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A sizable portion of the current research on the socio-emotional development of children and adolescents focuses on negative outcomes of aversive circumstances. However, Lerner (2002) has highlighted the need to explore positive youth development. As such, this special issue aims to explore research on promoting positive socio-emotional development from underrepresented contexts. In doing so, we've invited articles on development in adverse circumstances using samples from Latin America, in addition to reports of intervention programs that have shown success and have the potential to be replicated in other settings. Creative programs to address these issues have been implemented at the local, regional and national levels, yet rarely are the results of these interventions disseminated to academic audiences in the U.S.

Keywords: Socio-emotional development, children/childhood, adolescents/adolescence, adverse circumstances

The vast majority of current theory and knowledge related to socio-emotional development is derived from research conducted in the North America and Europe. In recent years, developmental scholars have increasingly focused on understanding socio-emotional development of children and adolescents in other parts of the world. For example, in 2002, the Study Group on Adolescence in the 21st Century (sponsored by the Society for Research on Adolescence) published an edited volume on The world's youth: Adolescence in eight regions of the globe (Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002).

In particular, we have included articles that move beyond applying concepts from theories derived in North America and Europe to evaluating them critically and proposing alternatives or expansions. This work spread over three issues includes critical evaluations of existing models in a novel context, use of mixed method and qualitative studies to generate new theories of adolescent development, and

rigorous cross-cultural tests of widely used developmental models. In that sense, another aim of this special issue would be to gather recent studies in this area that were conducted in Latin America; not only to describe the most current state of the art of this topic in the context, but also to critically analyze the conclusions reached by the researchers based on the characteristics from different contexts.

The goal of this special issue of the Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies is to build on this foundation of descriptive work by presenting a new generation of studies that provide a Latin American perspective on socio-emotional development. Ultimately, we hope that the articles contained herein will inform discussions of issues relating to socio-emotional development among children and adolescents, as well as stimulate further research examining basic psychological processes in the context of Latin America.

Relative Risk in Context: Exposure to Family and Neighborhood Violence within Schools

That exposure to violence in the daily environment is linked to negative developmental outcomes is well established in the extant literature, yet understanding of the mechanisms by which this occurs is in need of expansion. These outcomes, such as victimization, are likely related to social learning (see Hong & Espelage, 2012 for a review) and influences on social information processing (Dodge, 2006; Dodge, Bates, & Petit, 1990) which may lead to endorsement of aggression (Guerra, Huesmann, & Spindler, 2003) and social-cognitive strategies biased towards aggressive responses (Brendgen, Bowen, Rondeau & Vitaro, 1999). However, a comprehensive understanding of these mechanisms also requires attention to contextual influences that may profoundly shape these individual-level processes.

In response to a dearth of research exploring the effects of exposure to violence across different levels of context, particularly in low and middle-income countries, Molano, Torrente, and Jones (this issue) take an ecological perspective to the analysis of the relations between exposure to violence and individuals' experiences of victimization and attitudes supporting aggression by assessing the influence of exposure to violence in both the family context, as a proximal context, and in the neighborhood context, as a more distal context. Further, Molano et al. (this issue) provide a novel contribution by examining these effects in terms of individuals' exposure to violence relative to the school mean level of exposure and schools' mean level of exposure relative to the town mean level of exposure via an adaptive centering approach. Framing these associations relative to the school and town contexts allows the authors to situate these associations within a duck-pond framework, wherein the comparison of individuals to peers within a school and the comparison of schools within a town may have unique effects on childrens' behavior and cognition, above and beyond raw levels of exposure to violence (see Crosnoe, 2009).

