grouped under broader main categories. As a result of a careful analysis of the interviews, three main themes emerged: mechanisms of technological and cultural globalization, the effects of technological and cultural globalization on the family unit, and the persistence of the *cordial man*. Since these themes are directly related to this

research's guiding questions, the findings are presented in forms of answers to each of

the questions. Table 1 is a general summary of the findings.

Outline of Findings

I. Mechanisms of technological and cultural globalization

    A. The influence of television and the Internet

    B. Wider access to information and world connectivity

    C. The increase of consumerism

II. The effects of technological and cultural globalization on the family unit

    A. Family values versus individual values

    B. Reconfiguration of the family unit

    C. The lack of mindful contact between family members living in the same

    household

III. The persistence of the *cordial man*

    A. Cordial fathers

        Defined parental expectations toward the son's life

        Faith-based beliefs

        Saving face

        Emotional reasoning

        Parental interference in the son's adult life

    B. Cordial sons

        Meeting parental expectations

        Reconciling father-son differences

Cordial man tools

Gender-assigned roles

C. Parental support

Relying on the father

Is Brazil's younger generation—born after massive urbanization in the early 1970s and influenced by the U.S. cultural globalization in the 1990s—experiencing a shift within the LC/HC spectrum?

When participants were asked about the effects of urbanization and globalization on their lives, nearly all responses focused on the technological aspect of globalization. The first research theme that emerged from these responses was named mechanisms of technological and cultural globalization since it addressed how the television, the computer and the Internet functioned as instruments of change in global times. Technology has become the means to propagate low-context values deriving from foreign influences, such as the U.S. culture.

Fathers and sons report sharing the feeling of digital exclusion, even if in different degrees. While these fathers—who are also grandfathers—experience "digital and technological dependence" on sons, sons report "the younger generation seem to be born technologically savvy." If sons are feeling a great generational difference with regard to the way the younger generation handles information, fathers are naturally experiencing a greater gap between their generation and the generation of their grandsons. Thus, based on the responses regarding the effects of technological and cultural globalization, there is a shift happening within the LC/HC spectrum, slowly moving from HC towards LC.

Theme I: The effects of technological and cultural globalization

Regarding the effects of technological and cultural globalization, fathers and sons reported noticing changes concerning the influence of television and the Internet on the household, wider access to information and world connectivity, and the increase of consumerism.

A. The influence of television and the Internet. The influence of television, especially the very popular Globo network, on the lives of Brazilian citizens has been extensively documented (Ramos, 1987; Hartog, 1993; Balogh, 2002; Gomide & Pinsky, 2004). Globo's soap operas are on air nearly every day from 3PM to 10PM and, depending on their success, they will be watched throughout the nation. The soap operas, besides providing entertainment, have the role of shaping opinions based on cultural values that are already rooted in society, but also importing beliefs and ideals that were once foreign to Brazil, such as the need for personal space and avoiding physical punishment on children. American movies and cartoons are also a powerful medium, since the national industry is still secondary when compared to the amount of American movies and cartoons, which are aired on television and watched by Brazilian families. Although television has the capability of reaching every generation under study, both fathers and sons claim that the younger generation (the grandsons) is the one being most affected by it.

Samuel (son) states:

The TV and the radio are tools to shape opinions, mostly the TV though. Our society follows what is being shown in Globo. Everything that is on TV becomes

a fad. Our society is extremely molded by what is happening in the soap operas, in the news. Therefore, the way people raise their kids is changing. The way people look at life is also changing.

Francisco (father) sees the television as an educational tool:

I am sure the TV has influenced people to change because everything is on TV nowadays. In the past, the information was not there so you could not demand anything. Nowadays, if you see something wrong on TV you can demand the right thing to be done. I do that with my kids and they do the same with me. If I am being too harsh when punishing them, they will watch something about it, and soon they tell me that a father must not hit a son or treat a son in such manner.

Haroldo (son) is a father as well and shares his feelings of impotency with regard to the influence television has on his child:

There is no way you can take the TV away from a child. They know everything that is going on at such a young age. My son said he would call the police if my wife left us and would tell them she was trying to abandon him.

Regarding the effects of the Internet, most fathers report "being dependent on sons" and "feeling excluded from digital inclusion." Although all sons are in their twenties and thirties and all have been in contact with technology for most of their lives, there was an unanimous belief that they were the last generation that experienced unsupervised play time outside the house. Seven participants, four fathers and three sons, reported some sort of preoccupation with the grandson's generation and its relationship

with technology. Samuel (son) compares the way he interacted with friends and the way

children interact with friends nowadays:

> The Internet has changed the world. When I had to talk to a friend I had to call
>
> him or go to his house. Kids nowadays spend their days chatting online. Before
>
> parents knew with whom their children were talking to and what they were
>
> talking about, the silent conversation that exists today was not there then.

Eduardo (son) sees differences in the way his much younger brother relates to

technology. Not only he sees his brother as possessing more knowledge on how to deal

with the computer, but he also believes that his brother would not mind being grounded at

home with his technological gadgets.

> My little brother is way more computer savvy than I am. When I was his age, I
>
> did not know much about computers. Nowadays if my brother has any problem at
>
> school, my father will ground him and will say that he has everything he needs at
>
> home. It is easier to keep the child grounded in the house.

B. Wider access to information and world connectivity. As I mentioned in the

literature review chapter, wider access to information and world connectivity define

cultural globalization. Many fathers and sons are observing and/or experiencing the

changes brought by both phenomena. Julio (son) talks about how children and teenagers

are no longer dependent on parents and teachers to educate them.

> … Technology has allowed information to come from multiple sources. In other
>
> words, the amount of information that you have regarding education, about what

is right and what is wrong, what you can and can't do, what is healthy and what

isn't, is overwhelming.

