

Debates on attachment parenting in the Argentine media: famous mothers and co-sleeping sect

Debates sobre crianza con apego en medios de comunicación argentinos: mamis famosas y la secta del colecho

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Abstract

This article analyzes discussions about attachment parenting that circulated in the Argentine media about parenting styles among TV celebrities during 2014 and 2015. Attachment parenting implies that during the early years of life children need permanent care and attention, preferably from their mother. This article examines the role of mass culture in the dissemination of ideas and prescriptions on forms of child care. Then, the explanations and opinions offered on television shows and articles about the trend of parenting with attachment are observed to think about ongoing transformations of maternal subjectivities. In summary, the study identifies the selection of celebrities and follower-mothers, mostly represented as exotic and irrational, and, at the same time, a spirit of the times in which women join and contest their engagement in the public sphere.

Keywords: motherhood, attachment parenting, celebrities, mass media

Resumen

Este trabajo analiza debates sobre la crianza con apego que circularon en los medios masivos argentinos sobre la maternidad de mujeres del espectáculo televisivo durante 2014 y 2015. La crianza con apego determina que durante sus primeros años de vida los niños y las niñas necesitan preferiblemente la atención y el cuidado permanente de su madre. Se examina el rol de la cultura de masas en la difusión de ideas y prescripciones sobre el cuidado infantil. Luego, se observan consideraciones en espacios televisivos y artículos periodísticos sobre el cuidado con apego para reflexionar sobre transformaciones actuales de las subjetividades maternas. En conclusión, se interpreta la exhibición de una alerta sobre elecciones de las famosas y la comunidad de madres adherentes, que se ubican mayormente como exóticas e irracionales y -simultáneamente- la expresión de un clima de época en que las mujeres asumen participar en las contiendas de la esfera pública.

Palabras Clave: maternidad, crianza con apego, celebridades, medios de comunicación

1. Introduction

Among the social guidelines of maternity, childcare is a central regulation for the modes in which women exercise the maternal role. Discourses on the appropriate childrearing –in other words, on the actions relative to aspects such as diet, rest, affection, health and education (Abduca, 2014)– comprise a framework in which disputes are expressed among and within opinions of experts such as the pediatrician, psychologist and the child development practitioner. Discourses that, simultaneously, are revealed in the daily life of mothers: in their customs of childcare, in the opinions and evaluations that express and receive on their decisions.

This research¹ describes and analyzes considerations on a type of child raising, attachment parenting, discussed in mediatic texts (TV programs and newspaper articles) in 2014 and 2015 based on the topic of maternity of female TV stars. By producing stories on these private lives, mass media give visibility and availability to current methods of motherhood that allow questioning of present-day imaginaries on roles and identities of gender, relationship and ties, sexuality and eroticism, parenting and childcare, among other topics.

Synthetically, the main ideas of attachment parenting sustain that the maternal functions revolve around mammal nature, that provide reflex abilities to take care of children. They say that the exercising of motherhood arises from the biological configuration of the human being as mammal, whose attributes designate women so that they assume the task of childcare based on features considered innate such as the ability to breastfeed and the presumed nurturing instinct and attention to baby's needs, with which a relationship of mutual dependence is established: an attachment relationship.

Upon assigning mothers the guidelines on child raising they refer to a social cartography in which the adoption of determined practices that designate women as better or worse mothers. The article explores these processes of configuration and re-configuration of maternal subjectivities based on two questions: What does Argentine mass media say about attachment parenting and of those who practice it? Which voices are hierarchized to discuss its implications?

The study proposes a historic tour of the communication media that focuses on the stabilization of childcare in mass culture content and the contemporary disassociation between different lines of childcare. Specifically, this project studies the junction between celebrities and attachment parenting situated in a context of gender demands and activism in Latin America. Finally, we describe and analyze concepts expressed in some public debates online with the dissemination of the maternal practices of TV celebrities.

2. Theoretical Framework

The conceptual line of this proposal implies an approximation to operations of gendering in the production of texts of cultural industries that recognizes the implications of its ideological and social reproduction function (Zallo, 1988) although without considering them omnipotent. Paraphrasing Teresa de Lauretis (1996) motherhood, like gender, is not a property of the body but rather a set of effects produced in the deployment of “gender technologies”.

