

Arkadiusz Białek, Karolina Sobierska, Małgorzata Stępień-Nycz and Marta Białecką-Pikul
Institute of Psychology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

contact: a.bialek@uj.edu.pl <http://www.labdziecka.psychologia.uj.edu.pl/en.html>

The 23rd Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development,
July 8-12, 2014, Shanghai, China

INTRODUCTION

The emergent field of cultural developmental psychology emphatically argues that humans are biologically cultural beings and develop as participants of cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003). The conception of "the developmental niche" (Super & Harkness, 1986) systemizes the cultural structuring of child development. It contains three components:

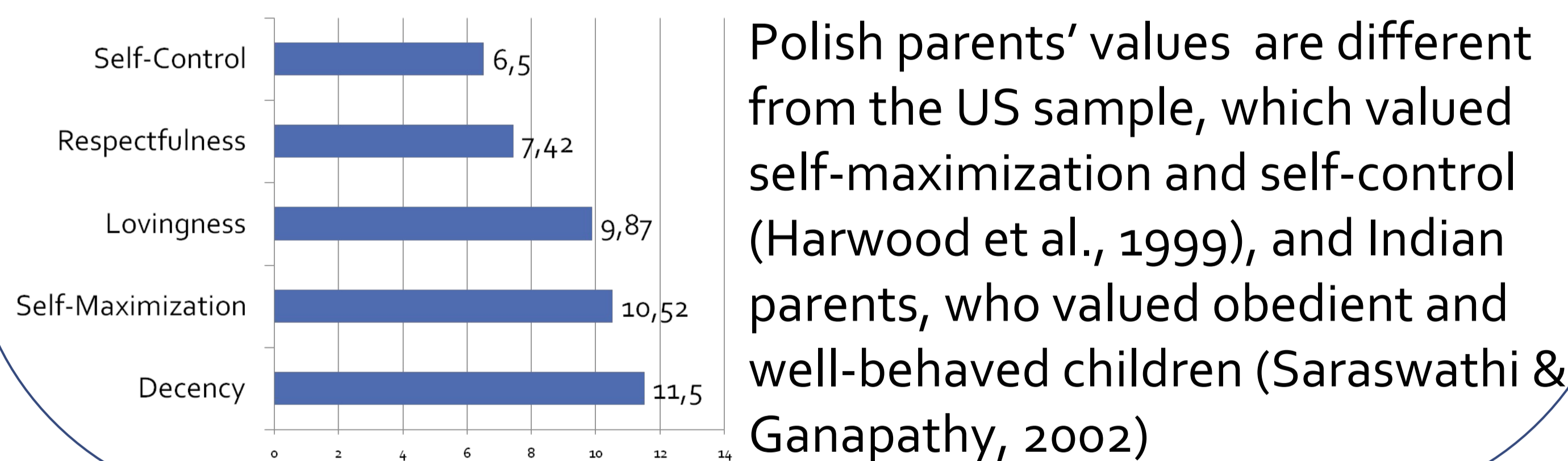
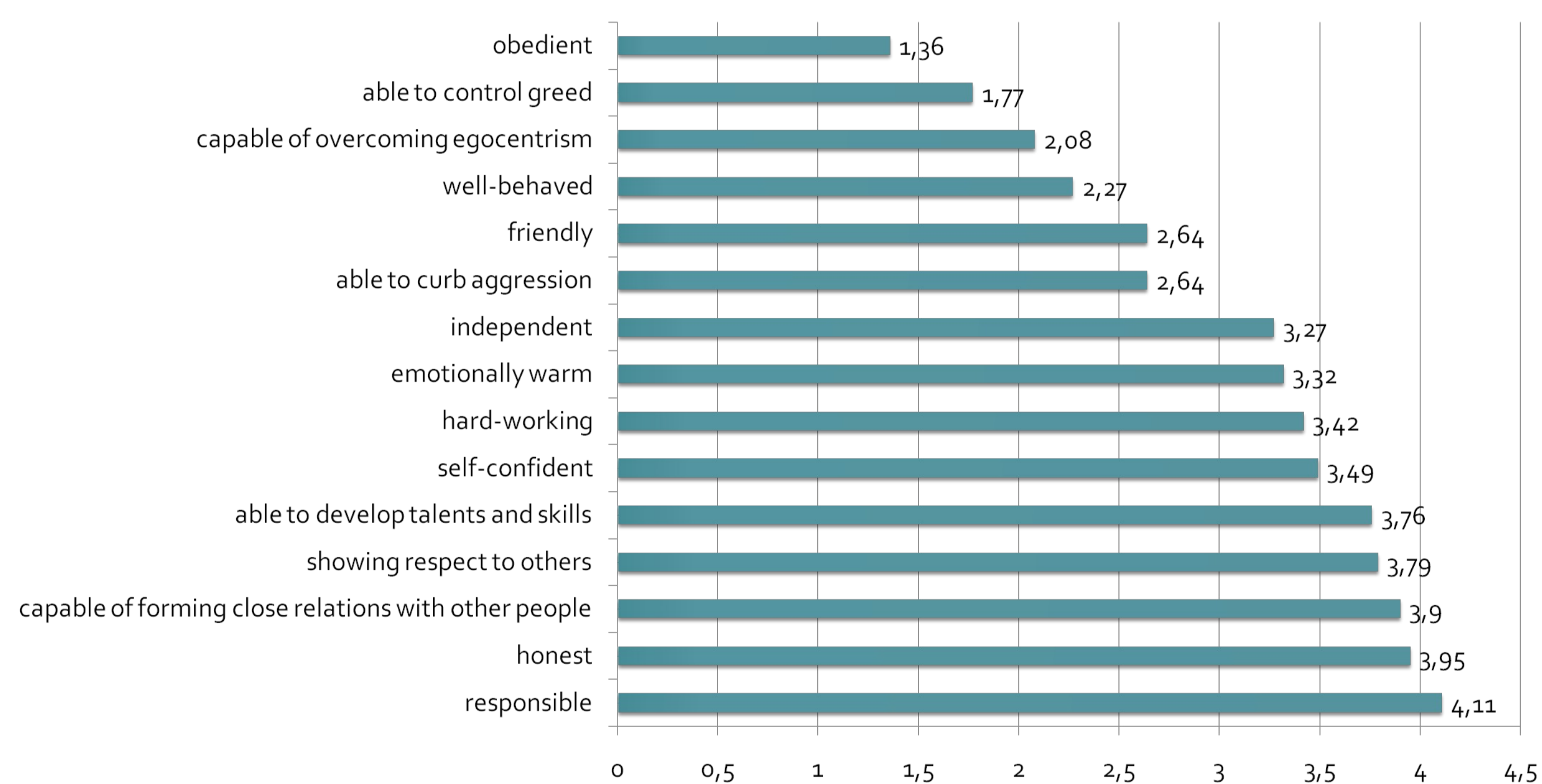
- the physical and social settings in which a child lives
 - the customs of child care and child rearing
 - the psychology of the caregiver (beliefs regarding needs of children and goals for rearing and long-term socialization goals).
- It provides the framework for the development of the "Me and my child" questionnaire, which aims to identify "the developmental niche" in Poland today.