Geraldo (father) and Tomaz (father) express their concerns with the "dumbing

down" of societies due to the shortcuts brought by technology. Tomaz (father) claims

that the "evolution of technologies is producing an acceleration in the amount of

knowledge that one can have. However, most knowledge that people choose to acquire is

useless." Saulo (father), who has a positive outlook on globalization and technology,

contrasts the present with the past:

> Nowadays, the youth take the wrong path only if they want because information is
>
> available everywhere. There is an explanation for everything, from what is right
>
> to what is wrong. It was not like that back then. People would not explain things
>
> to you; you had to find things out on you own.

It is challenging nowadays to keep information from spreading. Samuel (son)

talks about the influence of the new social media, such as Facebook. A post, photo or

video can become viral and travel the world in seconds. He states, "Familial conflict has

become an open debate. If I post something online saying my dad is tough, soon there

will be people I don't really know giving me advices on what to do."

Paulo (son) summarizes the phenomenon of global connectivity: "If you have

Internet, you have all the information you need. If something happens in Japan, in

seconds you will know about it."

C. The increase of consumerism. Participants in this study often discussed the

importance currently given to material possessions. Geraldo (father) connects

consumerism to the sense of immediate satisfaction felt by the youth and blames U.S.

culture for the dissemination of such values.

> The youth feels the weight of consumerism and immediacy. It feels like our
>
> responsibility is to make stuff instead of transmitting knowledge. Kids will say
>
> that you are boring [if you are trying to teach them something], that they can't
>
> look at it [books] anymore. We know what they don't want, but we still don't
>
> know what they actually want. Better yet, we do know, they want things that
>
> don't require hard work from their part; they want immediate satisfaction. My
>
> profession is to read history and see what has been done to our Brazilian culture.
>
> U.S. colonialism has been absurd in every sense. Our values are gone. U.S.
>
> acculturation… globalization… They wanted to sell us the idea that every boy
>
> must have a computer, must have a cell phone and other electronic gadgets. My
>
> kids were not raised like that [buying everything they wanted] and are not
>
> traumatized because of it.

Haroldo (son) finds a circular connection between work and consumerism. He

states, "He works in order to buy things to go to work." Once he buys good clothes and

shoes, he buys a car and other goods to be able to be presentable at work. Paulo (son)

reflects, "I see this happening with my friends. I have one friend that works and spends

all his earnings because he has to have that certain brand. It is all about consumerism."

Tomaz (father) finds a difference between the behavior that his generation displayed

toward foreign brands and the behavior of the youth now.

Here in Brazil we only had bad jeans to wear, so we would try to import Lee,

Levi's. It was hard to get them here but when we did we would remove the tags

because I was so against it, and to this date I am still against becoming a billboard

for these companies. Nowadays people pay exorbitant prices to advertise these

brands. We were different! We were counterculture!

Does this shift affect intrafamilial relationships between generations that identify

with different systems?

Participants' responses indicate a contrast between fathers' emphasis on group

oriented/collectivistic values and sons' needs to make individual choices. While fathers

claim that sons must think about the family before acting, sons claim to have acted in an

individualistic manner and that such individuality has either "caused conflict within the

family realm" or was perceived as an "act of selfishness."

Although this research was designed to focus solely on two generations, the

generation of the grandsons frequently emerged from participants' responses and became

part of the intergenerational dynamic under study. Similar to the HC-LC continuum,

fathers and sons' responses regarding intrafamilial values and behaviors seemed to be in

a continuum as well: fathers being at the higher end of the HC continuum, sons being in

the middle, and grandsons at the lower end of the HC continuum. While fathers and sons

agree on what has changed within the family realm—mixed families, divorces, re-

marriages and lack of mindful contact between family members—they differ in the

degree of normality they attribute to these situations. Thus, based on participants'

responses regarding familial dynamics, their families have been affected by technological

and cultural globalization; and family expectations, which were once unquestionable, are beginning to be challenged by the younger generations.

Theme II: The effects of technological and cultural globalization on the family unit

This theme emerged from participants' narrative on their personal experiences of being a part of a family unit and also from their viewpoints regarding the current situation of families in general. All five fathers reported having clear expectations with regard to family values while four sons—Julio, Samuel, Eduardo and Haroldo—reported having acted based on their individual needs. Other reported issues were the "reconfiguration of the family unit," the "lack of mindful contact among family members living in the same household."

A. Family values versus individual values. Fathers who have been immersed in a high-context culture longer and have been less exposed to individualistic values that accompanies cultural globalization report feeling "unheard," "disrespected," "lied to," and "paid no attention by" their sons prior or in times of conflict. Sons' lack of gratitude is also a subject that many fathers brought up. Some fathers feel that the conflict has not been resolved and choose to avoid the subject as the best alternative to maintain their social relations harmonious. Sons, on the other hand, have to manage their shifting values with their desire to partially meet parental expectations. Tomaz (father) illustrates the contrast between group/family values and individual needs:

When you are born, you may want to do crazy things throughout life but you have to think about those who stand behind you. When you are born in a family unit and you display inadequate behavior you are directly affecting the rest of your

family. You don't have this right; you will affect other people. If you were

alone, without any descendants or ascendants and if you wanted to die, then I

think you have the right.

Here Samuel (son) talks about how he was treated by his mother after he had

deviated from familial values:

My mother ignored me, she made me so angry at her. I don't like people like that.

It [the way she ignored him] made me really angry. If she smokes, she is harming

her own lungs; there is no reason for me to ignore her. I have the right to do what

I please with my life. Ignoring comes from the word ignorance. It is wrong.

Julio (son) recalls a time when he felt his family was punishing him for wanting

to be independent:

This may sound crazy, but it felt like I had to be punished [by my family], pay a

fee because I was successful. The problem did not reside in being successful; it

resided in the fact that I was successful after I became independent [from them],

after I became individualized.

Trying to establish an individual identity, one that separates or complements the

identity built within the family realm can be challenging, especially when fathers expect

their sons to absorb and live by family values.

Francisco (father) states, "The family is sacred and we must take care of it."

Geraldo (father) claims, "Your place [son's] is next to your mother and father… here is

where you will learn things." Tomaz (father) adds, "We are where we are [as a society]

not because of technology but because of family, because of unity." Antônio (father)

believes that "the reason we [himself and his sons] got married and constituted a family is to raise a child like I was raised." Saulo (father) states, "Everything stems from the family nest. The foundation of everything is the family. From there you are ready to deal with the outside world. Without family there is no foundation."