Among these technologies, De Lauretis recognizes processes of representation via the dissemination of already gendered models in cultural forms deployed in each time period. The discourses—among them being those of the cultural industry—are configurators of the human experience and identities, possess a character that is “shaping in regards to the behaviors, meanings of the good life by using, dimensions of the experience; in the end, of all that which contributes to the reproduction of social order” (Arfuch, 2005). According to Silverstone (2004) cultural industries are constitutive of the collective experience in that they filter and form daily realities, provide words to speak and ideas to express and participate in social realities. In that sense, if motherhood, as cultural construct, was developing itself as a transhistoric and transcultural identity based on discourse convergence and social practices that defined it in essentialist and pro-biologist terms (Palomar, 2005), it is observed that the mediatizations that currently mold it allow us to understand operations of permanence and symbolic perturbation in regards to this genderized identity.

Then come the proposals of Stuart Hall on dialectic processes that structure the cultural forms in

terms of dispute for hegemony (1984), which is to say, in the situated scene of struggle that entails the dispute to attach meaning. In that sense, to observe the production and circulation of gendered and genderizing meanings implies addressing the power relationships and the historic conditions in which the collective modes of understanding are developed and transit the genders that are built and rebuilt in specific contexts. In relation to these processes of semantic argument and classification of subjects and practices, we will discuss the historic dialogue relative to maternity and parenting based on expert knowledge and cultural texts in the following section.

2.1. Parenting, Expert Knowledge and Mass Culture

Early on, the Argentine cultural industry began to disseminate ideas of appropriate parenting and motherhood. In the late 19th century, the first articles were the result of pedagogical interest of Catholic moralists to express arguments of moral, philosophical and religious nature (Nari, 2004). Those texts were followed by publications coming from the hygienist medicine that focused on the dissemination of elemental ideas on child development (Darré, 2013).

The history of the discourses on child rearing and maternity in texts of the Argentine editorial market, whose ideas and values have been thoroughly analyzed in studies from various fields (Abduca, 2014; Borinsky, 2005; Briolotti & Benítez, 2014; Cosse, 2010; De Paz Trueba, 2011; Rustoyburu, 2012, 2016), show the existence of a first period (1890-1940) in which the intervention in maternal practices was led by medical science. In this period, children's medicine consisted of a specialty divided into two branches, focused on explaining the somatic based on the organic (Abduca, 2014): pediatrics, focused on clinical approach and the tracking of growth, and child development, focused on the transmission of scientific parenting methods (Nari, 2004). Such process took place in the context of wider social changes that implied the recognition of childhood as social category and a new modeling of the child-adult relationship (Colangelo, 2012). Also implied is the deployment of the local process of maternalization, one in which women were "understood as a reproductive good

of the nation" (Nari, 2004, p.151), that converged in the semantic inherence between femininity and motherhood.

At a time in which the state's goals were to populate and in which demographic variables (such as child mortality and the drop in birth rates) were evaluated together with the eugenic considerations of the social tissue and, linked to this, in which women were rejected in the workplace, medicine was the fundamental ally to intervene in daily practices. It was a scenario in which, while "mothers were portrayed as incompetent, ignorant and negligent, needing advice on behalf of health and reproductive professionals" (p.102), publications directed at mothers facilitated the transmission of new cultural patterns of parenting by using everyday language.

Established was that which Nari identifies as "scientific parenting" (1995, p. 9) that established the figure of the doctor as instructor and that ignored the tradition of knowledge shared, passed down and exercised by women.

After 1940, psychology and psychoanalysis were progressively incorporated with explanations on psychological, family-related, and social aspects associated to the children's needs and problems (Abduca, 2014). While the first decades of the 20th century brought about the medicalization of motherhood and parenting, articulated via state policies of maternalization², the following implied a renewal of knowledge that intensified the demands on mothers as parents of children. This shift occurred in a context of political and social transformations that, in health terms, were expressed in an increase in birthrate and a decrease in child mortality, as well as the eradication of illnesses that affected the population (typhus, syphilis, malaria, brucellosis). The State's assistant-protector model during Peron's government showed a major advance in collective health and created conditions conducive to the blooming of a new paradigm of parenting (Darré, 2013).