METHOD

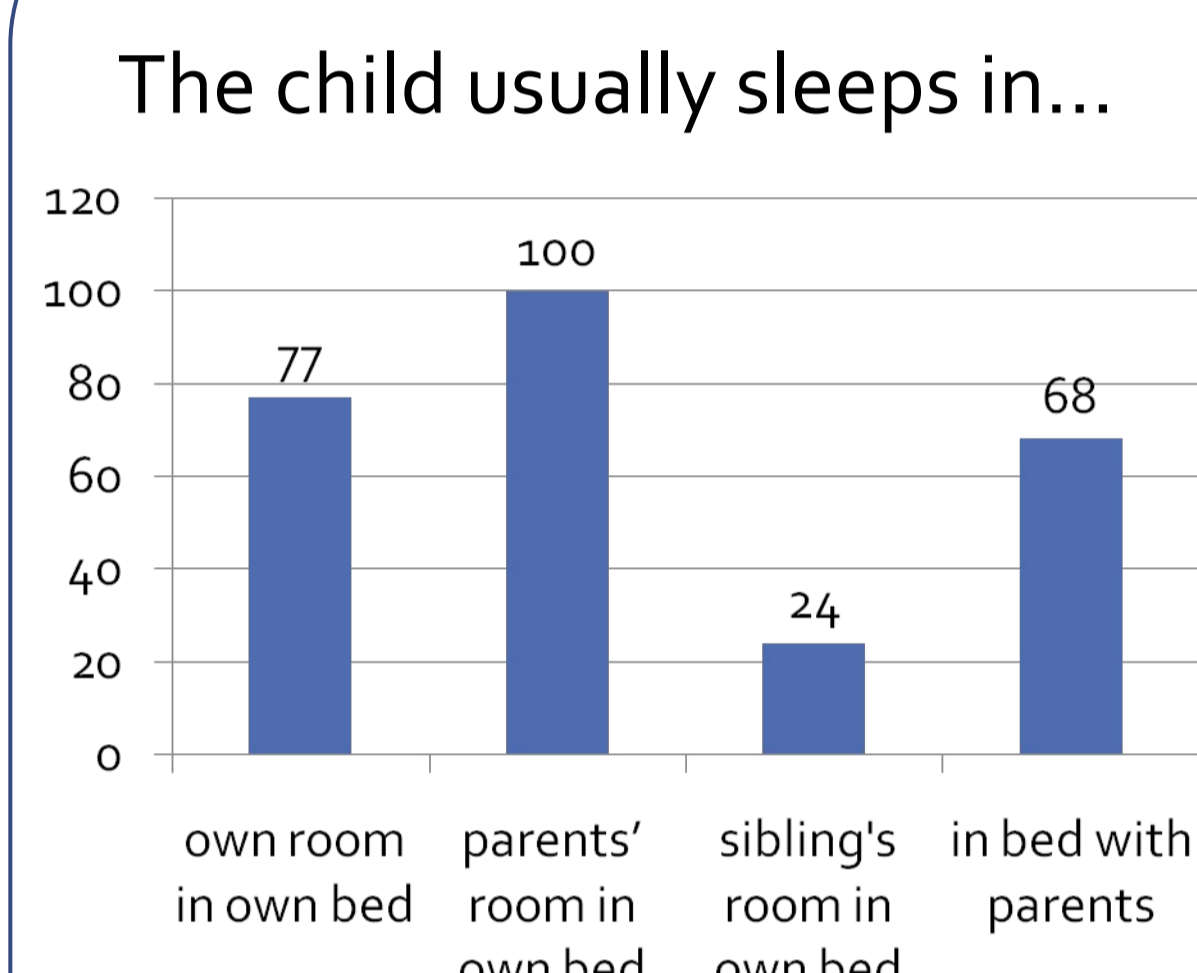
275 parents filled out the questionnaire when their children were 16 months old ($M = 72.2$, $SD = 3.1$; 127 girls, 148 boys). The data was collected as part of the ongoing longitudinal project "The birth and development of mentalizing ability". The "Me and my child" questionnaire contains 60 questions related to a child's social settings, care-giving practices and the parent's beliefs about the child and development.

