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Aggression and Violence in Youth

Introduction

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Aggressive behavior may be a universal characteristic of the human species. The expression of negative emotions, such as anger and frustration, in a defiant and explosive manner has been observed in infancy. Aggression is associated with a variety of social, behavioral and psychological problems (e.g., poor school performance, peer rejection) in childhood and adolescence and is predictive of later serious maladaptive outcomes (e.g., delinquency). Scientific evidence has indicated that aggressive behavior is likely determined by personal and situational factors, stable during development, and highly resistant to intervention.

Aggressive behavior is a major concern in most contemporary societies because it may inflict damage and harm on others and constitute a serious threat to the well-being of the group and the community. Developmental researchers have long been interested in the nature and developmental processes of aggression and violence in youth. Different theories and models have been proposed and numerous findings have been reported in this area. Nevertheless, many issues remain to be investigated. For example, if aggressive and antisocial behaviors are linked to early dispositional characteristics, such as difficult temperament and resistance to control, what are the mediating and moderating factors that serve to induce or modify the developmental pathways? And under what conditions may the early individual tendencies be weakened, regulated, or expressed in non-detrimental manners? What roles do social-ecological constraints and resources at the societal or policy level, such as poverty, massive exposure to war and political violence, as well as opportunities for education, play in the development of aggressive and violent behaviors? Finally, it is believed that aggression may be defined by "social judgement". If so, how are specific cultural norms and values, such as implicit theories about individual rights and responsibilities, interpersonal relationships and collective well-being in different societies, reflected in socialization practices and how do they eventually affect the development of aggression?

To understand the phenomenon of childhood and adolescent aggression in a more sophisticated way and to develop more effective prevention and intervention programs, it seems necessary to take an integrative approach, with consideration of multiple factors at biological, behavioral, developmental, ecological, and socio-cultural levels. To achieve this goal, a group of international scholars and investigators were invited to contribute to this special

section. The articles and commentaries in the section address a number of theoretical and empirical issues involving developmental origins, processes and outcomes, proximal and distal influences on aggressive and violent behaviors, and prevention. We hope that the articles and commentaries will inspire great interest in further discussion on this topic.

Aggression and Violence by Juveniles and Adolescents: From Developmental to Integrative Perspectives

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The task of explaining juvenile and adolescent aggression, criminality and violence is clearly a complex one, for antisocial behavior comprises a variety of heterogeneous behavior patterns. The micro-genesis and the ontogenesis of adolescent antisocial behavior are determined by a whole range of factors, including individual biographical experiences, personal resources, and biological predispositions, as well as the existing behavioral options and situational conditions, and the broader social context of individual opportunities for action and development. These factors interact in such a variety of ways that delinquency can only feasibly be explained by an integrative bio-psycho-social approach. Although there is now also a rich body of literature covering integrative approaches (e.g., Coie & Dodge, 1998; Loeber & Farrington, 1998), no consensus has yet been

reached on a general developmental theory of antisocial behavior in youth and adolescence. Most developmental theories of aggressive and antisocial behavior now assume a series of successive stages. The stages start with an inadequate social response to early individual or social risk factors, (hyperactivity being a typical example here), interacting cumulatively with further developmental difficulties (school problems, for instance), and eventually culminating in delinquency (e.g., Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998; Patterson, DeBaryshe & Ramsey, 1989).

Irrespective of the differences between the various explanatory approaches, however, there seems to be a general consensus that antisocial juvenile behavior is in the majority of cases the expression of a ubiquitous, but temporary ("episodic"), developmental stage (Moffitt, 1993). However, not only is the variation in the incidence of antisocial behavior in youth and adolescence substantial, its distribution is evidently bimodal. Less than ten percent of delinquent adolescents are responsible for the overwhelming majority of serious criminal and violent offenses (Rutter, Giller & Hagell, 1998). Their deviance can be reliably predicted at an early age by a range of indicators, including physiological ones (Coie & Dodge, 1998). For this subgroup, references to the episodic character of criminality and violence are clearly inappropriate.

Accordingly, Moffitt (1993) proposed that explanations of "adolescence-limited" antisocial behavior are to focus on the *discontinuity* of delinquent behavior, whereas "persistent" antisocial tendencies are to be explained primarily in terms of their *continuity*. However, this dual typology confounds two dimensions, in that it fails to distinguish systematically between the onset of antisocial behavior ("early vs. late starters") and the duration of this behavior ("desisters vs. persisters"; see Greve, 2001). Relatively little is known about the prevalence rates of those who engage in antisocial behavior at an early age but have already desisted from it by adolescence. Equally, little is known concerning those who do not embark on a criminal career until early adulthood, but then remain delinquent ("successful criminals" – a subject worthy of further study). Moreover, taxonomies tend to conceal the variability possible in developmental trajectories, in particular, differences between several types of chronic antisocial behavior (Huizinga, 1995).

Furthermore, typologies of antisocial development will always be relative to the cases observed. For example, some studies indicate that a subgroup of delinquent juveniles continue to engage in delinquent and antisocial behavior beyond age 30, though most of these offenses are not recorded in the official statistics (e.g., Nagin, Farrington & Moffitt, 1995). Moreover, qualitative shifts in the spectrum of antisocial behavior – toward domestic violence or white-collar crime, for example – as well as shifts in the visibility of internalizing disorders are often not taken into account. Finally, typologies entail the risk that features shared by different trajectories may be underestimated or overlooked. Even if their prototypical forms differ, trajectories may well be shaped by the same developmental dynamics. In this case, their differing forms will simply reflect the interaction with various individual or context parameters.

Additionally, both the prevalence and the forms of

juvenile delinquency sometimes change dramatically. The surge in juvenile delinquency in the early 1990s is a prime example of this (e.g., Pfeiffer, 1998). These kinds of surges reveal the limitations of purely developmental psychological approaches, as they can scarcely be explained by reference to the typically episodic character or the specific developmental conditions of juvenile delinquency. In short, these kinds of "booms" emphasize the need for *interactive* explanatory approaches.

We can thus conclude that developmental psychological approaches to the explanation of juvenile violence and aggression need to broaden their explanatory perspective in numerous respects. A number of concrete tasks can be identified here – in both the empirical (including methodological) and the theoretical domain.

Empirical Research Tasks

1. *Specific questions.* First, light still remains to be shed on a number of specific questions. The striking difference in the prevalence of delinquency among boys and girls (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter & Silva, 2001) is a prime example here. The explanations that have thus far been provided for this disparity are many and varied, spanning psychological, biological, physiological, and sociological approaches. However, an integrative theory of this gender gap is still lacking.
2. *Longitudinal studies.* More important than clarifying particular questions is integrating these questions into broad explanatory approaches. The only empirical path to be taken here is that of more extensive prospective longitudinal studies, preferably with various cohorts. Not only should these studies be conducted over an extended time period (continuing well beyond age 30, for example), they should begin as early as possible (preferably before the participants are born) and take the social environment (parents, siblings, teachers, friends, etc.) into account. This is the only way to identify risk and protective factors without



A juvenile delinquent peers out the window in a youth prison in Hameln, Germany.



miscalculating the respective base rates. As Tremblay (2000) has already pointed out, it is high time to start addressing this task.

3. *Quasi-experimental studies.* At the same time, there are few studies focusing either on specific samples (e.g., juvenile sex offenders, female violent offenders) and/or on specific interventions (e.g., social training programs, youth detention centers). Since true experimental designs are only practical in exceptional cases in this field, more frequent use must be made of quasi-experimental approaches. In Europe, for example, relatively few longitudinal studies have been conducted into the consequences of incarceration for adolescent offenders (Greve, 2001). Various kinds of systematic variance could be examined within this group; for example, the effect of social experiments (e.g., amnesties, changes in legislation, etc.).
4. *Theory-driven research.* Theory-driven research should not be restricted to testing narrow hypotheses. The controversial discussion on the role that self-esteem plays in explaining delinquency, especially violence, is an illuminating example here. On the one hand, many empirical findings indicate that low self-esteem is a risk factor for such behavior (cf. Kaplan, 1980). On the other hand, there is much evidence to suggest that high self-esteem is a risk factor for violent behavior (Baumeister, Smart & Boden, 1996). Kernis (e.g., Kernis et al., 1993) has argued that it is not the level, but the *stability* of self-esteem that is decisive. It seems probable, however, that the *conditions* determining the stability and quality of self-esteem are, in fact, the key to explaining its relevance for delinquency (Greve & Enzmann, in press).

Theoretical Tasks

1. *Combining ontogenetic and microgenetic approaches.* Perhaps the most important task for developmental psychological research is to broaden its explanatory perspective. It is not enough to regard individual dispositions as the main phenomenon to be explained ("chronic offenders," "antisocial personality disorder") and to leave the explanation of specific aggressive acts to clinical or social psychology. Rather, the motivational, volitional and cognitive conditions of aggressive and violent behavior (e.g., Krahé, 2001) constitute the main explanandum of an ontogenetic explanation, and thus can help to structure the search for ontogenetic processes.
2. *Toward an integrative perspective.* As a consequence, the challenge for research in the 21st century will be to develop integrative approaches that succeed in combining the biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives, both at the empirical and the conceptual level. It is obviously fruitless to ask whether it is the individual (e.g., genetically or ontogenetically determined vulnerability) or the environment (e.g., social discrimination, maladaptive interactions, or opportunity structures) that has a larger role to play in explaining juvenile antisocial behavior. Here, as always, causal explanations have to be seen relative to the underlying conditions. For instance, genetically determined weaknesses can obviously help to explain inter-individual variance in aggression, but it is only if the environmental conditions "match," and trigger or maintain the antisocial behavior, that individual dispositions actually come into effect. As long as we insist on using alternative or additive models to explain antisocial behavior, we will not be able to answer the really important question of precisely which mechanisms are in operation. Only an interactive perspective will

enable us to formulate constructive research questions investigating the physiological and psychological processes that act as mediators here. The answers to these questions are, in turn, the key to developing effective prevention and intervention programs.