The link between the cultural industry, maternalization of women and medicalization of parenting in Argentina reached its golden age during the 60s and 70s with editorial emergence of books, magazines and collections of specialized issues, radio, and TV programs. In this period, some health professionals –like the pediatrician Florencio Escardó,

the social worker and psychologist Eva Giberti and the pediatrician Mario Socolinsky³– were pedagogical experts on parenting in multiple texts of mass media. Their proliferation and that of other names and spaces in which they disseminated their views allows us to state that, starting with the 70s, the medicalization of parenting “would consist of a process of collective action, linked not only to the interests of medical companies but also the market and consumption” (Rustoyburu, 2012, p.84).

In the late 20th century and early 21st century, the parenting model of the cultural products aimed at mothers can be summarized by what Hays (1998) calls “the ideology of intensive motherhood”. This category encompasses a series of beliefs that naturalize a parenting perspective focused on the child, which is to say, one that focuses on his or her needs and desires (and no longer one that focuses on those of the nation); whose methods not only require the guidance of experts but that are also “more intensive, more absorbing from the emotional standpoint and economically more expensive than ever” (Hays, 1998, p.82).

2.2. Intensive Maternity and Attachment Parenting

In terms of the Spanish editorial market, Jiménez and Roquero (2016) separate two repertoires on parenting whose distinction lies in to whom the task of parenting is attributed and in how it should be resolved. On one hand, they identify a set of voices –“diversified motherhood and shared parenting” (p.332)– that considers it legitimate to delegate care (to nannies and institutions) and that offers conduct guidelines to the organization and the wellbeing of the family group. On the other hand, they find a summary that opposes early regulations of childhood behavior and that questions the criteria of the other set, considering them organized according to the needs of adult life. This repertoire –“intensive motherhood and attachment parenting” (p.334)– says that babies and small children require constant attention and that mothers are biologically disposed to comply with this need.

The expression “attachment parenting” was born from the confluence between expert discourse,

parenting, and the cultural market, when a North American pediatrician (William Sears) coined it in the late 90s in his books on childcare. But it was in the 50s when the psychiatrist John Bowlby developed his theory on attachment. Disseminated based on a report written by the World Health Organization, published with the title *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (1952), that theory sustains that babies and children require, for their wellbeing, a “warm, intimate and continuous relationship with their mother (or permanent maternal substitute), in which both find satisfaction and pleasure” (p.11).

Subject to criticism by the psychological field orthodoxy and later reviewed by the WHO (Briolotti, 2016; Rustoyburu, 2012), it still made a mark on knowledge of child health and positioned the affection dimension as a relevant aspect for family psychosomatic medicine. Based on the ideas of Bowlby “contributed to naturalizing the supposed existence of a constitutive affectionate link between mother and child, with its correlative on interdependence for the emotional development of the child” (Briolotti, 2016, p.434).

In Argentina, Therapist Laura Gutman is one of the key experts on attachment parenting, with a solid presence in the editorial market. In *La maternidad y el encuentro con su propia sombra*, she affirms that the human baby is born prematurely in comparison with other mammals, which implies that during the first months of life, it requires conditions similar to those of the mother’s womb: permanent communication, contact and attention (Gutman, 2008). And “permanent” means “all the time”. Gutman states that “we are a society in extreme aggression with our offspring” that ignores “the natural requirements of babies that depend exclusively on care by adults” and that “are at the mercy of our capricious modern ideas” (p.136).

3. Methodology

This article falls into the context of the qualitative cultural analysis from the ideological critical tradition (Hall, 1981; Richard, 2009; Thompson, 1991) to inquire into the configuration of social meanings in relation with its material production conditions (Angenot, 2010, Foucault, 1979). In addition, the study is located in the interpretative paradigm of abductive address for approach to cultural texts

(Ginzburg, 1989; Ford, 1994) for being a device for hypothesis creation. We understand the cultural analysis as a set of interpretations, a production of conjectures based on traces in the discourses that express values and imaginaries possible in specific contexts. Said analysis supposes a zigzagging interpretation that weaves in and out of texts, with the aim to recover a complexity in constant transformation (Alabarces, 2002).