RESULTS

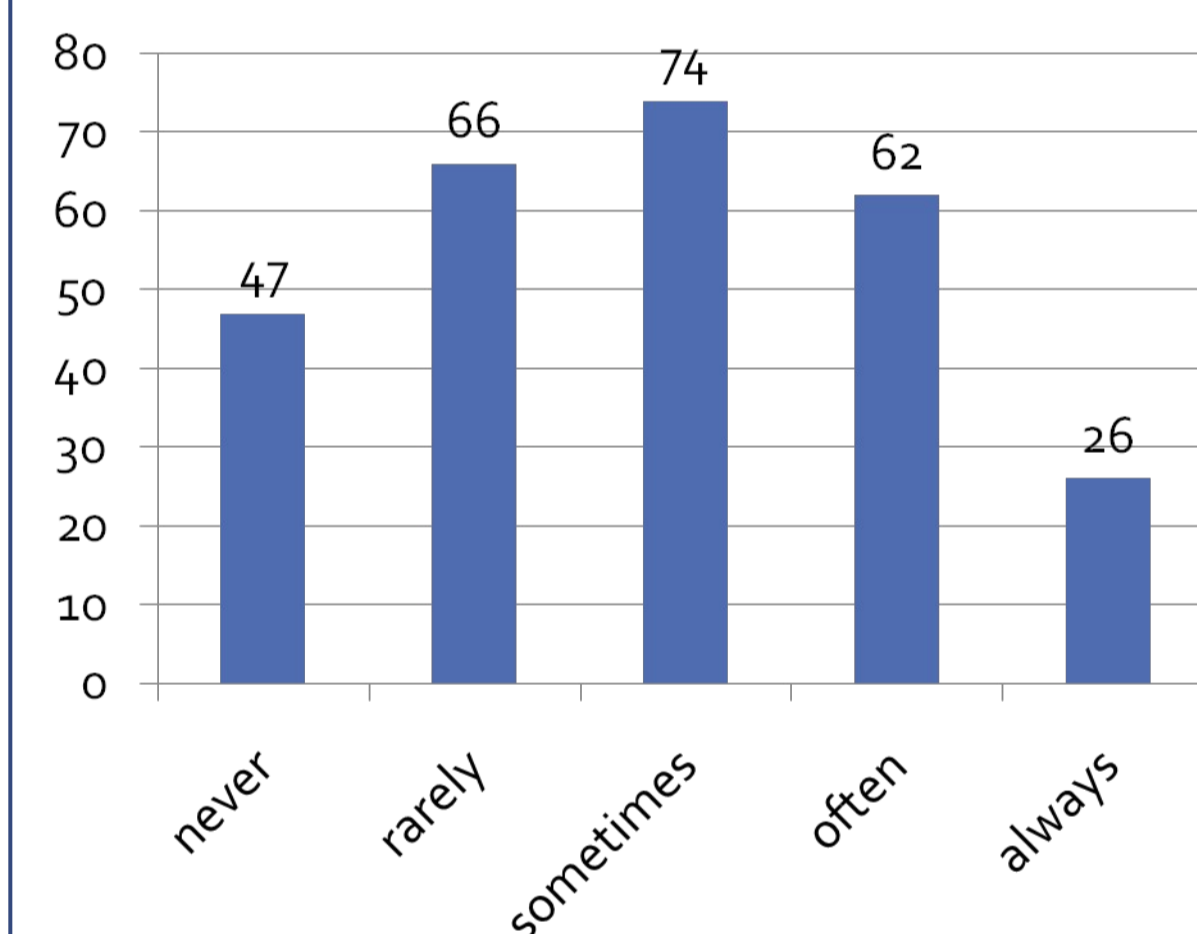
Socialization goals: "... choose the most important characteristics you want your child to have when it grows up"