In a sample of 5th and 9th grade Colombian students drawn from a large-scale representative assessment (Pruebas Saber, 2005), Molano et al. (this issue) assessed the associations among individuals' levels of exposure to violence in the family and neighborhood relative the school mean level of exposure, as well as exposure to violence in the family and neighborhood averaged across the school relative to the town mean level of exposure, and individuals' levels of victimization and attitudes towards aggression. Results support that higher exposure to violence in either the family or neighborhood relative to peers at school is associated with increased experiences of victimization, as was higher levels of exposure to violence in either the family or neighborhood relative to the town. The latter effect accounted for variability in levels of victimization above and beyond the former, emphasizing the importance of assessing relative exposure to violence at different ecological levels. Consistent with the duck-pond effect, analyses also revealed that the relationship between individuals' relative levels of exposure to family violence and victimization is weaker in schools with higher relative levels of exposure to family violence. Similarly, higher relative levels of exposure to violence in either the family or neighborhood positively predicted attitudes supporting the use of aggression, and the relationship between individuals' relative levels of exposure to family violence and attitudes supporting aggression is weaker in schools with higher relative levels of exposure to family violence.

The novel approach of Molano et al. (this issue) provides further evidence that, consistent with the ecological perspective, multiple levels of interconnected contextual systems influence individual-level outcomes, and goes beyond this to suggest that contextual influences should be taken into consideration with respect to (a) the unique effects of contextual influences on individual level outcomes, (b) the additive and multiplicative effects of contextual influences, (c) the relative position of individuals within a specific context, and (d) the relative position of specific contexts as nested within broader ecological contexts.

Self-Concept, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy: The Role of Self-Beliefs in the Coping Process of Socially Vulnerable Adolescents

The development of identity and a sense of self are critical developmental tasks during adolescence (e.g., Erikson, 1968) that lead to the development of self-beliefs which may either help or hinder coping with adversity. Self-beliefs consist of a set of interrelated but distinct views of the self (Loos, 2003). The component of self-concept can be conceptualized as a cognitive schema or structure integrating various relevant aspects of identity, including attitudes, values, abilities, and habits (Cardenal & Fierro, 2003). Self-esteem consists of evaluations of the self-concept. It is important to note that the magnitude of impact of these evaluations varies across domains, such that evaluations of one aspect of the self-concept may be given more weight than others, depending on was it considered salient and important to the individual (Harter, 2003; Manning, 2007). Self-beliefs also encompass self-efficacy, which concerns individuals' appraisals of their ability to attain a desired outcome and may also vary by domain (Bandura, 2006).

Because such self-beliefs can have a significant bearing on developmental outcomes, examining the self-beliefs of those exposed to adverse conditions (e.g., family violence or neglect) may shed light on how these individuals cope with adversity, thereby promoting or undermining positive development. Rodriguez and Loos (this issue) approached this proposition through both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the relationship between self-beliefs and the use of coping strategies among male adolescents who were housed in a Non-Governmental Organization shelter and who had previously experienced some form of adversity, such as physical or sexual abuse, death or abandonment of parents, substance abuse, or homelessness, and were therefore considered "socially vulnerable".

Overall, the adolescents reported a positive self-concept, average self-esteem, and high self-efficacy. However, these global results are qualified by differences across domains. Most adolescents reported happiness, life satisfaction, physical appearance, behavior, and academic and intellectual as positive aspects of their self-concept, but anxiety was also a commonly reported component of self-concept. Interestingly, as a group, the adolescents generally reported high self-efficacy in social and academic domains, but nearly half reported low self-efficacy in behavioral regulation. The authors propose that a self-concept with includes happiness and life-satisfaction may indicate the resiliency of the adolescents, yet the low self-efficacy in behavioral regulation may reflect the development of negative perceptions about their behaviors in response to these situations. Because most of the adverse conditions the adolescents had experienced were beyond their own control (e.g., parental abandonment), there was likely little opportunity to develop self-efficacy in behavioral regulation and perhaps many opportunities to thwart such development.

Coping strategies were distinguished as either problem-focused, which refers to coping with the situation, (i.e., taking direct action, taking aggressive action, searching for social support, and inaction), or emotion-focused, which refers to coping with the emotions generated by the situation (i.e., avoidance or distraction, searching for emotional support, and positive reinterpretation of reality), but some of the adolescents reported using the same strategies to cope with both the situation and the feelings associated with it. The authors note that sometimes the situation and emotions are indivisible.