B. Reconfiguration of the family unit. Geraldo (father), Antônio (father), Saulo (father), Tomaz (father), Paulo (son) and Julio (son) affirmed they have seen major changes in the familial dynamics due to the assimilation of global values and access to technology. The two major changes these participants mentioned are the reconfiguration of the family unit and the lack of mindful contact within the household. When referring to the reconfiguration of the family unit—divorces, re-marriages, mixed families and single parenting—fathers, unlike sons, see this phenomenon negatively, displaying resistance and unacceptability. Geraldo (father) states:

> There is no commitment and permanence in the relationship between parents nowadays. The child is born, and I don't know how… if I had to live like that, I would have gone crazy. I couldn't live with a woman that has three children from different fathers. How will one man look at the child of another man? This is something I can't understand. It does not make sense to have a child and to not be there to take care of this child. Responsibility and authority is what is lacking nowadays.

Saulo (father) makes a connection between the lack of family structure and the misfortunes that can affect the life of a young person.

A lot of the bad things we see around are happening because there is a lack of family orientation. There are many families going through tough times when the kids are acting up, the parents are fighting a lot and if they end up separating, and then it gets worse: kids leave home, they begin to make poor choices, like drugs, and end up in trouble or even dying.

Paulo (son), despite sharing the same sense of loss that fathers have expressed, see this reconfiguration of family as a phenomenon that has been present in his life for a long time.

I think that what is missing nowadays is something I had at home while growing up: Where are you going? When are you coming back? What did you do? Who did you go with? For a long time now, this is disappearing because the family unit has become unstructured a long time ago.

Julio (son) believes we will only be able see the effects of technology and globalization on the family unit when this new generation of reconfigured families "grow up, get married and have children. Maybe they will try to move backwards: have dinner together, be around family. I don't know what the future holds."

C. The lack of mindful contact among family members living in the same household. Francisco (father), Antônio (father), Tomaz (father), Julio (son), Eduardo (son) and Haroldo (son) expressed their concerns regarding the lack of mindful contact among family members within the household. By lack of mindful contact, participants referred to the growing absence of family gatherings in which individuals were mentally and emotionally present in the moment, and not only physically present, or multitasking

by watching television or using the computer. Some common used expressions were: "There is no dialogue anymore"; "The relationship is becoming impersonal"; "Kids are computer addicts"; "Each person in the family is doing their own thing"; and "Everyone is in their own cave."

> Tomaz (father) compares the effects of technology on the family realm to a knife:
> Things are bad. I am worried and that is why I try to have meals with my family, sit together. I am trying to keep our animal instincts alive. The day that we are only moved by rationality things will get worse. If the family sticks together we will be able to protect one another. Knowledge is good, technology is good, but if you don't know how to use them, they are no good. A knife can be used in a surgical procedure as it can be used to kill. It depends on who is holding it and on the type of instruction this person has had.

Results indicate that these families are going through a process of change. In a high-context/collectivistic—low-context/individualistic continuum, fathers would be placed on the higher HC side, where family values and emotional ties are highly regarded. Sons would be placed a little lower, slowly integrating individuality into their own set of values. Grandsons, on the other hand, may be the ones affected the most by the technological aspect of globalization. The younger they are, the more they are dependent on technology and the more they value their personal space.

Who is the *cordial man* now and can he adapt to a world that is dissimilar to his rural and patriarchal native habitat?

The *cordial man* is the Brazilian personification of high-context characteristics. Besides permeating the public arena, as seen in the literature review chapters, the *cordial man* is also present in the most private circumstances of the participants of this study: their familial interactions.

As expected, the interviewed fathers operate within the *cordial man* mind frame. They expect sons to live by family values, are preoccupied with the image of the family by the community and rely on emotional reasoning as a tool for persuasion. Sons, against my previous belief, are also *cordial men* themselves, even if at a lower degree when compared to fathers. Although sons have become more individualized, familial harmony is highly regarded. Thus, the sons try to reconcile their individual needs with their fathers' expectations. In order to meet parental expectations and act according to individual values, most sons opt to avoid conflict and mask their intentions.

Holanda speculated that a power shift—from a centralized patriarchal family to a decentralized institutional structure—would weaken the roots of the *cordial man*. However, the *cordial man* has been able to transition to an urban environment due to his reliance on personal connections and favoritism (Rocha, 2004). A globalized environment brings new challenges to the *cordial man*, since individuals are not being transplanted into culturally diverse cities; instead, cultural diversity is meeting individuals in the privacy of their homes through their computers and televisions.

Although cultural and technological globalization is changing the dynamics of the families interviewed, it is still too soon to determine if such a new phenomenon will be able to weaken cordial tools used within the family realm. If the *cordial man* remains

strong within familial dynamics it is unlikely that he will wither in the public arena. It is through the upbringing of children, who are first influenced by parents and second by the context in which they are immersed, that cordial values are disseminated. For now, the *cordial man* remains alive in an urbanized and globalized world.

Theme III: The persistence of the *cordial man*

Although each dyad of father and son has its own unique and non-generalizable familial dynamic experiences, some common concepts related to the *cordial man* emerged. These concepts were found in most responses and reflect values and behaviors taught at home and reinforced by society. Relevant concepts were placed under three main categories: cordial fathers, cordial sons and parental support.

A. Cordial fathers. Five common concepts emerged from fathers' responses: defined parental expectations towards son's life; faith-based belief; saving face; emotional reasoning; and parental interference in the son's adult life. These concepts were placed under this research theme when four or more fathers mentioned the same concept.

Defined Parental expectations toward the son's life. It is difficult for parents to keep their expectations towards their sons' lives in check. Parents may be subject to seeing their offspring as an extension of themselves or as a work in progress. Results show that the fathers in the study not only raised their sons with great awareness of what was expected of them, but they also continue to express their expectations to their adult sons. Geraldo (father) states, "My [adult] son does not smoke in front of me, but he knows that I know he smokes. Once we touched on the subject, I hinted that I knew he

was smoking. I told him: that is not what I have taught you, you know that this is not what I expected of you."