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The Origins of Physical Aggression¹

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Physical Aggression During Adolescence

Most studies of youth violence have focused on 12- to 18-year-old youth. Although a majority of adolescents will commit some delinquent acts, most of these are minor legal infractions. Population-based surveys have systematically shown that a small proportion of adolescents account for the majority of violent acts and arrests. Research on behavior development over the past century has tried to explain why some adolescents and some adults frequently resort to physically aggressive behavior while others do not. Although they are relatively small in number, these chronically violent individuals frighten a large part of the population, and they represent a heavy burden of suffering for their victims, their families and themselves. Adolescents with aggression problems are also much more likely to be unemployed, suffer poor physical health or have mental health problems.

Physical Aggression During Childhood

Rare cases of homicide by young children serve as a reminder that physical aggression does not start with adolescence. In fact, longitudinal studies of large samples of boys and girls followed from school entry to the end of adolescence show clearly that younger children are more often physically aggressive; as they grow older, they generally resort to less and less physically aggressive behavior. As expected, at each age, girls have lower levels of physical aggression than boys (e.g., Tremblay, 2000; Tremblay, Boulerice, Harden, McDuff, Pérusse, Pihl, & Zoccolillo, 1996).

Interestingly, these patterns are completely reversed in the case of indirect aggression, which is defined as behavior aimed at hurting someone without the use of physical aggression. Girls tend to have higher levels of indirect aggression at each age, and the level of indirect aggression increases during the elementary school years for girls and boys (e.g., Björkqvist, Österman & Kaukiainen, 1992; Tremblay et al., 1996). Thus, the process of socialization may involve learning to use indirect means of aggression rather than physical aggression.

Paradoxically, although it is relatively easy to convince people that the use of physical aggression declines with age, there appears to be a strong belief that a substantial number of children commence or substantially increase the frequency of their acts of physical aggression during the school years under the influence of peers and television. Nagin and Tremblay (1999) addressed this issue by attempting to identify the developmental trajectories of teacher-rated physical aggression in a large sample of boys from poorer socio-economic areas in Montreal. Those boys were assessed regularly from kindergarten to high school: 17 percent of the boys appeared never to have been physically aggressive; four percent showed a high frequency of physical aggression from 6 to 15 years of age; 28 percent started with a high level of physical aggression at age six and became less and less physically aggressive with time; while the majority (52 %) had a low level of physical aggression at age six and also

became less and less aggressive with time. In contrast to hypotheses concerning late onset of antisocial behavior, Nagin and Tremblay did not find any group of boys in which there appeared to be an "onset" and maintenance of high levels of physical aggression for a significant number of years after age six (see also Brame, Nagin, & Tremblay, 2001). Similar results were obtained with other large longitudinal samples from Canada, New Zealand and the USA (Broidy, Nagin, Tremblay, Bates, Brame, Dodge, Fergusson, Horwood, Loeber, Laird, Lynam, Moffitt, Pettit & Vitaro, in press).

These results clearly challenge the idea that the frequency of acts of physical aggression increases with age. They also challenge the notion that there is a significant group of children who show chronic physical aggression during late childhood or adolescence after having successfully inhibited physical aggression throughout childhood. If, between kindergarten and high school, children are at their peak level of physical aggression during their kindergarten year, when do they actually start to aggress physically?

Physical Aggression During the Preschool Years

There are surprisingly few longitudinal studies that have tried to chart the development of physical aggression during



Jail Babe. Eighteen-month old Ayman Khadari, crying yesterday in Alexandria, had some good news: Egyptian legal officials will reopen the case against the toddler, sentenced in absentia to six months in jail for causing bodily harm to a neighbour's 30-month-old daughter. The court was stunned when Ayman's father showed them recently he was a baby. The Globe and Mail International News, Wednesday, February 10, 1999 ©AFP PHOTO/ Ramzi HAIDAR



the preschool years. This lack of attention to physical aggression during the early years seems to be the result of a long-held belief that physical aggression emerges during late childhood and early adolescence as a result of bad peer influences, television violence and increased levels of male hormones. This view of antisocial development was very clearly described more than 200 years ago by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762/1979). The first phrase of his book on child development and education, *Émile*, makes the point very clearly: "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man" (p. 37). A few pages later, he is still more explicit and appears to be writing the agenda for 20th century research on the development of antisocial behavior: "There is no original sin in the human heart, the how and why of the entrance of every vice can be traced" (p. 56). Rousseau's strong stance was in clear opposition to Hobbes (1647/1998), who, a century earlier, described infants as selfish machines striving for pleasure and power, and declared: "It is evident therefore that all men (since all men are born as infants) are born unfit for society; and very many (perhaps the majority) remain so throughout their lives, because of mental illness or lack of discipline ... Therefore man is made fit for Society not by nature, but by training" (p. 25).

This debate has far-reaching consequences, not only for child development investigators and educators, but also for political scientists, philosophers and policy makers. Because the underlying debate is clearly grounded in our views of human nature, it is not surprising that investigators are likely to prefer the "origin of aggressive behavior" that best fits their view of human nature, and their political commitment. However, since most political philosophers appear to agree that society must be built on the natural tendencies of man, it is surprising that research on early childhood development of aggression has not been a priority.

Longitudinal studies of small samples of preschool children have found that the most physically aggressive toddlers tend to remain the most aggressive preschoolers. However, mothers' reports of their children's physical aggression indicate that the mean frequency of physical aggression peaks at the end of the second year after birth and then steadily declines (e.g., Tremblay et al., 1996; Tremblay, Japel, Pérusse, McDuff, Boivin, Zoccolillo & Montplaisir, 1999).

So, if the frequency of physical aggression is at its highest at the end of the second year after birth, at what age does physical aggression begin? Within a longitudinal study of a large sample of babies born in the province of Quebec in the mid-1990s, mothers were asked to rate the frequency of physical aggressions at ages 17 and 30 months and, at both times, to indicate at what age the child had started to show such behavior. At age 17 months, close to 90 percent of the mothers reported that their child at least sometimes was physically aggressive toward others (Tremblay et al., 1999). One of the interesting results of that study is the fact that mothers who were reporting that their child at 17 months had started to hit others in the previous months appeared to have forgotten this early onset, since they were reporting that at age 30 months their child had started to hit others after 17 months of age. This memory failure as children grow older, taller and bigger could, in part, explain why parents of

physically aggressive adolescents report that the aggression problems started only a year or two before.

How can the increase and decrease in physically aggressive and disruptive behavior during early childhood be explained? One would expect that physical, cognitive and emotional development play an important role. Over the first 15 months after birth, with increased physical mobility and cognitive competence, children also become more and more able to discover their environment. The frequency of their interactions with peers increases with age, and playing with others increases dramatically from the end of the first year to the end of the second year. This is the period when the rate of physical aggression increases to its maximum. At this age, children are exploring social interactions with their newly acquired walking, talking, running, grasping, pushing, kicking and throwing skills. Most of their interactions are positive, but conflicts become more frequent. The majority of these conflicts are over possession of objects. During these conflicts, children learn that they can hurt and be hurt. Children quickly learn that a physical attack on a peer will be responded to by a physical attack, and that adults will not tolerate these behaviors. Children also learn to wait for the toy to be free, and that asking for toys rather than taking them away from someone will more likely prevent negative interactions.

Learning to wait for something you want and learning to use language to convince others to satisfy your needs may be the most important protective factors against chronic physical aggression. Children's individual characteristics can explain part of the variance in the frequency and stability of

"debate is clearly grounded in our views of human nature"

this behavior, but the quality of children's relations with their environment, and the environment's reaction to this behavior, will very likely be important factors. If children are surrounded by adults and other children who are physically aggressive, they will probably

learn that physical aggression is part of everyday social interactions. On the other hand, if a child lives in an environment that does not tolerate physical aggression, and rewards pro-social behavior, it is likely that the child will acquire the habit of using means other than physical aggression to obtain what he or she wants or for expressing frustration.

Conclusion

St. Augustine of Thagaste may have written the most sensible page on the development of aggression close to 1600 years ago. In his *Confessions* he describes the physical aggressions of infants and concludes: "Thus it is not the infant's will that is harmless, but the weakness of infant limbs... These things are easily put up with; not because they are of little or no account, but because they will disappear with increase in age. This you can prove from the fact that the same things cannot be borne with patience when detected in an older person" (St. Augustine, 397/1960, pp. 49-50).