Not only were the results of these analyses characterized at the group level, but special effort was made to develop specific case studies of adolescents who were either higher or lower scorers among the group or exhibited interesting patterns of responses, such as contradictions. The case study presented in the current article is of a 17-year-old adolescent boy who had been sheltered for approximately ten years, and this approach provides more thorough and ecologically valid illustration of how specific individuals who have experienced adversity apply coping strategies to real-life situations and the role of self-beliefs in influencing these coping mechanisms. For Victor, self-beliefs were highly related to the academic domain and he identified current adverse situations as primarily within this domain (e.g., conflict with colleagues at school), thus exemplifying the relationship between the contingencies of self-belief and the perception of adverse conditions that may require the use of coping strategies. Further, Victor illustrates an interesting paradox between preferred strategies and those actually enacted; although Victor reported that his first choice of strategy was direct action, but he applied the inaction strategy instead.

Overall, this article provides an in-depth account of the interrelations of self-beliefs and coping strategies in a population of socially vulnerable adolescents for whom these dynamics may be particularly relevant and influential. The authors' integration of both quantitative and qualitative analyses provides a more comprehensive and fine-grained representation of this relationship and reveals important individual-specific patterns of self-belief contingencies and contradictions that may exist within individuals own self-beliefs and use of coping strategies, beyond what group-level analyses can provide.

Prácticas Socioemocionales de Profesores para Ayudar a sus Estudiantes a Elaborar el Terremoto de Chile de 2010: Aplicación de un Material de Trabajo en Educación Primaria

The earthquake and the Tsunami that took place in Chile in February of 2010 had a profound impact in the lives of Chilean children and their families. The mental and emotional consequences that children suffered which were associated to this natural disaster are the central topic of the article presented by Milicic, Cardenas and Maturana. Based on the notion that the emotional bond that a teacher establishes with a student has the potential to benefit the socio-emotional development of children (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), the paper presents a study that aimed to illustrate the socio-emotional practices that were carried out by teachers during a structured activity intended to elaborate the earthquake experience.

In this multiple case study, the socio-emotional practices of 13 teachers are presented trough the analysis of information gathered in class observation sessions. In order to analyze the data an observation scheme was developed. In this scheme the structure and dynamics of the

socio-emotional practices used by the teachers to approach the topic of the earthquake were described. The categories analyzed in this scheme included communication skills, emotional regulation, coping strategies, and socio-emotional learning.

In general, results showed that when teachers have good teaching material, even if they had not been trained in socio-emotional support, they are able to help the students elaborate the experience related to the earthquake. More specifically two patterns of teachers' socio-emotional practices were identified: sensitivity to the emotional needs of students and ambivalence. The first pattern was characterized by opportunities to talk about the event, feelings of empathy, acceptance and self-efficacy. For the ambivalence pattern, it was observed that the relationship established by the teachers and the students was characterized by the expression of the teacher's anxiety and by episodes in which instead of calming the students the teacher could frighten them.

The findings are discussed in the context of the geographical and economic characteristics of the region. As the authors mentioned, both Central and South America do not have enough economic and professional resources aimed to help individuals face the emotional consequences that natural disasters entail. In that sense, the findings presented highlight the importance of understanding teachers' socio-emotional practices. Likewise, it discusses the need to help professional staff such as teachers to prepare for managing such situations, which are fairly common in the regions they live.

Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents from Different Contexts in South of Brazil

Suicide in adolescence is endemic across human societies (WHO, 2010), and therefore constitutes a serious world-wide health problem and is deserving of attention from researchers.

Identification of predictors of suicidal ideation and attempts, which both predict actual suicide, is a priority. Several contributing factors have already been identified, including the following: dysfunctional familial relationships (Bostik & Everall, 2006), exposure to trauma (e.g., physical or sexual violence, negligence; Dieserud, Gerhardsen, Weghe, & Corbett, 2010; Espinoza-Gomez et al., 2010), violence both within (Dieserud et al., 2010; Espinoza-Gomez et al., 2010) and outside the family context (e.g., McDonald and Richmond, 2008), the use of drugs and alcohol (Rodrigues et al., 2006; WHO, 2000), and low self-esteem (Kokkevi, Rotsika, Arapaki, & Richardson, 2010). However, it is also crucial that researchers consider how the predictors may vary according to context. To this end, Braga and Dalbosco (this issue) investigated factors which contributed to suicidal ideation and attempted suicide in adolescents from three diverse contexts in Brazil: adolescents who lived with their families, adolescent offenders who were deprived of freedom, and adolescents living in out-of-home care facilities.