Antônio (father), who has an authoritarian parenting style, often measured the success of his children based on how similar to him they had become. "I started from nothing. So I have educated my sons to be like me, or at least to have what I have. Actually, I expect them to have more than me because I gave them the opportunity to study."

Faith-based beliefs. Faith-based beliefs were present in all of the parental discourses. Fathers either had a strong religious influence while growing up or spent part of their lives searching for the divine. Four out of five fathers report raising sons based on faith-based values. Although this is not a theme discussed previously in the literature review chapter, this concept was added here due to influence faith-based beliefs have on the moral values and social expectations of the Brazilian society. Holanda addresses religiosity on the *cordial man* theory to explain that Brazilians avoid distances even with religious deities by calling them by affectionate nicknames. Francisco (father) states:

> I had a strong religious upbringing. My mother always taught me to be obedient
> [to god]. I am an evangelical protestant. I have strayed a little, but I have always
> relied on my religious beliefs to teach my kids right from wrong, what they
> should do and what they shouldn't.

Saulo (father), who is an active Catholic, points out that his children were raised Catholic. His son worked in their church as a child and that "to this date, both [children] volunteer to work at their church."

Saving face. The importance of "saving face" within the community and the utilization of "emotional reasoning" to persuade sons were also discussed by fathers. Both concepts are characteristics of high-context societies and are powerful tools—used by the *cordial man*—to try to keep sons under control. Francisco (father) states:

I worry about what my [extended] family or neighbors think. It worries me. Nowadays we also live for the society. There is always someone who will be badmouthing you. And if you do something that attracts a lot of attention to you, then I don't think it is cool. It becomes vulgar. Let's say you are dating someone, and you go beyond a certain point [getting pregnant], you will attract the attention of other people, and that is not ok.

Antônio (father) echoes the same idea:

I worry about what other people think. When you have a son that is doing something wrong, everybody is going to punish you, they will be talking about your son. It is important to act right for your sake, for your family's sake, for everybody's sake. If you are not a good person, nobody will like you. Everybody will complain, criticize, point out what you are doing wrong. It would make me really sad; it would be painful to have a son that people are talking about, criticizing.

Saulo (father) is concerned with the image that one can project to other people. He claims that someone's image is important and must be cared for. So, "if someone asks who is this person, everyone will say that this is a very nice person."

Emotional reasoning. Fathers were asked about their reaction towards sons in an extreme conflictive situation, such as drug abuse. All fathers responded they would help their sons and would use emotional appeal as a tool to persuade them. Francisco (father) states, "My kids would think about me before doing something [wrong], they would think about how I would react. I would not admit too many mistakes or foolish behavior from their part because I have never given them a reason to do that with me."

Saulo (father) adds, "We have to follow parents' advices or advices from people who are older than us. Parents always know better. In such a serious case, I would ask him to think about us, about his roots, and our tradition. We have [given him] such a good foundation that he could only have a good future with it."

Parental interference in the son's adult life. Finally, the last concept that emerged under this theme is parental interference in the son's adult life. This concept has a relevant connection to parental authority. Some fathers were naturally more authoritarian than others while raising their sons. However, all fathers indicated that authoritarianism was necessary in order to clearly establish a familial hierarchy. Thus, even the fathers who did not have an authoritarian nature had to put on the "authoritarian hat," as Julio (son) stated, in order to play the disciplinarian father and male role expected by wives and society. Tomaz (father) states:

> Depending on what kind of things he is doing I would interfere because if I didn't, it wouldn't be a problem between him and I, it would be a problem between me and I because I am the most difficult person that I have to live with. I live with myself twenty-four hours a day. I can't lie to myself; I can't fool myself; I can't

pretend that everything is all right. And in order for me to live reasonably well I

have to be in peace with me and with God. So I would interfere for my own sake.

I wouldn't care if he wanted me to interfere or not. After he had hit his head

against the wall a little bit I would back off for a while, or would try a new

approach. But the first approach would be direct confrontation, with love and

support, but always going back to the imposition of authority.

Francisco (father) states:

A son of mine has to respect me as a father. At their age all I have to do is talk to

them and they will respect me [my wishes]. I have never given my sons the

authority to disrespect me. They don't even smoke in front me, not because I am

the macho, mean type, but because they learned to respect me. When they were

little I just had to look at them and they would run towards me to see what I

wanted. They were always afraid of the belt.

B. Cordial sons. Four common concepts emerged from sons' responses that were

connected to the *cordial man*: meeting parental expectations; reconciling father-son

differences; *cordial man* tools and gender-assigned roles. These concepts were placed

under this research theme when four or more sons mentioned the same concept.

Meeting parental expectations. Sons were raised immersed in parental

expectations and thus talked about situations in which they were preoccupied with trying

to meet their father's expectations. Here Julio (son) is faced with doubt regarding the

individual—and not family supported—choices he made in life:

When I told my parents [about losing my job], I was ashamed to have let them

down. It felt like I was coming to them and saying: look, I rejected that

educational standard [given by his parents] and chose to pursue a different one,

but then I got fired. I had to make sure they knew it was not my fault. I hadn't

done anything wrong. I had to resolve this issue within me later on.

Haroldo's father expects him to raise his son like he was raised. Although

Haroldo (son) agrees with his father on the effectiveness of physical punishment, he does

not want to raise his child with the amount of severity that he was raised. When

confronted by his father on being "too soft" on his son, Haroldo (son) blames the new

Brazilian law against physical punishment on children: "Sometimes my dad complains

that I am not raising my child the way he raised us. I don't want to be as harsh as he was.

I tell him there is a law now so I can't be too harsh."

Reconciling father-son differences. The bond that unites typical high-context

families is strong. Although these sons are moving towards individualization there is a

unanimous desire to maintain the harmony of the relationship or to reconcile when there

is rupture. The sons that have shared conflictive situations in which family values were

challenged by individual values are rebuilding—using different tools—the once strained

relationship. Julio (son) is trying to open up to his family:

I hope that in this new father-son relationship I can discuss with him my projects

in life. Nowadays I am able to share with him a little more of my projects, of

what I am thinking, I am able to talk about myself. Let me give you an example.