Here we select a limited number of materials taken from a larger corpus that comprised a study on models of maternity that circulated between 2011 and 2016 in journalistic stories on mothers in the Argentine arts and entertainment scene (Sánchez de Bustamante, 2017). The heterogeneous character of the sources of that study (articles from magazines on current affairs and arts and entertainment, from the daily press and news sites on *chimentos*⁴ and arts and entertainment, reports and interviews on general interest TV programs, of *chimentos* and arts and entertainment and news) was justified based on the observation of a cultural continuity in which the construction of narratives and the circulation of information is established via feedback in the production, reproduction, and increase of news on TV industry celebrities in which aspects of their private lives, among other issues, are discussed (Justo von Lurzer, 2017). The period of this work, as well as the cases that were characterized in different models (single motherhood by choice, motherhood at an older age, attachment parenting, abject maternity and eroticized motherhood), were determined after the review of a temporary wider fragment by two Argentinean magazines on current affairs (*Caras* and *Gente*). That review allowed us to see the configuration of histories on motherhoods that challenged the mediated hegemonic archetype of motherhood (biologic, cis-gender, heterosexual, biparental, shy, cheerful, among other features) situated in a context of legislative and social modifications.

In this work in particular, a specific period of time (2014-2015) will be analyzed in which the parenting choices of some famous mothers encouraged explications and journalistic discussions on practices considered part of the attachment parenting concept. It is considered that certain maternal biographies cause concerns in regards to some of the elements that comprise this type of mother socially understood as the most logical being challenged.

These biographies shed light, simultaneously, on the intimacy of the stars and the changes in socio-generic practices. And for this reason, the media is interested in covering them. They are profitable because they are focused on the lives that audiences are interested in and because they show dislocation on that which is possible to debate and extend the production of content. From that informative production emerge considerations that are worth recovering because they are ways of presenting similar contemporary motherhood experiences.

4. Attachment Parenting, Celebrities, and Activism

Observe the cross of the biographic and celebrity world is interrogate an inexorable link. As a founding characteristic of mass culture, the configuration of this vertex was a common practice of popular press from the early 20th century, although the focus was to take the focus off the constitution of idols from the areas of science, politics, and industry –“idols of production”– to widen its scope, and focus on, entertainment figures like actresses, actors, singers and athletes –“idols of consumption”– (Lowenthal, 2006, p.130). As a specific form of the cultural industry, celebrity culture portrays itself as a “cultural creation that has a social function” (Turner, 2010, p.14). As a condition, celebrity implies “that which incites public notoriety and in regards to which opinions and values are expressed” (Justo von Lurzer, 2017: 31).

Narratives on celebrity mothers differ from the traditional pedagogical repertoire in which cultural texts teach us how to care for children via an instructional modality based on advice from healthcare professionals. And although female celebrities are not experts, identification and interest, which facilitate dissemination of their statements and actions reveals the social value that their condition of celebrities carries.

The context of enunciation observed refers to a state that is deliberative (Semán, 2015) and the broadening of gender and sexuality rights. The demand for and passing of laws to prevent, sanction and eradicate violence against women, to recognize the identity of self-perceived gender, to promote and guarantee breastfeeding, for respectful child-

birth assistance, to broaden the modes of ties and recognize different family types, describes an era of gradual transformations. Between 2012 and 2015, for example, various laws relative to gender rights were enacted: Law 26.743/12 on Gender Identity; Law 26.862/13 on Medically Assisted Childbirth; Law 26.873/13 on Public Breastfeeding Promotion and Awareness; the Civil and Commercial Codes of Law of the Nation (Law 26.994/14) whose sections include new regulations on relationships, ties, and adoption; Decree 2035/15 that enacted the Law 25.929/04 on Humanization of Childbirth.