In his attempt to blame the arts, sciences, and civilization in general for inequalities among men, Rousseau invented a human child, born innocent, who had to be kept far away from society until early adolescence. Living alone with nature was the best way for a child to follow nature and avoid becoming corrupted by society. Children had to be kept away from peers, from books and the theatre. Whatever led Rousseau to this romantic perception of child development

appears to be an extremely common experience. Many present day adults, including specialists in child development, appear to be convinced that social behavior is natural (“God-given” or “genetic”) and antisocial behavior is learned. For those who believe that Rousseau is the cause of this attitude toward child development, consider the fact that 200 years before the publication of *Émile*, Erasmus (1529/1985) in his “Declamation on the subject of early liberal education for children” criticized those “who maintained out of a false spirit of tenderness and compassion that children should be left alone until early adolescence” (p. 299) and argued that “one cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of those first years for the course that a child will follow throughout his entire life” (p. 309).

Modern research on the development of aggression during childhood has mainly tried to answer the following question: How do children learn to aggress? To understand the development of human aggression and prevent its most negative impacts, I believe we rather need to ask the question: How do children learn not to aggress? And to start looking for answers during early childhood.

1. Modified version of a paper published in Tremblay, R.E. (2000). The origins of youth violence. *Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 1(2), 19–24.

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Developmental Issues and Delinquent Behavior of Brazilian Adolescents

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“violence and crime have been the second leading causes of death of youngsters”

The objective of the present paper is to describe some characteristics of the development of delinquent behaviors of Brazilian adolescents. It aims to review the experience of psychologists working in this field in Brazil and to suggest therapeutic interventions that might be effective.

In Brazil, violence and crime have been the second leading causes of death of youngsters for many decades (Minayo & Souza, 1999). However, media exposure has given high visibility to crime committed by adolescents and, in turn, this has affected the feelings of well being and security of the population. Delinquency, which was a public security issue, has become also a health problem.

In Brazil, the expression “juvenile delinquency” is not used anymore, except in law codes. We use the expression delinquent behaviors, in this paper, to refer to major crimes such as murder, rape, or burglaries which involve aggression or violence against the victims, committed by youngsters who are between 12 and 18 years of age. Loeber and Stouthaner-Loeber (1998) define aggression as an act that causes physical or mental damage to others. Violence is defined as aggressive acts that cause serious damage (such as rape, murder, robberies, among many others).

The aggression and violence involved in crimes committed by adolescents in conflict with the law is usually understood as a symptom of maladaptation to life’s circumstances and challenges because it tends to be a generalized, non-discriminative response to the environment. Loeber and Hay (1997) argue that juvenile violence is a pathology because it is insensitive to changes in the environment; it is directed against any individual; it may be initiated without any reasonable provocation, and it can



be aroused by events to which most people would not react with a violent response. This violence tends to be generalized to different environments (home, school, community) and to multiple victims (parents, siblings, peers, strangers). The fact that it can be directed to individuals, who are very close and related, such as parents or siblings, is evidence that such violence is indeed pathological and a symptom of maladjustment. In any case, there is little dispute that behaviors that place an adolescent in a situation of risk (in this case, the risk of being killed) cannot be considered but pathological.

In Brazil, adolescents in conflict with the law are subject to social and educational measures determined by the Code of Children and Adolescents (Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente, 1990). The educational measures allow for institutionalization of the adolescent for a period that can vary from six months to three years, in institutions that have an educational, pedagogical, and therapeutic character. The objective of depriving the adolescents of liberty is to allow for their reincorporation into society. Model institutions hold up to 40 youngsters, who go to school and receive training to help them develop work skills and knowledge. They also receive medical, psychiatric, and psychological care.

Adolescents in these institutions can receive weekly visits from family members and friends. A recent survey (Silva & Hutz, 2002) showed that most of these adolescents come from families that are poor and live in the periphery of the cities. Almost all of them attended school before being committed to an institution, but did not progress as expected for their age. Without exception, they all used alcohol and drugs (marijuana, cocaine, and crack).

Although aggression and violence have become serious problems in Brazilian society, there is little local research in this field. We lack, therefore, specific knowledge to guide interventions. In an attempt to fill this gap, a research team was organized in 1999 at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, in southern Brazil. Academic researchers and psychologists who work in educational institutions for adolescents who commit crimes started a research program to describe these adolescents and to try to better understand the causes and motives underlying their behavior, to assess interventions methods, and to search for commonalities and differences with findings from other cultures.

Within the framework of this research program, we developed a longitudinal study, which started in 1999 and is still ongoing (Silva & Hutz, 2002). The study's main objective was to investigate the life trajectory of these adolescents in order to understand their developmental context, their life events and how they perceived their experiences. The participants were 200 male adolescents, aged between 13 and 20 years ($M = 16.5$ years), who had committed serious offenses. All of them came from families of low SES level. Only males took part in the study, because in Brazil the incidence of adolescent females deprived of liberty because of crime is very low, i.e. about 2% of the adolescents who are institutionalized because of crime (Febem, 2002).

The adolescents in our sample had committed crimes against property (68% were involved in theft) or against persons (32% were involved in violent rape and murder). The participants were chosen randomly from the population who had been institutionalized because of crime in early 1999.

Data were collected from several sources. The records of the adolescents were analyzed to obtain information about their life histories and their histories of conflict with the law. Also, interviews were conducted with the adolescents and with their families. Data from this study have already allowed us to suggest that the development of delinquent behavior by Brazilian adolescents is related to contextual factors (Silva & Hutz, 2002). All of the adolescents came from very poor families, their parents did not attend school or stay in school for more than five years, and they have poor job skills. Families are large (six children on average). Because of poverty, these youngsters start working very early to help feed the family. However, they earn very little because of their lack of job skills or technical training. Over 90% of the participants in the study were doing some kind of informal work when they committed their first crime. When they start working they tend to drop out of school because it is difficult to work and study at the same time, or they are expelled from school because of delinquent behavior, mostly theft and robbery, which the school cannot control. More than 80% of the sample had spent fewer years in school than expected for their age.

“most of these adolescents come from families that are poor”

It is noteworthy that most of the adolescents in our study started to commit crimes very early in life. Usually they started when they were around 10-years-old. At that time, they started to steal at home and in the neighborhood. The next step for them was the use of drugs and, after a short time, abuse of drugs. All the of 200 adolescents in the sample used drugs. The adolescents themselves recognize that drug use contributes to their continuing to commit crimes and increases the seriousness of their offenses.

In an investigation of the life experiences of male adolescents who committed serious crimes, Silva and Hutz (2002) found that the lives of these youngsters seem to have been permeated by violent and perturbed social, interpersonal, and family relationships that are sources of emotional and often physical pain. Fights and physical aggression among family members happened almost on a daily basis. Also, their security and physical integrity were frequently threatened by fights in school, in parties, or on the street (e.g., shootings among peers or with the police, fights between gangs), and other forms of physical violence. Most of the adolescents carried guns and eventually used them. These adolescents also reported the loss of significant persons, such as their father, brothers, friends, and neighbors who were killed or murdered. In many cases, the adolescents were present and witnessed the violence. It is worth noting that these negative events are reported not as isolated incidents, but as having been present throughout their life, since they were children.

When asked about which factors may have contributed to leading them to engage in violent crime, adolescents undergoing psychological counseling often mentioned the violent deaths of their fathers, which they witnessed when they were children. They reported having watched their fathers being killed in fights with guns or knives. Most of these fathers also themselves had a history of crime and aggressive behavior. It is interesting to note that these adolescents perceive the violent loss of the father as the major cause that started them in a criminal career and led them to commit acts of violence and cruelty. They also blamed the

lack of a father model even when other men were present (such as the grandfather or a stepfather). They verbalized feelings of frustration and revolt as motivation for acting violently. Some of them seemed to believe that acting aggressively was a way to avenge their fathers' deaths or to heal their grief and feelings of loss.

Reports of that nature, which were also found by Assis (1999), corroborate Steinberg's (1999) assertions that exposure to violence, at home or in the neighborhood, makes violence seem banal or trivial and, therefore, facilitates the occurrence of violent behavior. The psychological development of these youngsters is profoundly marked by the violence they experienced and witnessed. They have learned that violence and aggression are valid (and effective) means to relate to others and with society.

Considering this reality, therapeutic interventions that seem more promising with these adolescents are those based on behavioral or cognitive theories. This, by itself, is a problem in countries like Brazil where most psychologists have psychoanalytical training. These adolescents need help fast, they need goals that can be achieved, and interventions must also comply with the restrictions that are imposed by the institutions in which they are being held. The restrictions actually derive from the legal code. Adolescents stay a short time, even if the crimes were violent, and the staff is usually shorter than needed to deal with the large numbers of offenders. There are two major objectives to be achieved with therapeutic interventions designed to increase the chances of success (defined as keeping the adolescent out of trouble when he or she goes back home). The first objective is developing new problem solving and social skills that do not involve aggression and violence. The second objective is to re-structure the adolescents' perceptions of violence in the past to allow them to deal with them in a positive manner. These perceptions and memories must be understood and internalized in such a way that they will no longer be causal agents or determinants of violent behavior.