I am thinking about selling my house. I offered the house to my mom in case she

wanted to live here. I didn't offer it to my dad, but I talked about it with both of them. I asked if they were ok with me selling the house. We talked about the monetary value of the house. For the first time they were aware of how much I pay for my things, of what is the value of the things I own. I felt a little safer in sharing these things with them and asked for their opinion, finally.

Eduardo (son) was able to reconcile with his father by accepting blame and by avoiding the subject:

My relationship with my father changed since our big blowout because I learned a lesson. If I could I would change the past, I would have acted differently. Nobody likes to get hit. I was never hit as a child to see it happen when I had grown up. Sometimes I think about what happened and I feel hurt, but at the same time I think that I am the one to be blamed. If you ask my father I am sure he regrets it as well. We don't talk about this because I keep it to myself. I will ask for his advice on other things, but we don't talk about me.

Samuel (son) changed his behavior to stop hurting his father:

He [father] was not going to hit me; he wasn't going to do anything with me, except throwing at me a bunch of words. Words can't hurt. I was down and I was hurting him. I wanted to get better for him, for my family in general. Only after I stopped he decided to talk to me about things. After everything had been done.

***Tools of the* cordial man.** Since sons are interested in reconciling with fathers but are also interested in pursuing their needs based on individual values, they have

created tools to help them balance both interests while trying to avoid conflict. Samuel

(son) prefers to smooth things over in times of conflict. He affirms he can be

"manipulative" and use the *jeitinho* to pursue something he knows his family will be

against. In the excerpt below, he has difficulty to resolve a conflict with his father

objectively and prefers to mask the truth until he has accomplished what he desired.

> I wanted to buy a big motorcycle but I knew he [father] would not let me. I had a
>
> friend who also wanted to buy one. He had never had a big motorcycle neither
>
> did I. So we decided to buy one together. I was 30 years old then. I told my
>
> father that the motorcycle belonged to my friend, but that I would be the one to
>
> pick it up from the dealer. Then I went, got the motorcycle, came back and kept
>
> on riding it day after day. Soon my father began to ask me why my friend was
>
> leaving his motorcycle with me for such a long time. I replied that my friend
>
> didn't have time to ride the bike. Then, one day I finally told him that I had
>
> bought the motorcycle with my friend. My father asked me why I had not told
>
> him the truth? I said: If I had told you there would be a conflict between us. Thus
>
> it is better if I buy what I want and then tell you. We will get into an argument,
>
> and even a conflict emerges I will already have what I want. That is how I do
>
> things. Nowadays the motorcycle is only mine and I even give my dad a ride
>
> from work in it. It is the Brazilian *jeitinho*.

Haroldo (son) has been raised with emotional reasoning—also known as

emotional manipulation—as one of the tools that kept him from misbehaving. He also

intends to use such tool while raising his son:

My father used to tell us that if we did anything wrong and went to jail he would

not help or even visit us. He would say that just to keep us from doing anything

wrong. But if you truly analyze it, you will see that he would [help and visit us].

This is the type of education that he has passed to us. I do the same thing with my

kids now and will probably do the same when they grow up. I will tell them:

don't do this because I have done it before or don't do this because I have never

done it. You don't see your dad doing this, so why would you do it? This sort of

discipline works, this pressure [works]. There are a lot of people that were raised

without this pressure and are lost in this world. Some of them are not even in this

world anymore. With us this [technique] worked. We drink our beers, but none

of us are addicts.

Eduardo (son) did not want the conflict with his father to escalate so he preferred

to avoid conflict in order to maintain a certain level of harmony:

I would avoid running into him when I was going out. I already knew at what

time he went to bed and I would take advantage of that and sneak out… I was

afraid of him. I was trying to avoid conflict. Even tough I did not know for sure

what would happen to me when I got back from partying I would go anyway. At

that moment, all I wanted was a way to get away. I wanted to go out and have

fun.

Gender-assigned roles. All sons shared experiences in which they were

immersed in a familial context that had defined roles for males and females. The male,

paternal, "macho" figure is something taught at home and reinforced by society. In an

honor culture, such as the Brazilian, in which masculine values are predominant, there is

great inflexibility towards gender roles. Eduardo (son) states:

> Things were different with my sister. When a guy wanted to date her, he had to
>
> come to our house to talk to our dad. Maybe because she is a woman he [dad]
>
> was not as tough on her as he was on me. Maybe because women are less defiant
>
> she did not get into a lot of trouble with him as I did.
>
> Paulo (son) claims, "The difference [in the way siblings were raised] is that my

parents were more strict with my sister; maybe because she was the firstborn or maybe

because she is a woman. There a strong cultural influence saying that women have to act

differently."

> Haroldo (son) and his wife have different disciplinary roles:
>
> If a child does not fear his father, then you have a problem. Fathers have more of
>
> a disciplinary role than mothers. When my wife talks to him [son], he doesn't
>
> change his behavior or he will talk back. But if I am the one speaking to him he
>
> will stop what he is doing right away. My wife always counts on me to discipline
>
> him. He remembers the spanking I have given him and stops right away.
>
> Julio (son) talks about his father having to act on the role of the disciplinarian

father. After his mother had tried different and ineffective disciplinarian tools, his father

would step in. "He wasn't the one to judge the offense. He would execute the final

punishment. He had to put on an act. I could see he did not like that and he felt bad for

having to do it."

C. Parental support. Father-son relationships have changed from one generation to the other. These were some of the expressions used by fathers to describe their childhood: "Children had no voice," "I had a strict work schedule to help my family," "there was a set hierarchy at home," "I had to leave the room when adults were talking," and "I had to count only on myself." None of the fathers interviewed shared an occurrence of having deviated from their parents' expectations, of causing any disappointments to their families or of relying on their families once they left home. Sons, on the other hand, despite being raised by fathers with an authoritarian parenting style were able to pursue their individual interests and beliefs. These sons did not like to disappoint their fathers but they were also not willing to abstain from pursuing what they perceived as necessary, thus the need for some sort of reconciliation.