Considering this strengthening of the women's movement⁵, attachment parenting is also strengthened by association with other topics such as respectful childbirth. It increases in significance for mothers –middle class sectors in urban areas– that know each other and organize based on their support of this line of thought. Via lectures and workshops given by institutions and professionals or by the very initiatives led by the mothers themselves, the appropriation of the repertoire of attachment parenting –or respectful parenting, as it is also called– shows a collective and singular state of reflection on the motives and benefits for which they ascribe to all or part of its proposals (Abdala, 2016; Mantilla, 2019). That collective state led to activism with lines of action such as publicly disseminate and defend the ideas and practices that this line of thinking supports, together with health professionals with new models of medical assistance for pregnancy, birth and childcare (Felitti & Abdala, 2018).

In 2014, attachment parenting became visible in the agenda of mass media when some famous mothers proclaimed to be followers. That revelation led their decisions to be questioned. Biographies on the way certain famous mothers cared for their children led to explanations and evaluations by specialists and the revindications of celebrity mothers.

To reflect on ideas circulating in regards to that link between parenting and activism we will review the way in which some mediatic texts addressed attachment parenting based on choices by famous mothers.

5. Mediatization on *Co-Sleeping*

In October 2014, Paula Chaves (Argentine model) stated on air during a show with a large audience that on her wedding night she slept in the same bed with her daughter. The story was no coincidence: Marcelo Tinelli, host of the program, knew beforehand about certain decisions made by Chaves in regards to raising her child; among them being sleeping in the same bed, also known as *co-sleeping*. In the dialogue, laced with humor, the model also mentioned that her daughter was exclusively breastfed, and associated her actions to “a new way of parenting”: attachment parenting. Confronting her, the host said that she should be more concerned about the couple's relationship and incorporate other methods: give her daughter a bottle and delegate her care to another person. But he also inquired about the implications of this line of thought:

Tinelli: Attachment parenting that you have her in your room until when, to what point?

Chaves: To when she wants.

Tinelli: Oh! So, she decides? [laughs] Tell me that is not annoying! [...].

Chaves.: Children, at some point in their lives have to sleep with their parents. We are animals. How do animals sleep? With their offspring near. [...] There are some beds made that are co-sleeping beds, that is an extension of the parents' bed.

Tinelli: But, are you going to make a bigger bed so that Oli can sleep there too? [laughter].

Chaves.: There is a Spanish pediatrician that recommends laying mattresses on the floor and sleeping all together [...].

Tinelli: [...] They brainwashed you! Who gave you all these ideas? You are part of a sect! [laughter] Tell me which one. The co-sleeping sect! The annoying co-sleeping sect [...] Some must be saying: “look what this guy is saying, he does not follow the instincts of nature, he makes his child sleep in the next room”. Tomorrow I am going to research it, I'm going to *google* “the co-sleeping sect”⁶.

After that program, Chaves's practice and support of attachment parenting led to –with explicit reference to the televised conversation with Tinelli– in

the journalistic production of information on this practice, supported with examples of other famous mothers. In other words, based on the mediatization of the maternal practice of a famous TV figure, various programs offered explanations and classifications on criteria and practices that comprise this parenting perspective and proposed debates in regards to the pros and cons of its adoption.

“The famous mothers that practice co-sleeping, a controversial topic”, was the title of an article in the newspaper *La Nación*⁷. That article defined attachment parenting as “a movement that is more and more popular every day” and characterized the set of practices that summarize its principles: prolonged breastfeeding, co-sleeping, permanent body contact and immediate response to crying. In addition, the article featured emphatic support of other famous mothers on TV.

To describe the practices of attachment parenting and the choice of this method, mass media tied co-sleeping to celebrities calling it a “media frenzy”⁸. But to evaluate the implications of growth of the movement they relied on the expert discourse: health professionals dedicated to disseminating knowledge of parenting.

The TV morning show, for example, presented co-sleeping like a controversy with images of famous mothers and the following voice over:

Time ago, that parents would sleep in the same bed as their children was seen as something harmful for the children. Today it is called co-sleeping and it is a word that is in fashion when it comes to parenting. This new form of natural parenting little by little became a topic in the entertainment industry. The model Pampita Ardohain wrote on *Twitter*: “Long live co-sleeping” and shared a picture that shows her sleeping in a large bed surrounded by her three children. Other famous mothers that support attachment parenting are Carla Conte, Paula Chaves and Maju Lozano, who was more than happy to sleep with her son despite stating that Joaquín was already 3 years old and still did not want to sleep in his own bed. “Margarita is going to sleep with us until ag 12”, said Griselda Siciliani who showed to be a supporter of co-sleeping. [...] The debate grows and, without a doubt,

natural parenting is a tendency that is making waves. In fact, beds are already being made to facilitate this cultural change. Is it good for parents and children to sleep together? Co-sleeping, yes or no?⁹.