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Investing in the Prevention of Youth Violence

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Chronically violent and delinquent adolescents represent one of the most costly and vexing problems in American schools today. Economic analyses suggest that each career criminal costs society over 1.3 million dollars (Cohen, 1998), in costs to victims and costs of incarceration and treatment. No government or professional group knows what to do with these youth. Public schools tend to expel them. Juvenile courts incarcerate them. Mental health agencies have little funding to deal with them, except in large groups where they simply learn from each other to become more deviant. Almost all professionals and government agencies have come to the same conclusion about chronically violent adolescents: By the time that these children get to agencies, it seems too late.

It should not come as a surprise that we have so few solutions for this problem, given how little our nation has invested in research and development on education and children (Grissmer, 2002). In most private industries, companies spend 5 to 10 percent of their resources on research and development. In the pharmaceutical and computer industries, the research and development investment has been up to 20 percent of all expenditures, and the return on that investment has been striking. Of all federal expenditures in areas such as health, transportation, and energy, 2 to 3 percent are spent on research and development. However, when it comes to education and children, only 0.2 percent of all dollars that are allocated are spent on research and development. It is as if when it comes to education and



children, we feel that we do not need to develop a science and an evidence base. Hopefully, that perspective is changing.

The solution to youth violence has required a different approach than the approaches that have been taken in the past. It is an approach that we have borrowed from education and public health. Consider some analogies. About 100 years ago, we had a major problem in this country with illiteracy. When our economy moved away from exclusive reliance on agriculture, too many of our young adults were ill-prepared to contribute to the new economy. As a society, we solved that problem through universal public education. We had a theory about literacy, namely, that one must be taught systematically over a long period of time in order to become fluent at reading. And so we developed a system, called public education, that is charged with delivering those services to every child in America. We do not wait until age 18 to see which children have failed to learn to read and then try to provide remedial help.

Consider another analogy. About 75 years ago, our society also had a major problem with dental cavities and tooth decay. We solved that problem with a public health approach based on scientific theory and research about the cause of this problem, that involved creating a system of putting fluoride in the water and providing access to toothpaste at an affordable price that enables children to prevent tooth decay. We did not decide to wait until children lost teeth and then replaced those teeth. We solved the problem through prevention.

Now consider the problem of chronically violent behavior among adolescents. We may agree that this problem should not be tolerated and that action by government must occur to protect others once violence has occurred. But do we have a system to prevent these children from growing up to become chronically violent? There is no fluoride in the water for violence prevention, and there is no 12-year system of training and education to prevent violence.

Such a system can be developed and implemented, however. Scientific research supports implementing this system. It may be cost-beneficial to do so; and it may be necessary in order to help the next generation become productive citizens.

The scientific rationale for early prevention comes from numerous longitudinal studies, such as the Child Development Project (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990). A community sample of 585 preschool-aged boys and girls was identified in 1987 and 1988 through annual interviews, tests, observations, and review of archival records, and they continue to be followed today. Several points can be learned from this body of research.

The first point is that we can identify high-risk children by the time they complete kindergarten. Screening through teacher and parent reports of who is poor, behaves aggressively at home, has difficulty getting along with peers at school, and has experienced early adversity can identify a group of children who have a high probability of becoming chronically aggressive (Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1997) and of being arrested 12 years later (Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, Bates, Crozier, & Kaplow, in press).

Second, we have learned that this early identification is *not* destiny. Chronic violence *develops*, and development depends on life experiences during the school years. The children who become violent in adolescence are those who

have received harsh parenting, have been physically maltreated, or have parents who have not been able to supervise them (Lansford et al., in press). Also, the children who become violent are those who have had social and academic problems during the early school years (Dodge, Lansford, Burks, Bates, Pettit, Fontaine, & Price, in press). They have been socially rejected by their peers, have failed academically, or are unfortunate enough to go to a school where the classroom environment fails to support nonviolence. These are life experiences that can be changed through intervention or reform.

Furthermore, we have learned how these life experiences lead to violence. We have learned that harsh and rejecting environments lead children to develop deviant ways of processing social information, which, in turn, leads them to react violently when they are provoked (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Dodge, Pettit, Bates, & Valente, 1995). For example, children who have been maltreated become

hypervigilant about other people and tend to attribute hostile intentions to others even when others have not acted in a hostile manner. This hostile attributional bias, in turn, leads a child to react aggressively when he or she is provoked. In contrast, children from warm and nurturing home and school environments tend to learn social-cognitive skills, such as how to read others' intention accurately and how to

solve problems nonviolently.

Third, we have learned that it is possible to change those harsh life experiences, so that even high-risk children need not grow up to become violent. It is this premise that guided the creation of the Fast Track Prevention Program (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group [CPPRG], 1992), which began in 1990 through the support of the National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the Department of Education, and which continues today.

Participant selection for Fast Track occurred at four sites across the country in 1991, 1992, and 1993 by screening 10,000 kindergarten boys and girls. 891 children were designated as being at high risk for adolescent violence. These children tended to come from mostly poor, single-parent-headed families with multiple problems (Lochman & CPPRG, 1995). High-risk children were randomly assigned to receive the Fast Track intervention or not. Those children who were assigned to the control group were allowed to receive whatever intervention might be offered to them by the community, but no efforts were made to supplement those efforts.

The Fast Track Prevention Program lasts 10 years and costs about \$40,000 per child. Group training in behavior management is provided for parents and is supplemented with biweekly home visits to help with family management and family-school relationships. Group training is provided to children in social-cognitive skills, such as understanding emotions and intentions and in solving social problems. Children receive phonics-based tutoring in reading skills, and the development of positive peer relationships is supported through coaching. Finally, teachers are trained to deliver a classroom curriculum in social and emotional development and are consulted regarding classroom behavior management.

Delivering the Fast Track Program has required a committed team of education and family specialists,

“a system to prevent children from growing up to become chronically violent”



community volunteer tutors and mentors, school teachers, and parents. We were able to get 99 percent of the 445 families to agree to participate. Over 75 percent of the parents and 88 percent of the children attended more than half of the sessions that were offered (CPPRG, 2002a).

The efficacy of the Fast Track Program has been tested by comparing the 445 children who had been assigned to receive intervention, even if they rarely attended, to the 446 children in the control group. Findings are modest but statistically robust and very striking.

First, the program was successful in improving the competencies of targeted children and their parents. The parents in the intervention group reduced their use of harsh discipline, and their children improved their social-cognitive and academic skills, relative to the control group (CPPRG, 1999). In turn, improvements in aggressive behavior were found across the elementary school years. Compared with children in the control group, children in the intervention group displayed less aggressive behavior at home as reported by parents, less aggressive behavior in the classroom as reported by teachers and peers, and less aggressive behavior on the playground as directly observed by our observers who did not know which children had received intervention (CPPRG, 1999; 2002b). By the end of third grade, 27 percent of the control group had become free of conduct problems, in contrast with 37 percent of the intervention group, and costly special education had been reduced by about one quarter (CPPRG, 2002b). Moderation analyses suggested that the positive effects held equally well across gender and ethnic groups (CPPRG, 2002c).

Furthermore, mediation analyses suggest that improvements in the domains that had been targeted during intervention (e.g., parenting, social-cognitive skills training) accounted for a substantial portion of the positive effect of intervention on outcomes (CPPRG, in press).

Although these effects may seem modest in magnitude, preliminary economic analysis suggests that the differences may prove to be cost-beneficial. For example, if each career criminal costs society 1.3 million dollars, and if the Fast Track Program costs \$40,000 per child, the program will prove to be a wise economic investment if just 3 percent of the children are saved from careers of violent crime.

The importance of the Fast Track research rests not in supporting this particular model of prevention. Rather, this work supports the concepts of early screening and long-term intervention as a new system of preventive care for children at risk for chronic violence.

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Types and Theories of Aggression in an African setting: A Zimbabwean Perspective

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Aggression and violence are considered reprehensible in most societies in that they involve a major violation of societal norms. The fact that aggression is defined in relation to social

norms suggests that it is socially constructed, and that, to an extent, societies can be expected to vary on the specific behaviors that comprise aggression or a significant violation of norms.

This article presents a Zimbabwean view on aggression. The presentation draws from my experience as a native of Zimbabwe, and a psychologist in that country over a 10 year period, in which I worked with adolescents with aggression in a variety of settings: child rehabilitation centers, schools, homes. A primary goal of this presentation is to explore indigenous conceptions of aggression in an African country. A secondary goal is to offer an interpretation of conceptions of aggression in an African setting from the context of extant theories on aggression, as developed in the international community. Meeting these goals would add to an understanding of the emics (within culture) and etics (cross-cultural) of aggression as a mental health issue in the international community.

In that connection, the specific questions that are considered in this article are: (a) what are the types of aggression that are recognized by indigenous Zimbabwean communities? (b) how are these various types of aggression manifested? and (c) what are the theories on aggression among indigenous Zimbabweans and how are these related to the various types of aggression?

Geographical Location and Demography

Zimbabwe is a southern African country and neighbors Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia. It has a total area of 150,873 square miles (390, 759 km²) and a population of about 11 million people (Government of Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office, 1994). About 95% of the population are Blacks and five percent



A Shona adolescent wrestles with a younger sibling who would not end a preferred game. Older siblings have parent-child responsibilities over younger children.

other ethnic groups. Eighty percent of the population are Shonas (a cultural-linguistic group), 15% are Ndebeles, and 5% Asians, Whites and others. Eighty percent of the population lives in rural areas and 20% in the cities.