Relying on father. This concept emerged from fathers and sons' responses and it is pivotal in understanding why sons—differently from their fathers—were able to act based on individualistic values despite familial expectations, and why fathers still influence sons' attitudes.

When sons were asked about their father's reaction if they were to transgress a serious familial expectation, such as drug abuse, all sons responded they could "rely on father to be helped." Despite all the conflicts and behavioral deviations reported by sons, all of them were welcomed back into the family realm. Fathers not only responded, they would help their sons in times of need, but most of them is presently supporting their children either financially or in raising their grandchildren, which enables their interference in sons' life.

Geraldo (father) states, "A lot of people question me about having 30-year old children living with me. I tell them: Where do you want my children to go? Should they live on the street? Having my children with me is not a burden."

Francisco (father) states:

You guys [the generation of his son] take more risks; do things I wouldn't do. I never did those things because I did not have the same [parental] protection that he [son] did. I did not have a father and a mother [to catch me if I fall] like he did. Kids nowadays count on the familial support a lot. If a son goes to jail, there goes the father to rescue him. I did not have that. I was afraid of doing anything wrong because there wasn't anybody to save me. By the time I was 18, I was the one taking care of my mom.

Tomaz (father) and Saulo (father) support their children by taking care of the grandchildren on a regular basis or when needed. "I already foresee that we will end up having to take the grandchildren and pick them up [from school] depending on the day," says Tomaz (father). "My daughter is always here because we take care of our granddaughter for her while she works," says Saulo (father).

Chapter Summary

Three principle questions guided this study: first, is Brazil's younger generation—born or raised after massive urbanization in the early 1970s and influenced by U.S. cultural globalization in the 1990s—experiencing a shift within the LC/HC spectrum? Second, does this shift affect intrafamilial relationships between generations that identify

with different systems? Finally, who is the *cordial man* now and can he adapt to a world

that is becoming more dissimilar to his rural and patriarchal native habitat?

The ten participants in this study discussed shifts brought by technological and

cultural globalization and its effects on familial values. They also discussed the

dynamics of their father-son relationships. Three research themes emerged and were

directly related to the research questions, thus were organized as responses to each of the

questions.

The first research theme regards the mechanisms of technological and cultural

globalization. Fathers and sons reported noticing changes concerning the influence of

television and the Internet on the household, the increase in information access and world

connectivity, and the increase of consumerism. Fathers and sons report feeling digitally

excluded when they compare themselves to younger generations.

The second theme focuses on the effects of technological and cultural

globalization on the family unit. Participants' responses indicate a shift within the value

system of the sons interviewed. Sons have pursued goals based on individualistic values

that challenged familial expectations. The subjects of the study also addressed the

subsequent generation (i.e., grandsons) for comparative purposes. Similarly to the HC-

LC continuum, fathers and sons' responses regarding intrafamilial values and behaviors

seemed to be in a continuum as well: fathers being at the higher end of the HC

continuum, sons being in the middle and grandsons at the lower end.

Participants shared viewpoints regarding changes happening within the family

unit: mixed families, divorces, re-marriages. However, since sons have been exposed to

such phenomenon longer they tend to see the reconfiguration of the familial structure

with a higher degree of normality when compared to fathers. Another subject brought up

by participants was the lack of mindful contact among family members, since people can

be physically in the same household but each member will be isolated with the help of

technology. For participants such behavior can weaken family ties and lead to

disconnected families.

　　　The third research theme concerns the *cordial man* and parental support.

Relevant concepts were placed under three main categories: cordial fathers, cordial sons

and parental support. Results show that fathers and sons operate differently within a

cordial man mind frame, and that there is no separation between social and familial

cordial behavior. Emotional reasoning, conflict avoidance and "machismo" were some

of the concepts brought up by the participants of this study when talking about their

familial dynamics. These are the same tools used within the Brazilian society as seen in

the literature review chapter. Although the individualization that is being brought by

technological and cultural globalization is presenting new challenges to the survival of

the *cordial man*, he is far from withering. *Cordial man* behavior is circular: it is taught at

home and supported by society. Additionally, sons are more financially dependent on

their families now than they were in the last generation. Such dependence creates an

additional bond between fathers and sons in which fathers feel entitled to interfere in their

sons' adult lives and sons feel a greater need to meet parental expectations.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion, Limitations, Recommendations

The research uncovered themes related to intergenerational dynamics in an urbanized and globalized context. This chapter discusses findings and the conclusions of the study. The emerging theory is evaluated using the criteria suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Finally, the implications for practice, limitations and recommendation are addressed.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study of cultural variability is currently being challenged by porous boundaries between culturally diverse groups. Technology, wider access to information and global connectivity function as bridges for cultural exchange. Although values and behaviors are exchanged and assimilated by everyone involved in a cultural transaction, there is a constant imbalance among cultures. Economically developing societies tend to import cultural values from economically developed societies at a higher rate. Thus, as history repeats itself, it is only natural that peripheral cultures admire and wish to adopt practices of central cultures. Most low-context cultures belong to the developed group of nations and most high-context cultures are also considered under developed or developing nations.

Brazil, a HC and developing nation, is still pursuing horizontal digital inclusion. The knowledge of how to use computers and the Internet remains a privilege of the middle and upper classes and the younger generations. Such familiarity with computers comes at a price in a culture accustomed to prioritize family gatherings. The fathers and sons interviewed reported noticing changes within their families due to the use of

technology. Although fathers and sons are not novices in the effects of the television

within households, the same cannot be said about the effects of the use of computers and

video games. This is a relatively new phenomenon to these fathers and sons. Sons are

raising their children with the help of electronic devices since they keep children busy

and out of trouble. Furthermore, this is a time in which both parents choose or have to

work to support the family.

Families are also experiencing the individualization of leisure and play time.