In that report, the words of the guest specialist, Psychologist Gervasio Díaz Castelli, were against co-sleeping with children:

It’s a good topic to discuss, it causes a lot controversy, a lot fanaticism and a lot of militancy. And, as always, when people se dogmatize a little, generally it can cause a little damage, right? What seems important to me is the argument of the people who talk about co-sleeping. The point that it is cultural, that in Arabia, that in China. Cultural issues can sometimes be harmful. [...] I wrote “El colecho y el niño bon-sái” because I think propose that certain practices by parents can go harming the children’s growth. It lacks a certain substance. The theory of attachment, we all say... I think it is important that we make the time to understand that there are certain things we need to think a little more about. The bed within the family structure is not the same as a chair, it is a symbolic issue¹⁰.

On this program, it was said that co-sleeping is a trend promoted by fanaticism and activism and it invites people to “think better” considering that it does not obey valid arguments but rather arbitrary dogmas. On the other hand, the cultural dimension was recognized as an organizing element of parenting practices, that transform though space and time. For this reason, anthropological view was not added but rather ethical-moral: the cultural does not justify harmful behaviors and co-sleeping –as an emergence of new parenting methods– was evaluated as an action that produces damage because, for example, it ignores socio-sexual limits such as the symbolic value of the parents’ bed.

Another TV program (*Argentina para armar*) dedicated a show to debating about “2 21st century tendencies”:

the first, that said that you should let babies cry, leave them in their rooms, that they should go adapting to this world when they are babies,

and this other, that is so in fashion today, that speaks of attachment parentings, where we are much more concerned about the children, closer to the children [...]”¹¹.

For the example, the very Paula Chaves was invited and for the discussion, among other women, there were two therapists with opposing positions whose disagreement revolved around the cultural conditions.

One of them emphasized that mothers desire to satisfy other social roles and activities, that many do not choose co-sleeping because they cannot sleep continuously and stated that the problem is the practice is explained as an emotional maternal need, in other words, a new cultural norm:

a mother that needs to work, that wants to go to the gym, that wants to sleep peacefully in her bed, that wants to sleep embracing her husband and, however, others tell her that she should feel a different way, that she should want to be with her child all the time, that she should give up her own life as a woman to be a mother [...]”¹².

The other specialist emphasized that children are born dependent on maternal care and that their needs are linked to the very instincts of the human mammal species:

We are born dependent on maternal care, practically unable to do anything, we depend on our mother’s protection or the mother figure. On love, on nurturing, on the body. What do we do as human children? We ask for, we seek, we need nurturing. This is original design, it is not culture. [...] Here, beyond what we decide, is if we give ourselves the chance as adults, and especially to mothers, to go back and connect with the girl or boy that we have become thanks to the child we have had”¹³.

In this way, opposing ideas on parenting –one where the children must adapt to the rhythm of their cultural situation and another in which culture should not interfere with the rhythm of nature– were outlined by two sources of expert discourse and cultural market directed at women that are mothers. One of these sources considered that mothers must satisfy the desires and responsi-

lities that transcend the maternal role. The other source proposed listening to child world conceived as not permeated by culture, and revendedicated the human biologic dimension as “original design”.

Following this mediatic period of interest in attachment parenting based on the experience of famous mothers, the reference to this line of thinking could no longer be dodged in terms of content production. When this occurred, the omission had to be corrected. For example, in 2017, the program *Morfi, todos a la mesa* invited a pediatrician that objected to co-sleeping and offered steps to follow so that babies “learn to sleep”¹⁴. The dissatisfaction expressed on social media in regards to that intervention, criticizing the show for presenting only one point of view about babies’ sleep, resulted in an immediate new program with statements made by the same pediatrician and with the opinions of a child development specialist supporting attachment parenting¹⁵.