This article will consider types and theories of aggression among the Shona of Zimbabwe, who are the majority group in that country. The Shona comprise many sub-cultures within them: Karanga, Korekore, Manica, Zezuru. However, they have the same base culture dating back to about a thousand years ago and have only dialectical language differences.

Types of Aggression Among the Shona of Zimbabwe

The Shona of Zimbabwe recognize various forms of aggression: verbal, physical, passive, reactive, proactive. Verbal aggression tends to involve decontextualized mention of another person's body part (e.g., your head, your stomach), relation (your mother, grandfather), or relation's body part (e.g., your mother's X) (Watkins, Akande, & Mpofu, 1996). The aggressor leaves the victim to complete the invective in the worst possible way and consistent with the cultural knowledge that he/she did not mean to be kind. Verbal aggression also includes name-calling, often with reference to human excretory products, pets, apes and other animals or birds. For example, if someone said "you owl", they mean to insult, because owls have negative associations among the Shona. They are thought to be the guides for witches and their goblins, as the witches perform their nefarious nocturnal activities. So, if someone was called an owl, they have, in fact, been called a witch guide. Verbal aggression also includes talking back to adults or older siblings, offering unsolicited opinions in discussions by adults or older siblings, humming a tune in the middle of a discussion and unduly interrupting other people's talk.

Physical aggression among the Shona involves fighting, destructiveness, obscene gesturing, and hostile acts against people and animals. Passive aggression includes defiance, ignoring customs and rules, running away from home or school, looking an adult or older sibling in the eye, unexplained smiling and unwarranted spitting. In Zimbabwean rural communities, people who show a persistent ignorance of weeds despite opportunity to learn, lost livestock in the pastureland, were unwilling to handle vegetable and animal products (e.g., cow dung); were inappropriately dressed for the activities of subsistence farming; and failed to carry out age appropriate tasks would also be considered passively aggressive. Reactive aggression is in response to an actual attack. It is considered somewhat justified. The Shona have a saying that "Tsvaru, wakadana tivu", which translates to "An aggressive pat invites a huge reprisal". It can take various forms: verbal, physical. Women can be reactively aggressive by undressing in public and in front of the offending party (if male). The moral is that people should avoid provoking others as they may regret the aftermath. Proactive aggression is when a person attacks others with or without apparent cause. Its expression towards members of an in-group (e.g., family, clan, friends) is more heavily censored by the Shona than if directed towards an out-group. Often, proactive aggression is connected to control over scarce resources of some territorial turf war, although it can also be of spiritual causation.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that behaviors that comprise significant violations of the rights of others and the community in Western and other societies (e.g., fighting, defiance, temper tantrums, destructiveness, negativeness, stealing, lying, ignoring rules, aggression and hostile acts against people or animals, truancy, running away) are also regarded as indicators of aggression by the Shona of Zimbabwe. However, there are also some types and ways of expressing aggression that are uniquely indigenous and African (e.g., use of invectives, nudity in public by women). Thus, aggression by the Shona of Zimbabwe has a presentation that is both similar and different from that for Western Europeans and North Americans.

Theories of Aggression Among the Shona of Zimbabwe

Understanding theories of aggression and violence germane to a particular society is important because such theories influence how members of a society think, imagine, talk, account and act towards those whom they regard as having aggression. Often, communities hold implicit theories about a variety of phenomena, and these theories may only partially overlap with those of experts (e.g., academics, clinic-based practitioners).

“People’s implicit theories are important”

Implicit theories are “constructions by people ...that reside in the minds of these individuals” and “are discovered rather than invented because they already exist ...in people’s minds” (Sternberg, 1985, p. 608). People’s implicit theories are important in that they are the basis on which they make judgments and take actions in relation to themselves and others. These implicit theories are captured in the people’s communications (e.g., language) pertaining to their notions about specific phenomena (Irvine, 1988; Sternberg, 1985). Studying communication as a way of understanding social practices and the judgments that inform them is allied to the ethnographic approach and well established in anthropology and sociology and relatively new to psychology and health.

The Shona terms “*musoro bhangu*”, (the one who bangs his or her head), “*musikahwa*” (one with distorted behavior), “*mambara*” (with cast away manners), “*mwana anemamhepo*” (person with the winds) and “*ane muromo*” (has no mouth) are descriptors for people with aggression (Mpofu, 2002). *Musoro bhangu* (one who bangs his head) suggests a view of aggression as a failure in self-regulation, associated with impulsive decision-making. *Musikahwa* (distorted behavior) is a term that is closely related to “*musoro bhangu*” in that people with “*musikahwa*” are regarded as having distorted thinking. A “*mambara*” person (or one with cast away) is so behaviorally maladjusted that he or she appears to have lost all sense of culture or social propriety. The terms *musoro bhangu*, *musikahwa*, and *mambara* suggest that the Shona of Zimbabwean have an implicit theory of aggression that considers it as a failure in basic self-regulation due to poor cognitive processing or temperament. This view of aggression is similar to explicit theories of aggression that have been proposed by researchers in North America and Western Europe.

A person with predominantly verbal aggression is said to have “a mouth” (“*ane muromo*”). Having a mouth means that the individual has a tongue lash that he/she administers liberally or with little social discrimination or etiquette.

Shona females tend to be associated with having “a mouth” more than the males. Within the population of Shona women, those of the vaHera clan are widely acclaimed to have “a mouth.” If they are in a relationship, their partners/husbands would tend to agree with that sentiment, although the vaHera women’s brothers consider their sisters to be the least aggressive of females in the nation. There is some informal consensus among the Shonas that “*muromo*” (tongue lashing) among the vaHera women is reactive rather proactive and could be due to an inheritance factor.

The Shona may consider a person with aggression to have “the winds”. The alleged “winds” causing aggression are thought to be spiritual visitations on the person from the dead or ancestors (Mpofu, 2002; Mpofu & Harley, in press). For instance, a family may believe that aggression in a person is the manifestation of a spirit of ill omen cast on the person by his or her family’s enemies. The winds may also be the spirit of a departed person who was aggrieved by a family member.

Aggression in a person may also be due to a spirit of a family member for which culturally prescribed rituals were not performed (Mpofu, 2002). Typically, families holding such explanations for a person’s aggression would have consulted a traditional healer or prophet, who may assert or confirm a spiritual causation for the aggression. People whose aggression is ascribed

to spiritual causation usually have more severe and chronic aggression and have experienced a history of unsuccessful treatment by the family and by social agencies.

Types of Aggression and their Implicit Theories

Verbal aggression among the Shona is likely to be ascribed to child rearing practices and temperament. For example, the Shona would consider a person who is verbally aggressive because he or she has “cast way manners” to have had a poor upbringing. They also consider verbal aggression a temperamental problem, as in “*musoro bhangu*” or “one who bangs his or her head”. Physical, proactive, and passive aggression would be ascribed more to spiritual causation than to upbringing. Aggrieved spirits (non-family members) are believed to cause a person to be violent and destructive as a way of demanding amends from that person’s family. Non-family aggrieved spirits may also cause aggression of a predatory nature. The Shona would explain this phenomenon as due to efforts by the foreign (i.e., non family spirit) to draw in other families against the family that caused it offense. The spirits may also elect for the person to be passively aggressive but in a manner that breaches salient Shona mores and customs. Aggrieved family spirits would cause passive aggression because they may not want to hurt a family member. Nonetheless, they may want some rituals performed in appeasement. Reactive aggression is explained by the Shona in relation to contextual or psychosocial factors. It is regarded as having the least malignant of causes.

Summary and Conclusion

The Shona people of Zimbabwe have various ways of expressing aggression: verbal, physical, passive, reactive, proactive. These types of aggressive behaviors are explained in terms of implicit theories involving psychosocial or spiritual factors. Although the classification of aggressive behavior among the Shona is both descriptively and



functionally accurate, a single cause of aggression (e.g., spiritual), can result in a variety of aggressive behaviors in an individual (e.g., verbal, physical, proactive). Gender may “explain” certain types of aggression among females (e.g., undressing) and males (physical aggression). Temperament is relevant to explaining aggression among the Shona, and is secondary to spirituality and child rearing practices.

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COMMENTARY: Understanding Youth Aggression in Developmental Cultural Context

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I feel honored to write this commentary to the set of 5 essays in this issue which all deal with different aspects of juvenile aggression and violence. In line with the international orientation of ISSBD, it is wonderful to see the contributions by Hutz and Silva on aggression and violence in Brazil, and by Mpofu on aggression and violence in Zimbabwe. Their contributions highlight how much victims' perceptions of what qualifies as aggression vary from culture to culture. I wonder, however, whether agreement among cultures is more distinct at the extreme end of violence compared to at the less serious forms of aggression and provocations. The work in Brazil and Zimbabwe is also a reminder of how much more work needs to be done in countries and continents other than in North America and Western Europe. It is doubtful that results from aggression studies in the Western world will apply seamlessly to other countries. We need to better evaluate whether knowledge on the etiology, contexts, and preventive and remedial interventions developed in the Western world can be 'imported' and effectively used in other countries. This would certainly improve our general knowledge of aggression and violence and advance applications in a much broader sense than appears to be the case now.