Family members may be physically present but are mentally absent. Mark Federman

(2004), a chief strategist from the McLuhan program in culture and technology, confirms

such separation between mind and body:

"In cyberspace, we literally go 'out of our minds', not to insanity, where we lose

our sense of reality, but to an extension of reality that offers us many more dimensions of

experience. As McLuhan predicted, 'having extended … our central nervous system into

the electromagnetic technology, … [we] transfer our consciousness to the computer

world as well'" (p.6). In this sense, computers, video games, and the Internet can be

providers of experiences that differ from the ones that the familial reality is able to

provide. These technologies also function as a safe place to which family members are

allowed to escape: for children, this is a safe place in their sheltering home; for adults,

such technologies are often connected to work.

Another intrafamilial change reported by fathers and sons is concerning conflicts

generated by sons' attitudes based on individual needs, which confirms a minor shift

from HC to LC in sons' reasoning. While fathers highly regard familial values, sons are

in a transitional state, in which individual goals are relevant enough to challenge parental

expectations, but still cause guilt when pursued. Due to such guilt and the desire to

maintain a healthy familial relationship, the sons will try to reconcile with their fathers.

Reconciliation can be achieved through conflict avoidance or through the use of *cordial*

man tools, such as masking the truth, smoothing things over, indirect communication and

the use of the *jeito*.

The utilization of *cordial man* tools at home—specially the *jeito*—has not been

the focus of academic research. Roberto DaMatta (2004) addresses the family realm by

contrasting the familial and private dynamics at home against the public and impersonal

characteristics of the street in order to explain why Brazilians use the *jeito* frequently:

The street compensates home, and home equilibrates the street. In Brazil, home

and street are the two sides of the same coin. If home bases itself on a set

hierarchy with people positioned according to their importance, sex and age,

constituting basic dimensions in this classification—first the father (the 'boss of

the family'), then the children and, lastly, the 'housewife'—, the street

fundaments itself on the equality of everyone with regard to the law, to the stop

signs and to the a public order that wishes to become more democratic. However,

as these values do not change by decree, home and street continue to be—as once

said Gilberto Freyre—intimate and complementary enemies. Thus, what is lost in

one side is gained in the other. What is denied at home—impersonality, equality

and work—is available on the street. In Brazil, the world would make no sense

without the contrast between home and the street (p. 18).

Although DaMatta (2004) accomplishes his purpose of contrasting private and public spaces in order to shed light on social behaviors inherent of Brazilian society, he fails to acknowledge the complexity of the familial arena by treating it as a social oasis where masks are unrequired due to the emotional rules that govern such environment. It is exactly because of these emotions that the cordial sons interviewed felt the need to mask their defiance toward familial expectations with cordiality. The familial arena functions as a microcosm of the social and public environment. Power distance is maintained due to set familial hierarchy but it does not keep sons from pursuing their individual needs. Thus, tools such as *jeito,* are used to ask for forgiveness, not permission.

Besides hierarchical respect and emotional ties, there is a third element that kept the sons in this study from straying from familial expectations: a relationship with parents based on obligation and reciprocity. Lia Zanotta Machado (2001) states that the apparent transformation brought by urbanization and globalization, of large and patriarchal families into nuclear and small families hides a strong supportive network made of relatives: "children are often left under the care of relatives… always is the name of the rules of reciprocity—give, receive, and requite. The perception of a relational whole precedes individualization tendencies…" (p. 20).

While sons reported acting in individualistic or defiant ways, which is one of the signs of low-context cultures, there has not been evidence that suggest they have changed their communication styles toward their fathers. Instead, cordial sons continue to perpetuate ritualized interactions by employing characteristic strategies. The main

conclusion is that technological and cultural globalization is bringing changes to familial dynamics, but the familial collectivistic ties of participants remain strong in the face of new challenges.

Emerging Theory

Grounded theory was selected to frame this research due to its ability to generate theory according to findings from the data. As seen in the methodology chapter, Strauss and Corbin (1990) advise researchers to check their findings against four central criteria to learn if it is a well-constructed grounded-theory: fit, understanding, generality, and control.

The theory that emerged from this research is that cultural globalization is exporting individual values to collectivistic cultures, but strongly rooted family values and guilt prevent sons from becoming more individualized and disengaging from the expectations of their parents. This theory meets the criteria of being fit and understanding since it derives from the collected data and, through member-check, was verified against the beliefs of the participants of this study. This theory is general since it could be tested against individuals of other high-context cultures who may be experiencing a shift in their value systems in comparison to their families. Finally, this theory meets the control standard since it is specific enough that could be used by professionals working with families to which parental expectations and guilt are relevant familial issues.

Implications for Practice

The main implication for practice from my research is for families in conflict as well as professionals who address the family realm as their main line of work. Of special concern are family therapists, counselors, mediators and facilitators. Conflict is a natural occurrence within families and can be a healthy process that promotes a better understanding of the viewpoints of the ones involved in such conflict. If families could learn to analyze their conflict through a more comprehensive perspective it would be helpful in dissipating the tensions between conflicting parties that often are based on the right versus wrong dichotomy. In times of conflict it is difficult to step back from the heat of the moment and look for values and beliefs that are informing such behavior or such choices of words. However, families would benefit greatly if they could be trained to spot the belief that is motivating a certain action, and work on understanding the belief in greater detail before engaging in unproductive conflict.

Families could also benefit from working on strengthening the ties of the father-son relationship. The findings of this research show that the father-son relationship is being challenged by individualistic values since technology is playing a major role in educating children and also functioning as a relevant medium for social connections. Furthermore, the time that one spends on technological gadgets is interfering with family time, which is capable of changing familial dynamics. Thus, if the uncoupling of the father-son relationship is a possible threat to the familial structure, families would benefit from learning new tools to strengthen their relationship in a modern and globalized world.

The conclusions from this study have broad appeal to family therapists, counselors, mediators and facilitators. The effects of cultural and technological globalization on the family unit should be discussed with families during sessions and, when needed, tools to address such technological dependence should be discussed as well. Family therapy can be enriched by discussing internal values that different generations within the family abide to and by examining conflict resolution strategies that welcome differences. It is not uncommon for family therapists, counselors, mediators and facilitators to work with bi-cultural families or families who identify with different cultural values. Thus, the professionals above can benefit by applying the conclusions from this study when working with families who identify with low-context and high-context values simultaneously.