6. Conclusions

In the 21st century, the model of intensive maternity survived cultural changes such as the massive presence of women in the workplace, the recognition of different types of family, and certain gradual change of the paternal role. This means that mothers continue to be positioned as the best caretakers possible and as those who should take on the tasks of childcare. Yet while the validity of the feminization of the care remains as “one of the critical cornerstones of the social construction of gender” (Faur, 2014, p.14), the perspectives on types of parenting make the discursive scene more complex by presenting contrary arguments on who should assume the task and how it should be carried out.

Upon situating the human biological dimension as the one that guides children’s demands and the appropriate responses to these needs, attachment parenting opened a critical dialogue with other guidelines that give regular advice on the behavior of babies. As mentioned, the emergence of such perspective occurred in the confluence of expert knowledge and mass culture with the sermon of books and lectures by related specialists. In the groups of breastfeeding, parenting and tribes of

mothers both in person and online, dissemination of such ideas grew and went about incorporating different axes. In addition, attachment parenting consolidated not only as a parenting option but rather as an opportunity of collective organization: a cause to disseminate, that experienced still greater dissemination by becoming an issue in journalistic narratives on TV mothers.

By various famous mother showing their support, attachment parenting was presented to mass audiences as “controversy”. Co-sleeping, invested in its synecdoche, on occasions was challenged with different characterizations: of being a fad, of being promoted by fanaticism and militancy, of altering limits of the socio-sexual morale, of becoming the new norm, of implying a risk to babies. For some health disseminators, co-sleeping surpasses the limits of sexual morale (conceived necessary to protect babies). But for others the ethical transgression is expressed in ignoring the demands of babies-offspring that require by animal instinct that nurturing; for them, medicine established an arbitrary set of actions far from mammal impulses; for them, the new principles indoctrinate with other more harmful norms.

On the other hand, mediatic references on the growth of this practice show certain alarm regarding choices that are considered not only as strange but also as disobedient to exercising the maternal role based on the historic supervision of medicine, and furthermore as inconsiderate in regards to the marriage relationship. In that entry to the mediatic scene of voices that argue about parenting choices reproduces the naturalizing of the caretaking tasks as powers of the mothers, although in the interstice of those discussions is the influence of the current situation in regards to women’s push for recognition of their role in the construction of the social realm. Because the discussions that emerge from the groups and practitioners of attachment parenting cannot separate from others, like those promoters of the humanized birth movement that also increased its visibility.

These experiences share, among other aspects, languages anchored on biology and –as a result– in essentialisms of gender; simultaneously, they support ideas relative to the autonomy and social critique social associated to the militancy for women’s rights (Felitti & Abdala, 2018). In other words, among the diversity of demands and positionings, these activisms value and demand respect for the

decisions of mothers and resist being anchored to medicine as the only valid discourse. In that resistance, there are disagreements that, on one hand, are supported by conceptual foundations; on the other hand, it is discussed how health specialists exercise their profession: the lack of listening and contemplation of emotions, knowledge and convictions of mothers for the application of protocols that exclude their desires and beliefs.

If the process of maternalization portrayed mothers as negligent, ignorant, and lacking of valid knowledge –and the maternity discourse still continues with the logics of a demanding and oppressive pedagogical device– today’s mothers differ from those of the first half of the 20th century. Many of them are women active in the process of advance of the struggles for gender equality that appeal to different, and at times contradictory, theoretical frames to revendicate demands conceived as more just for one’s own life and shared life. Among these demands, the problematization as to the limits of the medical system on the autonomy of the body and the decisions of women is one of the thresholds on the contemporary scene of changes in the subjectivities of gender. Because in raising their voices, mothers (celebrities and anonymous) have understood themselves as valid interlocutors that seek to negotiate with other agents the practices that involve them and define the ways of organizing social life.

Notes

1 A preliminary version of this work was presented at the First Latin American Congress on Gender Studies and Care “Latin American Views on Care”, held November 6 – 8, 2018 in Montevideo, Uruguay. Such presentation fell within the framework of the Oriented Research Project (2015-2018): “The politicization of the spectacle: production, texts and reception of TV spectacle programs” (Res. N°3333) sponsored by the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research and the Public Defender’s Office of Audiovisual Communication Services.