The essays by Greve and by Tremblay touch on key issues in our conceptualization of when and how aggression and violence

develops from childhood to adulthood. Greve deplores the fact that no consensus has been reached on a general developmental theory of antisocial behavior in youth and adolescence. Instead, we have a variety of conceptual models which often focus on certain aspects of aggression, such as the behavior itself, and its cognitive and emotional components, without sufficiently integrating all three aspects. However, there is a continuous stream of publications in which researchers re-examine empirical, conceptual and theoretical notions of aggression and antisocial behavior in general. For example, Moffitt's theory on delinquent behavior is subjected to critical scrutiny (e.g., Fergusson & Horwood, 2002), including a revision by Moffitt herself (Moffitt et al., 2002). This dialogue and sharpening of the evidence on individual differences in the developmental course of aggression and antisocial behavior helps the field tremendously and can be seen as tentative steps toward consensus building. Greve rightly points out that typologies of antisocial behavior are only as good as the cases observed or the measurements taken. In that sense, it would be good to develop benchmarks against which to judge studies, as variations in these benchmarks may determine developmental typologies and establish 'fake' controversies in the field. For example, gaps in data collection or shortcomings in measurements can seriously undermine the classification of individuals and lead to different conclusions about the true nature of developmental trajectories.

Tremblay makes a cogent case that aggression in some children can already be observed in the toddler period, and that some of these children may persist in their aggression over the years. He also cites a study by Nagin and Tremblay (1999) showing the absence of a trajectory for males with a late onset of aggression after age six. Yet, there are few longitudinal studies that challenge this (Lacourse, Nagin, Vitaro, Claes & Tremblay, 2002, Loeber & Hay, 1997). It is not clear whether the findings by Nagin and Tremblay depend on the use of a single informant (teachers) and the lack of information from the youth himself. Certainly, the social learning literature (e.g., Patterson, 1982) implies and sometimes shows, that individuals can learn to become aggressive. Critics of this literature, however, may argue that many of the studies were done in a developmental vacuum and do not reveal how many of the aggressive youth just persisted in behaviors that they had shown during the toddler period. However, a critical fact, often overlooked in the discussion of late onset, is that only a minority of aggressive youth eventually escalate to serious violence (such as robbery or rape) or to homicide. In all probability, some of the factors that can explain such escalation must be proximal to the time that escalation occurs. In summary, we can still learn a great deal about the exact nature of trajectories and how they can best explain why only a minority of males commit violence (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998).

Much of the developmental knowledge on aggression and violence should inform intervention efforts. This point is well made by Dodge in his essay "Investing in the Prevention of Youth Violence." Given the enormous costs of violence to its victims and to society in general, it is appalling that investments to address this threat to all of us, in comparison to investments in many other areas of human behavior, have been so minimal. Dodge concludes that "we have learned that ... early identification is not destiny." He rightly points to a broad front of improvements in preventive and remedial forms of interventions, and highlights the important contributions of the Fast Track Prevention Program. There are still key gaps in our knowledge of what works best, however. Interventions for young antisocial girls are very uncommon and have not been well evaluated, so that they can be disseminated

more widely. Evaluations of even the best interventions still leave unaffected a large proportion of antisocial youth (Lipsey & Wilson, 1998). Much work remains to be done, and this series of essays clearly indicates many ways for us to go.

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COMMENTARY: *Under All the Wrong Circumstances*

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Despite the fact that the five target essays were written by authors who reside in four continents, it is clearly the case that aggression, wherever it occurs, is intolerable. This does not mean that aggression and violence is unacceptable “locally” ... just that it is intolerable from a “universal” perspective. Studies the world over indicate that aggression among children is associated concomitantly and predictively with many things negative – whether those “things” include peer rejection, school failure, psychopathology, sociopathy, partner/spouse abuse, and so on (see Coie & Dodge, 1998 for a review). The authors note also that aggression and tendencies toward physical violence develop for good reason. The reasons offered include the following: (a) biological or dispositional factors such as dysregulated temperament (e.g., negative reactivity and poor regulatory processes); (b) family, neighborhood, and school circumstances that are either stressful or impoverished or abusive or neglectful or insecure or “all-of-the-above.”

Taken together, it may well be that these latter “environmental” circumstances help create or exacerbate intrapersonal

dispositions to be vengeful, to see the world through unpleasant lenses, and to aspire to some semblance of self-respect via aggressive and violent means. Another bit of common ground among the authors was the recognition that the early years are probably “where the action is” with regard to (a) developmental trajectories of risk (and resilience) and (b) those effective ways-and-means to prevent or intervene with those trajectories. The bottom line appears to be that biologically driven “bad seeds” need not have negative, violent or aggressive destinies. Furthermore, “vile weeds” can be created and embellished by families, peers, and neighbors. With this in mind, it is in the best interests of all societies to work, in meaningful ways, to halt trajectories to violent and aggressive behavior. After all, as the authors themselves indicate, the costs to individuals, human relationships, and societies of not preventing or ameliorating are enormous – socially, emotionally, and most certainly financially.

Where does the collective message of the essayists leave us? For one, there is mounting evidence that the origins of aggressive behavior can be found among the very young. For example, from the research of my colleagues and I (e.g., Rubin, Burgess, Dwyer, & Hastings, in press; Rubin, Hastings, Chen, & McNichol, 1998), we have learned that *toddlers* who have difficulty regulating their anger and inhibiting negative behavior turn out to be aggressive as preschoolers. And we know that aggression, from early childhood, is relatively stable (Coie & Dodge, 1998). My colleagues and I have shown, however, that hostile, punitive parents can exacerbate these early dispositional tendencies. Further, non-punitive, responsive, sensitive parents can diminish these early tendencies. All of which is to say is that biology is not destiny, but that it can certainly achieve destiny under the wrong circumstances.

It is also the case that in early childhood, children's social minds are relatively malleable. In early childhood, aggression produced can be aggression forgotten. One can dislike and reject an aggressive child, but then again, as the essayists point out, there are many more salient acts of aggression committed in early than in later childhood. As such, aggression may be excused if the perpetrator changes her/his behavioral styles, or at the very least, acts more friendly and comes to school with attractive toys that can be shared by others! By middle and later childhood, peers come to truly reject their highly aggressive peers – at least, this is the case in “typical” milieus. And once a child is rejected, it takes a great effort to dissuade the peer group at-large to alter their beliefs. Aggressive children are aggressive and even when they act nicely, their mid- and late-childhood peers know who they are “really” like. By mid-childhood, negative reputations are difficult to alter (see Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998 for a relevant review).

The two preceding paragraphs suggest that it's easier to alter developmental trajectories earlier than later in childhood. But the information contained therein also suggests that parents and peers can strengthen aggressive tendencies. From the perspective of this writer, it seems reasonable to propose that many of the extant theories pertaining to aggression are descriptive of these simple realities. From a *learning theory* perspective, violence or punitiveness begets violence or punitiveness – especially when family, friends, or neighbors reinforce children's violent or aggressive or angry thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. From a *social learning theory* perspective, punitive parents, siblings, peers, and neighbors are veritable arm's length models of aggression. Violent television and music lyrics are not nearly as reinforcing of aggression as is the immediate, proximal environment within which children live.

Importantly, some children learn all manner of ways to aggress by watching (or personally experiencing, e.g., physical abuse)



others, yet they fail to behave aggressively themselves. These are the *resilient* children and they certainly deserve our attention. Others, whose parents, siblings, peers, and neighborhood mentors consistently and with requisite anger reinforce violent behavior; learn not to inhibit the performance of aggressive behavior. We do not need carefully constructed, laboratory studies to examine the veracity of these theoretically-derived arguments; indeed, all we need to do is turn on our television sets and watch the world news. If we socialize hatred, we get hatred. If we socialize negative stereotypes, we get negative stereotyping. And if we are models of violence who rage against our enemies, we socialize, directly and indirectly, aggression, violence, and hostility.

Of course, it may be of some significance to ask why anyone would want to reinforce violent, aggressive behavior. The not-so-simple answer must have something to do with the biological need for survival. Some of our basic theoretical expositions about why aggression exists are relevant. *Felt frustration*, thoughts and feelings of hopelessness, and the personal need for self-esteem and empowerment can conspire to produce aggressive tendencies at home, at school, or in the streets. If one is lacking necessary resources to live healthy and secure lives, one may seek to alter one's life experiences. And *when all else fails*, one may turn to aggression. Prior to so doing, one may have to discover, and then characterize an oppressor – a target or a personal reason for one's personally negative life experience. By so doing, one can activate feelings of anger and direct it at someone, or at some group, or at some country's citizenry. For example, one may attribute one's negative life experiences to others who are seen to have particular resources, power, and advantages. And one may share with family (children) and friends, one's perspective of the negative characteristics of these others. And so, we bring together our theories of *frustration-aggression*, *negative intention cuing*, and *negative stereotyping* working arm-in-arm to develop, maintain, and exacerbate purposeful and "reasonable" (from the standpoint of the actor) acts of aggression.

In short, many of our theories accounting for the development and maintenance of aggressive and violent behavior are valid. One doesn't have to play one against the other; and arguably one does not need to await the arrival of yet additional longitudinal data. Children become aggressive under all the wrong circumstances. And some of these circumstances, if altered, can produce effective change earlier than later in childhood. It's our responsibility to act as Dodge and colleagues have described in their essay. We must begin to bring to the socio-political table our collective scientific findings. With common voice, it behooves us to convince those in government that aggression and violence will not go away just by our wishing this to be the case. From psychological, sociological, economical, and humanitarian perspectives, we know much of that which is necessary to reduce aggressive and violent behavior. The essential question to pose is not where aggression comes from; rather, it's why we have not yet raised our collective voices.