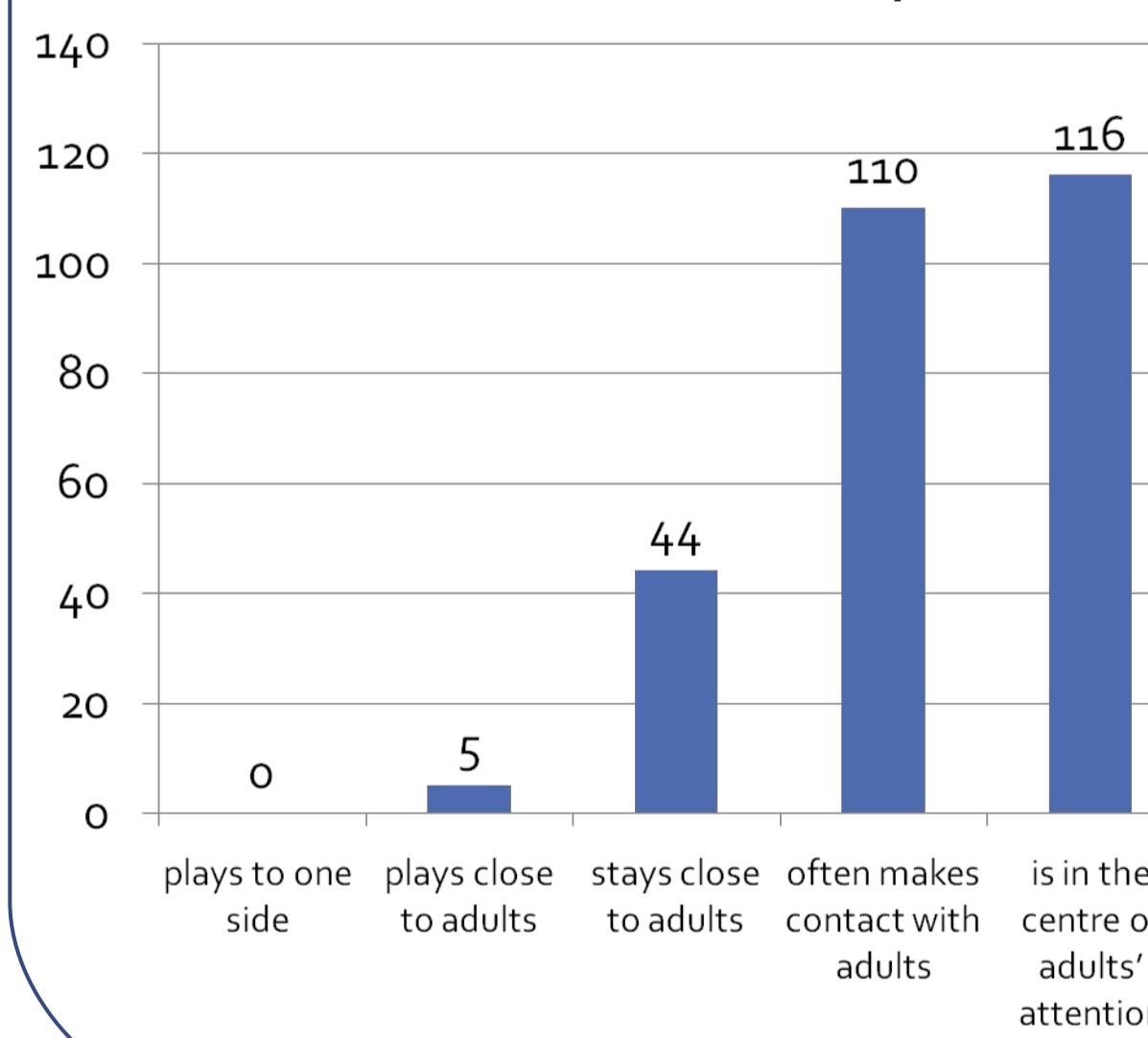
Care-giving Practices



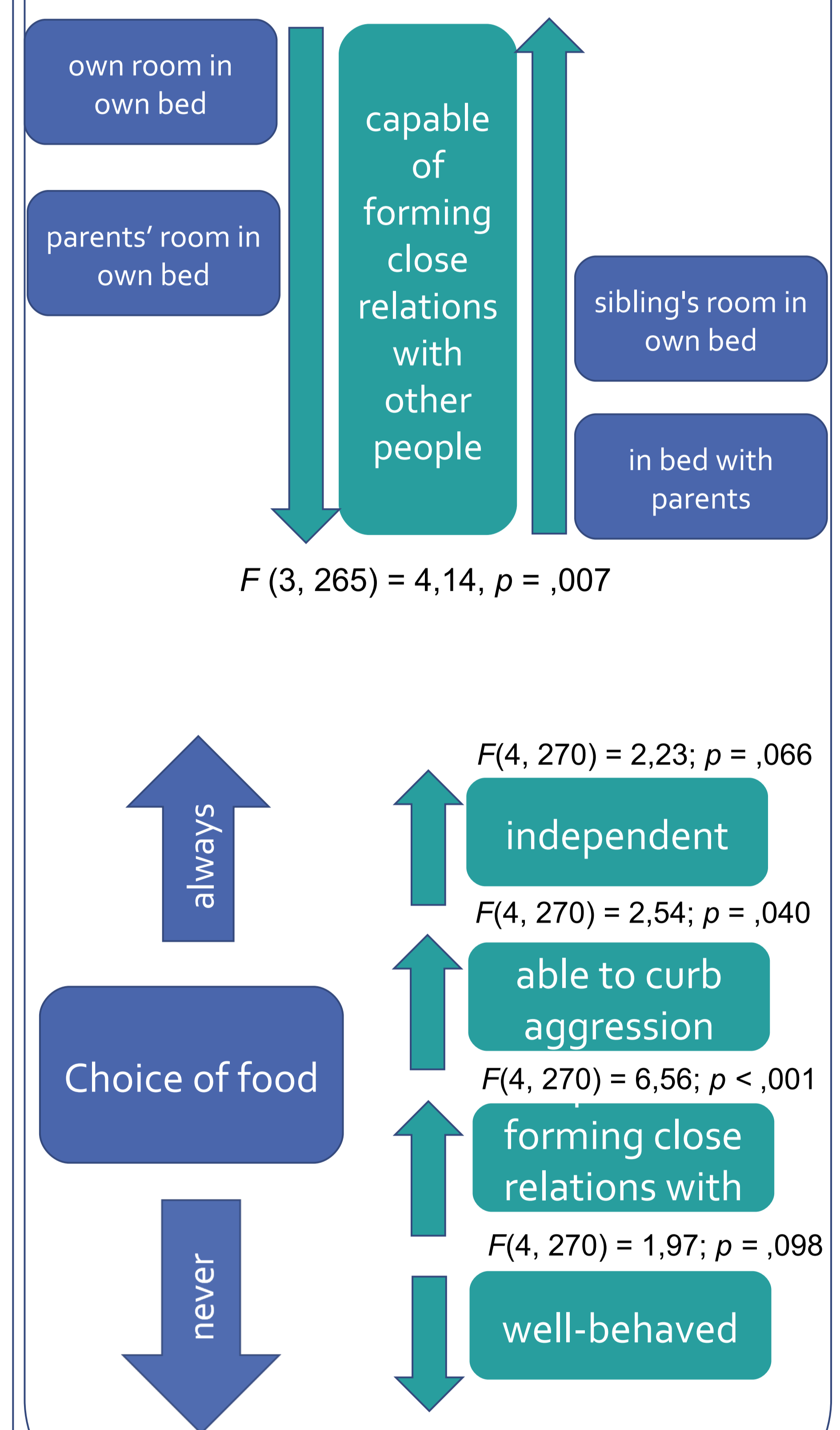
How often do you give the child a choice in terms of food?



What happens to the child when other adults visit you?



Relations between socialization goals and care-giving practices



DISCUSSION

The "Me and my child" questionnaire was able to collect data related to care-giving practices and parents' developmental ethnotheories in Poland. It turns out that the social goals of Polish parents combine values characteristic of Western cultures (self-maximization) and Eastern cultures (decency). The practices of Polish parents are coherent with the Western ideal of the child's centrality (Lancy, 2008). They are extremely different from e.g. Mayans (Gaskins, 1999) – no child plays to one side, but this practice is not systematically related to measured beliefs. There are relations between care-giving practices and parents' values: (1) parents who sleep together with their children value, as a socialization goal for their child, the capability of forming close relations with other people, (2) parents who give their children the opportunity to choose food value the independence of their child more and it is less important for them for the child to be well-behaved. In the next stage of the ongoing project the characteristic of "the developmental niche" of Poles will be related to other variables measured in the longitudinal project "The birth and development of mentalizing ability".

REFERENCES

Gaskins, S. (1999). Children's daily lives in a Mayan village: A case study of culturally constructed roles and activities. In A. Goncu (Eds.), *Children's engagement in the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Harwood, R., Schoelmerich, A., Schulze, P., Gonzalez, Z. (1999). Cultural Differences in Maternal Beliefs and Behaviors: A Study of Middle-Class Anglo and Puerto Rican Mother-Infant Pairs in Four Everyday Situations. *Child Development*, 70, 1005-1016. Lancy, D.F., (2008). *The Anthropology of Childhood. Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Rogoff, B. (2003). *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Saraswathi, T. S., Ganapathy, H. (2002). Indian parents' ethnotheories as reflections of the Hindu scheme of child and human development. In H. Keller, Y. H. Poortinga, & A. Scholmerich (Eds.), *Between culture and biology: Perspectives on ontogenetic development*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Super C. M., & Harkness S. (1986). The developmental niche: A conceptualization at the interface of child and culture. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 9, 545-569.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS This research was supported by a grant from the Polish National Science Centre (DEC-2011/01/B/HS6/00453) and Early Career Scholar Travel Grant funded by the Jacobs Foundation, Zurich.