2 In regards to the “policies of maternity” or mothers as object of public policies, Nari (2004) analyzes the discussion and passing of laws linked women’s participation in the workforce, infanticide, abandonment, abortion and custody of children.

3 Florencio Escardó wrote columns in *Mundo Argentino*,

Hijo Mío...!, *Madre y Niño*, *Viva Cien Años*, *El Hogar*, *Vea y Lea*, *Claudia*, *Para Ti*, *Vosotras y Primera Plana*. He published *Anatomía de Familia* (1955), *Sexología de la Familia* (1961) and *Mis padres y yo. Nueva puericultura para mamás* (1968) and directed two magazines aimed at mothers: *Mi hijo y yo* and *Maminia*. Eva Giberti wrote columns in *La Razón*, *Nuestros Hijos*, *Claudia*, *Vosotras y Damas and Damitas* that were later compiled in the collection *Escuela para Padres* (1961). Mario Socolinsky hosted from the late 70s the TV program *La Salud de Nuestros Hijos*, show which aired until 2003.

4 In Argentina, the expression “programa o revista de chimentos” refers to the audiovisual and graphic design industry that showcases the private lives of public figures linked mainly to arts and entertainment industry. For more details on relevant aspects and the emergence of the mediatic genre “chimentos” in Argentina, see the work of Alina Mazaferro (2014) on “celebrity culture” and that of Carolina Justo von Lurzer (2017) on the social function of TV programs on entertainment and chimentos.

5 In Argentina, starting in 2015, the women’s movement increased its public visibility with events stemming from complaints regarding violence and inequalities from which women, lesbians, transvestite and transgender people suffer. The protests that occurred with the forming of the Ni Una Menos collective (marches against femicides and women’s strikes), together with other organizations linked to feminist demands, contributed to and increased the debates that gradually led to, for example, the largest mediatic treatment on gender issues (physical and symbolic violence, inequalities in productive and reproductive work and politics linked to sexual and reproductive health).

6 Eltrece (14/10/2014): *Showmatch 2014 – Tinelli se indignó con un dato del casamiento de Paula y Peter* [video]. Recuperado de <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Bd8gvp6Vrs>

7 La Nación (10/11/2014): *Las famosas que siguen el colecho, una práctica que trae polémica* [online]. Recuperado de <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/espectaculos/las-famosas-que-siguen-el-colecho-una-practica-que-trae-polemica-nid1740257>

8 Clarín (7/10/2014): *¿Es bueno dormir con los hijos? El colecho, de la TV a tu casa* [online]. [Is it good to sleep in the same bed with your children? Co-sleeping, from the TV to your home] Recuperado de https://www.clarin.com/hijos/colecho-hijos-bebes-ninos-padres-dormir-habitacion-cuna-misma-cama-crecer-crecimiento-etapas_0_B16SN9YPXL.html

9 Telefe (28/1/2015): *Colecho: dormir con tu bebé, ¿sí o no? – AM* [video]. [Co-sleeping: sleep with your baby, yes or no?] Recuperado de <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcyjGx8LMTY>

10 Telefe (28/1/2015): *¿Es bueno dormir con tu bebé? – AM* [video] [Is it good to sleep with your baby?]. Recuperado de <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-4fnwQT9ag>

11 Milii ramos (9/11/2014): *Paula Chaves en Argentina para armar 1/2 #TN* [video] [Paula Chaves in Argentina to love 1/2 #TN]. Recuperado de <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odl-rqJe8AQ>

12 Ídem

13 Ídem

14 Telefe (26/01/2017): *¿Cómo hacer que tu bebé duerma? [How to make your baby sleep?]- Morfi* [video]. Recuperado de <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHPbhCvHC5s>

15 Telefe (31/01/2017): *Debates de mamás: Colecho sí o no? [Mother’s debates: Co-sleeping, yes or no?]- Morfi* [video]. Recuperado de https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sF_NPNvzpQ

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- How to cite:

Sánchez de Bustamante, M. (2019). Debates sobre crianza con apego en medios de comunicación argentinos: mamis famosas y la secta del colecho. *Comunicación y Medios*, (40), 156-168.