In summary, since all of us are more exposed to different cultures due to cultural and technological globalization, the conclusions of this study have broad appeal to those who work in bi- or multi-cultural settings, such as in social agencies, schools and universities, religious organizations, community and professional groups.

Limitations

A variety of questions could have been asked to clarify the impact of globalization on participants' familial dynamics. Since there was only one question that addressed such phenomena, and it was placed at the end of the questionnaire, the issue was not properly explored. Additionally it would have been interesting to learn, in greater detail, how the sons are raising their own children and which values they are choosing to transmit to the next generation.

It would also have been helpful to explore the dimension of masculinity in this study. Sons may be dealing with the necessity of adhering to different masculine roles at home and at work. At home sons find themselves in a transitional state—pursuing individual goals while conforming to parental expectations—but no data was collected regarding the behavior of the sons at work. It would have been interesting to learn if the sons abide to a more low-context value system in their professional environment. If women had also been interviewed there could be a comparison between man and women in correlation to low-context and high-context values.

Recommendations

In order to gain more diverse data, it would be useful to add a third generation— the grandsons—to future research. The findings of this thesis indicate that the grandsons are the ones exposed the most to technological globalization, thus it would have been interesting to learn from this younger generation their perspective on familial values and individualistic versus collectivistic behaviors.

It would also be interesting to learn about child raising intentions of the sons that participated in this study and how they are fathering their children in comparison to the way they were fathered. Such information would allow a more comprehensive comparative study between fathers and sons with regard to the values each group choose to transmit to its children.

Furthermore, a comparative study on sons' who depend on fathers, financially or to take care of grandchildren versus sons who are independent from familial obligation,

would also be interesting to pursue in order to learn if the second group demonstrate

greater individuality and other low-context characteristics.

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Appendix A: Initial e-mail sent to all my Brazilian contacts in my e-mail contact list

Dear Friends:

Please, print or forward this e-mail below to friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances at

you church, university, clubs, etc.

Thank you,

Thais

Greetings,

You are receiving this e-mail because our mutual acquaintance thought

you might be interested in participating in my study. My name is Thais and I am

a Master's Degree Candidate in the Conflict Resolution program at Portland State

University, in Portland, Oregon, U.S.

I am studying the influences that urbanization and American-influenced

cultural globalization have on intrafamilial conflict in distinct generations in

Brazil. In order to advance this study, I would like to interview 6 dyads of fathers

and sons. Ideally, fathers must have been born in small/rural towns and children,

who should be 18 or older, must have been born in large/urbanized towns.

I will come to the participants' home, or any place they deem to be more

comfortable, and will perform individual interviews for one hour to two hours

each. The questions will not be specific to the participants' personal experiences

pertaining to their intrafamilal conflict. Instead, they will be pertaining to general

intrafamilial conflict, disciplinary methods used by parents to correct unwanted

behavior, and participant's reactions towards conflictive situations within the

family. Each participant has the right to refuse to answer any of the questions

asked or to withdraw their participation from the study without having to give any

explanations to the researcher and without any consequences.

I would like to explore whether the transformations that usually occur in

younger generations due to globalized cultural influences (such as exacerbated

individualism, need of personal space, and shifts in societal norms) are generating

conflict between parents and their children.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can

be linked to you or identifies you will be kept confidential. All comments which

would identify you to your son/father will be obscured or omitted. Your

participation in this study will also be kept confidential to everyone, including our

mutual acquaintance. If there is something of particular significance which might

identify you, I will come back to you and specifically ask permission.

Although, you will not receive any material compensation to participate in

this study, I hope that you will benefit by engaging in a self-reflective thought

process while telling your story, and will have a new perspective regarding your

intrafamilial conflict during the process, and once you learn about the findings.

Another benefit is that your disclosures and reflections will immensely contribute

to the fields of conflict resolution and counseling where the focus is on

intergenerational conflict. There are no studies in Brazil that address this

particular issue and your participation will be greatly valued.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please write me an e-mail and I will give you more detailed information about the research. I will be arriving in Brazil in November/2011 for the interviews and would like to schedule them as soon as possible at convenient times for you and your family. I would also like to ask you to talk about this study with people you know, since word of mouth is an effective tool to publicize a study and recruit participants. My e-mail is: thaislarosa@hotmail.com

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1) Describe yourself:

    i.   As part of your family; and,

   ii.   As part of the Brazilian society.

2) (Parent) How many children do you have? What is the place of the child I am interviewing in the birth order? (Adult Child) How many siblings do you have and what is the birth order?

3) (Parent) Did you see any differences in the way you raised your first and last child? (Child) Did you see any differences between the way you were raised and your older or younger sibling was raised?

4) What are the differences between the ways parents educated their kids in the past and now?

5) What were the major influences on you regarding the upbringing of your children?

6) When you need to make a difficult personal decision, what do you consider and whom do you consult?

7) Talk about your relationship with your son/father. In which ways are you similar and different?

8) What are the best ways to discipline a child?

9) (Parent) If your son/daughter was doing anything that you disapprove of, what would be your major concerns? (Adult Child) When your father has expressed disapproval of your actions, what were his major concerns?

10)   (Parent) When you needed to prevent your son/daughter from doing

something, as a child and as an adult, what methods did you use? (Adult

Child) When you father/mother was trying to prevent you from doing

something, as a child and as an adult, what methods did he/she use?

11)   (Parent) If your son/daughter was doing heavy drugs, what would be the

first 3 things you would tell him? (Adult Child) If you were doing heavy

drugs, what are the first three things you father would tell you?

12)   Talk about a conflict you have or have had with your son/father. Has it

been resolved? How?

13)   Think of 3 ways communication could go bad with you son/father.

14)   In what ways urbanization, technological advancements and globalization

have hurt or improved the way people deal with conflict?