Across the total sample, it was found that 21.9% had thought about suicide, and of these ideators, 44.4% have made an attempt, and the rate of attempts and ideation was greater for girls than for boys. Participants who were sheltered in out-of-home care groups reported higher rates of both suicidal ideation and suicide attempts, and lower age at first attempts, whereas the adolescent offenders reported higher rates of suicide attempts only. Both adolescents in shelters and adolescent offenders reported higher levels of intra- and extrafamilial violence, stressful events, and drug use, with the sheltered adolescents reporting the highest levels of drug use and the lowest levels of school satisfaction. Using stepwise regression, intra- and extra-familial violence, stressful events, and school satisfaction were all identified as predictors of

suicidal ideation, whereas extrafamilial (but not intrafamilial) violence, stressful events, and drug use were implicated in suicide attempts.

Taken together, these findings support variation in predictors of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts as a function of living context among adolescents. Further, although suicidal ideation and attempts are highly associated, this study suggests that the predictors have both overlapping (e.g., extrafamilial violence) and distinct (drug use only for attempts) predictors. Gender differences also warrant attention, and future research is needed to identify the factors that are associated with the increased frequency of suicidal ideation and attempts in girls (e.g., depression), and therefore may place them at high risk for completing suicide. The role of context, consideration of specific and perhaps differential predictors, and gender may be highly relevant in clinical and therapeutic contexts, allowing more targeted assessment of risk and potential avenues of treatment in the prevention of completed suicides.

Depressive Symptoms, Self-Beliefs and Academic Performance among Brazilian Children and Adolescents

Depression is one of the most prevalent and widespread psychological disorders (e.g., Hollen, Thase, & Markowitz, 2005) which effects people of all ages and stages of development. Although the consequences of depression for children and adolescence have been well-established, Bauer & Loss-Sant'Ana (this issue) extend this understanding by integrating assessments of both affectivity, specifically self-beliefs (e.g., self-esteem), and cognition, as indexed by academic competence, which are both known to be affected by depressive symptomology (e.g., Grunspun, 1999). Combining these two domains allows the authors to tap into consequences that are highly

relevant for children and adolescents as they attempt to navigate the sometimes challenging task of identity development, which may be highly reliant on self-beliefs, while maintaining performance in the school setting, as society expects.

The interdependency among depression symptomology, self-beliefs, and academic performance was examined in a subsample of students who displayed clinical levels of depressive symptoms as determined by prescreening. Interestingly, although girls exhibited higher levels of depressive symptoms than boys (particularly in anhedonia and negative mood) in the original sample, boys displayed higher levels of depressive symptoms than girls (particularly in interpersonal problems and negative self-esteem) in the clinical subsample, although girls did express higher levels of anhedonia.

As expected, the three components of self-beliefs (i.e., self-esteem, self-concept, and control beliefs) were intercorrelated, but showed differential patterns with specific dimensions of control beliefs (e.g., means-end beliefs versus agency beliefs). Also as expected, higher levels of depressive symptoms were related to lower academic performance, lower levels of control beliefs, and more negative self-esteem and self-concept. Lower levels on control beliefs were also associated with poorer academic performance. Taken together, these findings support the interrelationss among depression, academic performance, and self-beliefs among students who exhibit clinical levels of depressive symptomology.

As noted by the authors, the interconnected nature of depression, self-beliefs, and academic performance clearly have important implications for the education system, suggesting that promoting academic competence, particularly

among students with depressive symptoms, is likely to require attention to affective factors as well as addressing academic performance. That is, it is necessary not only to acknowledge the role of the depressive symptoms in influencing academic performance, but also the role of a range of dimensions of self-beliefs, spanning self-esteem, self-concept, and control beliefs, which are likely to have reciprocal relations with both depression and academic performance. Further, it is necessary to put this understanding into action creating interventions and support systems for depressed students that emphasizes reducing depressive symptoms, developing a sense of control over the environment and self, and promoting positive self-concept and self-esteem, in addition to targeting academic performance more directly.

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