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COMMENTARY: Understanding Aggression Requires Integrating Diverse Perspectives

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The essays in this special section provide valuable and diverse perspectives on some of the current issues relevant to the study of the development of aggression and violence in youth. In this short commentary, of necessity, I will focus more on where I think the authors have gone astray, but that should not diminish the value of the other points that they make.

Let me start with one overall criticism. Developmental understandings of aggression could be greatly enhanced if developmentalists attended to the vast body of literature on aggression developed in other areas of psychology. A serious problem in many of these essays (and one that all too often occurs in essays on aggression by clinical and developmental psychologists) is the lack of attention to 75 years of research on aggression by learning theorists and personality and social psychologists, ranging from Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower, and Sears to Bandura, Berkowitz, Eron, Lagerspetz, Leyens, Mischel, Dodge, and Baumeister, to mention a few (Anderson & Huesmann, in press).

Werner Greve, in the opening essay, touches on some of the generally accepted principles that have emerged out of decades of research on aggression and violence and other antisocial behaviors, i.e., that habitual aggression or other antisocial behaviors are seldom due to a single factor and can best be understood as due to the interaction of biological, psychological, and environmental factors. Unfortunately, by not discriminating between antisocial behavior in general and aggression and violence in particular, Greve diminishes the value of his essay for informing us about the central topic of this special section – aggressive and violent behavior. For example, I think the characterization of most theories of aggressive behavior as stage theories is wrong. Most theories assume a reciprocal-transactional process through which the child's interactions with the environment both changes the child and the environment in a vicious circle exacerbated by certain biological predispositions. Similarly, Greve's discussion of continuity does not emphasize the key finding of numerous longitudinal studies that there is continuity of aggressive behavior throughout the life course, and Greve's final conclusions suffer because they seem at odds with many of the findings about aggression from other areas of psychology. At the same time, Greve does nicely point out some of the general problems with typologies of aggressive youth. The evidence for adolescence limited "aggression" is actually very weak if one looks at aggressive behavior on a continuum. Most young adults will display levels of aggression as young adults that place them at a similar point in the population where you would have found them as children (Huesmann & Moise, 1999).

In contrast, the Tremblay essay deals with some very straightforward but very important findings about aggressive behavior from his longitudinal research. When one measures physical aggression in terms of behaviors initiated rather than harm done, one finds that physical aggression is more prevalent among 2- to 3-year-olds than among older children. The frequency of physical aggression simply decreases with age. Yet, few believed it until Tremblay proved it with his longitudinal studies. In contrast, the frequency of indirect aggression seems to increase. It seems that children are learning not to aggress physically as they grow up and are learning that indirect aggression is more socially acceptable. Of course, this finding has important implications for the origins of aggressive behavior. One interpretation is that humans are born aggressive and have to be socialized out of aggression. However, another interpretation is that humans are born without much perception or consideration of "harm" to others. Thus, instrumental acts that involve pushing or hitting others to obtain a reward have no negative valence for the perpetrator until such a valence is learned. Although the differences are subtle, I favor this latter interpretation because there is little evidence to date that toddlers engage in hostile, reactive aggression towards others. Interestingly, there is evidence that older youth and adults, when sufficiently provoked, do "enjoy hurting" others by aggressing against them. So the puzzle is how does this "desire to hurt" develop?

Hutz's essay on Brazilian adolescents, like Greve's, is more about delinquent behavior and not aggressive or violent behavior per se. He reinforces many of the valid points Greve makes about the multiplicity of factors that interact to affect delinquency – biological, cognitive, behavioral, family, social, and contextual. However, of particular interest in this essay is Hutz's report on his study of male adolescents in Brazil who had committed serious violent crimes. Their lives seemed to be permeated with environmental physical violence – violence within the family, within peer-groups, in school, and in the community. Many reported having seen their father killed violently. I think the conclusions Hutz draws from this evidence are particularly worth noting. He concludes that therapeutic interventions need to focus on restructuring the adolescents' perceptions of violence in the past and on helping them develop non-aggressive social problem solving skills. I only wish he had connected his reasoning more to the large body of psychological research on observational learning and desensitization which provides more of a theoretical basis for these conclusions.

Dodge, in his essay, continues the theme of prevention, and makes a compelling case for a national program to prevent the

development of aggression in children. He argues that we have now met all the prerequisite conditions for a national violence prevention program. We can identify high-risk children; we know that high-risk children do not of necessity become aggressive young adults; we know what many of the factors are that increase risk; and we have learned that it is possible to change many of these factors. There are a number of early universal or targeted primary prevention programs such as his own FastTrack program or my and my colleagues' MACS program (MACSRG, 2002) that have had some success. Generally, I agree. My only potential disagreement is on the balance of the cost of such programs against their degree of success. No prevention program works with every at risk child, and most have not even worked with most children. I think we need to improve the success ratio relative to the cost before such a national prevention program will be viable.

In the final essay, Mpofu discusses the kinds and origins of aggression in Zimbabwe culture. One is immediately struck in this essay by how similar are the types of aggressive behavior encountered there to the types encountered in more Western cultures. True, certain specific acts (a woman revealing herself to a man) and certain specific phrases ('you are an owl') are considered aggressive there and not elsewhere, but that is true to a lesser extent even between Western countries (e.g., consider "bloody" in Britain and the USA). More important, the society recognizes that physical, verbal, indirect, and passive behaviors can all be aggressive. Additionally, as Mpofu, points out, there are important conceptual ideas about the causes of aggressive behavior that are revealed by the Zimbabwean language that are not very different from Western ideas. For example, common phrases used to describe aggressive people suggest that aggression is due to a failure in self-regulation due to poor cognitive processing and/or temperament.

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Notes from The President

Dear ISSBD member: Like many of you I recently returned from our excellent congress in Ottawa – Barry Schneider and his colleagues have done a wonderful job. The program was lovely, and as always on such opportunities I was struck by the intensity and quality of the discussion among our members and guests.

At the end of the congress, the new Executive Committee took over and I began my term as your new President for the next two years. I want to welcome all on board – President-Elect Anne Petersen, Secretary General Jari-Erik Nurmi, Treasurer and Membership Secretary Barry Schneider. For a full list of all members of the Executive Committee see the Minutes in this Newsletter. Welcome to our new members Xinyin Chen, Avi Sagi and Peter Smith. The transition from Kenneth Rubin, our Past President, to the new group went smoothly as expected.

Talking about the Ottawa congress leads me to the next biennial congress to be held in Ghent, Belgium under the stewardship of Leni Verhofstadt-Denève. She presented her plans at the General Assembly and at the Banquet – everybody was impressed by her energy and positive spirit. I am convinced that Ghent 2004 will be a major event that you will not want to miss. For details, please check our Webpage.

Our society is in good shape, but as you know there is always room for improvement. And indeed I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about a number of steps that we, the new Executive Committee, and I myself in particular want to pursue. I feel it important that we move quickly.

First, many learned societies are having difficulties these days to maintain their membership levels. There are many reasons, among them the economic situation in many countries, but also the fact that the founding generation of ISSBD is facing retirement. The problem is that, up to now, we have not been able to attract enough young investigators and students as new members. In this regard, international societies have more problems than national ones (in part due to the travel costs related to meetings). We have decided to invest more efforts in attracting new members. Towards this end, a new Membership Committee will be formed that will bring our message to the attention of young scholars in our field. I have asked Andrew Collins to chair the international group and to work in close conjunction with our Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

We had the pleasure of welcoming far more young scholars and students to the Biennial Congress than had initially been expected. This provides some indication that ISSBD is of interest to researchers of the upcoming generation, with the challenge to encourage these investigators to join and become active members of the Society.

Second, the Biennial Congress offers the best showcase of all the advantages ISSBD membership entails. We want to be even better than in the past concerning incentives for new members. But the main attraction is the program itself – the keynote speakers, the symposia, the posters, the pre-conference workshops, etc. As I mentioned, Ottawa was excellent but we also realized that we had some blind spots on one important aspect of our mission: ISSBD is devoted to human development across the entire life-span, from early childhood to old age, and in this regard we are truly a unique international society.

Although the program was as strong as always on the earlier periods of the life-span, some attendants missed keynotes and symposia on development in age and old age. Together with Leni Verhofstadt-Denève and the entire Program Committee for the Ghent congress, we have been working on an enrichment in this regard, including new program elements such as invited interdisciplinary symposia held by leading figures in the field of aging.

It is the belief of the new Executive Committee that the quality of the congress and the outcome of our membership drive are closely interconnected, and we will do our best to make ISSBD's offers as transparent and as attractive as possible.

Third, over the years we have been present in various regions of the world with workshops that have brought international expertise particularly to young scholars, and in thus doing helped to build up the infrastructure for developmental science. This was always a major part of our mission, but naturally we needed to ask foundations for additional financial support. Although this worked in the past, more recently we have not been receiving grants we had asked for. The Executive Committee discussed this situation and followed my suggestion to react by writing up a master plan that details our aims and financial requests for a series of interrelated workshops. This plan will be presented to foundations active in our field. Receiving matching funds from more than one foundation would be a good outcome.

President-Elect Anne Petersen and myself will devote efforts to this project. We hope to come up with a specific plan soon. All the issues addressed thus far are interrelated – we have to provide funds for the workshops from our coffers as well (foundations will not support our own basic dealings, but only activities with an extra added value). To do this we depend on membership that, in turn, is drawn to us by the quality of the congress and other programs.

Fourth, public recognition of scientific achievements is certainly good for those who receive an award, but it also helps the reputation of the field and raises ISSBD's visibility. Until now we have been very modest in this regard to say the least. We want to change the situation profoundly and develop a number of awards that draw on particular achievements by young and experienced scientists. Moreover, we will address achievements within science and achievements in the application of science as well. The first round of the bestowment of awards will take place on the occasion of the Ghent congress, based on a Call for Nominations handled by Award Committees. Past President Kenneth Rubin and I will work on this.

Fifth, our own organization needs an overhaul – frankly we spend too much money on top of the officers' unpaid spare time for our daily operations, and yet we are not able to offer enough support to the organizers of our congresses and workshops. Certainly we are a Society of volunteers, and we want to keep the advantages related to that. Nevertheless, we need to think about ways to streamline our operations and make them more efficient. One way would be to follow the model of other learned societies and team up with fellow organizations when it comes to certain services such as the handling of membership accounts. I will work on this in



Notes from the President (continued)

conjunction with the Treasurer and Membership Secretary Barry Schneider.

Sixth, ISSBD has always had a worldwide mission – but in order to fulfill a global aim, one often needs to coalesce locally. In the past, for instance, we sponsored congresses on human development in Europe. More recently, as an offspring of that, an independent European Society of Developmental Psychology was formed that many of us viewed as a competitor. Not entirely to my surprise, we have a new situation – the President-Elect of the new society and I have agreed that we should restore the collegial partnership and form an alliance wherever this is fruitful for the advancement of the study of human development.

At this time, our Past President Kenneth Rubin is already busy preparing the next election for President-Elect and Executive Committee members. I am excited about our rolling system that mixes experienced members with new blood, thereby guaranteeing fresh thoughts and activities.

Our Secretary General Jari-Erik Nurmi is in the process of rejuvenating our Webpage – soon you will have more information at your fingertips than before, and we also want to further improve the rapid exchange between you and us beyond the Newsletter. On this occasion, I also want to thank our editors (Joan Miller and Xinyin Chen for the Newsletter, and William Bukowski and his colleagues for the International Journal of Behavioral Development) for their excellent work.

Please feel free to get back to me whenever there is something I may be helpful in resolving (rainer.silbereisen@uni-jena.de). Have a splendid fall. We need you and your thoughts.

Yours,

Rainer K. Silbereisen, Ph.D.

President of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development

ISSBD Sponsored Publication

We are pleased to announce the publication of

Growing Points in Developmental Science: An Introduction (2002)

(Psychology Press)

An ISSBD sponsored publication that provides a comprehensive sourcebook on the past, contemporary status, and future direction of developmental psychology. Co-edited by Willard W. Hartup and Rainer K. Silbereisen, the volume is comprised of expanded versions of the millennium symposia papers that had been published in the *International Journal of Behavioral Development* in 2000. To provide a broad-based overview of developmental science in a highly accessible form, the editors invited senior experts, as well as some younger cutting-edge scientists, to survey the history and traditions that have marked their fields of inquiry as well as to communicate their visions of the current state of the art and of future prospects. The volume encompasses biological as well as cultural perspectives on behavioral development, topics in personality and social development, perspectives on knowledge acquisition and memory, as well as issues of developmental change in adolescence and adulthood. Including a highly distinguished international group of authors, the work succeeds in providing insight into contemporary controversies and challenges in developmental psychology, as seen by leading scientists in the area, and will be of interest to researchers of many different generations and backgrounds.



Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee Meeting:

Ottawa, Canada, August 2, 2002 and the General Business Meeting, August 5, 2002

Members of the EC present: Avshalom Caspi, Patricia Greenfield, Willem Koops (Secretary General), Brett Laursen (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Jari-Erik Nurmi, Kenneth Rubin (President), Rainer K. Silbereisen (President-elect), Suman Verma.

Editors present: William Bukowski (IJBD 2002-), Joan Miller (Newsletter), Xinyin Chen (Newsletter), Rohays Perry (representative of Psychology Press), Rainer K. Silbereisen (IJBD –2002).

Ad hoc advisors present: Huichang Chen, Silvia Koller, Tatiana Yermolova.

Newly elected members of the EC present: Xinyin Chen, Anne Petersen (President-elect), Jari-Erik Nurmi (Secretary General), Avi Sagi, Barry Schneider (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Peter Smith.

Apologies for absence received from: Anna Silvia Bombi, Andrew Collins (Membership Committee), Roger Dixon, Candida Peterson, Robert Plomin, Jacqui Smith, Richard Tremblay (Nominations Committee), Carol Zahn-Waxler (Publications Committee).

In attendance for a particular item: Seong-Yeon Park (Korea workshop), Ann Sanson (bid for the XIVth Meetings), Barry Schneider (XVIIth Meetings), Ock Boon Chung (Korea workshop), Leni Vershofstad-Denève (XVIIIth Meetings).

1. Opening

The President, Kenneth Rubin, welcomed the Executive Meeting (EC) members, ad hoc members and editors.

2. Minutes of the EC meeting in 2001

The Minutes of the EC meeting that was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A., April 22nd, published in Newsletter 2001, No. 2, Serial No. 38, page 22, were approved unanimously.

3. President's Report

The President, Kenneth Rubin, concluded his term as the President, noting the following developments. Membership has remained at the same level as it was at the time of his entrance into the presidency. Financial accounts have never been stronger. Biennial meetings have taken place on three continents. The workshop series has been regenerated. The Society now has a strong publication contract that brings with it advantages for all of its members. For example, every member receives the Newsletter and the IJBD. Psychology Press also hosts the society's web-page and produces biennial editions of the membership directory.

Other activities reported by the President were as follows: A letter was composed together with the Chair of the Membership Committee, Andrew Collins, and it was co-signed by Richard Tremblay, the Chair of the Elections Committee. It was included in the registration material at the SRCD biennial meetings in Minneapolis. A similar letter was sent to scholars in Europe. The President reported also making personal "advertisements" for the Society in many research venues in Korea, Italy, Australia and North America. He also reported being in frequent communication with Barry Schneider concerning the ISSBD meetings in Ottawa, as well as with Xinyin Chen about the organization of the conference workshop on Observational Methods in the Study of Human Development. Moreover, the President had been involved in looking, in collaboration with Willem Koops, to find a host for the 2004 meetings. After succeeding in this effort, he has worked together with Leni Verhofstadt-Deveve, at the University of Ghent, Belgium, to develop a proposal to host the 2004 ISSBD meetings in Ghent. The President also reported about his efforts to look for an institution or a group of individuals to organize the ISSBD meetings in 2006 and 2008. In response to these efforts, a group of scholars in Melbourne are preparing a proposal to host a meeting in 2006,

and Wolfgang Schneider is preparing a bid for the 2008 meetings in Germany.

The President's office has communicated with Margarita Azmitia, May Louise Claux and Brett Laursen concerning a successful workshop "Research and social policy: Family, peers and schools and developmental contexts", that was organized in Lima, Peru, in 2001. Similarly, the President worked together with Avi Sagi and Rachel Seginer to organize a workshop in Israel, which, however, had to be postponed due to unfortunate development in the area. He also worked closely with Ock Boon Chung, Bok Hee Cho and Seong-Yeon Park to organize a workshop on parenting and parent-child relationships across the life-span, in June 2003, in Korea. Moreover, he was in close communication with Tatiana Yermolova concerning her plans to organize an ISSBD workshop in Moscow, Russia, 2003. He also negotiated with African ISSBD members concerning the possibility of an African ISSBD workshop series. As a result, Therese Tchombe and Bame Nsamenang have submitted a proposal to host a workshop in Cameroon in April 2003. As one further contribution, the President has created a "Notes from President" column in each volume of the Newsletter.

The President, Kenneth Rubin, thanked his fellow Steering Committee members over the years – Lea Pulkkinen, Rainer K. Silbereisen, Brett Laursen and Willem Koops. Special acknowledgement was made to Laursen and Koops in particular, because they are leaving their respective positions of Membership Secretary/Treasurer and Secretary General. He welcomed Anne Petersen as the new President-elect; Barry Schneider as the incoming Membership Secretary/Treasurer, and Jari-Erik Nurmi, as the incoming Secretary General, as well as the new EC members Xinyin Chen, Avi Sagi and Peter Smith.

The report from the President was approved unanimously.

4. Secretary General's Report

4.1 Operations of the Secretary in general

The Secretary General, Willem Koops, produced the Minutes of the EC meeting in Minneapolis, April 2001, and prepared the EC and General Business Meeting (GBM) sessions in Ottawa. His activities included also responding to several requests for information regarding the Society and its activities; replying to a variety of questions, such as those concerning the addresses of officers of the Society as well as its conferences and workshops.

Because the Norwegian group from Oslo indicated that they would not be able to proceed with the preparations for the XVIIIth Meetings in 2004, the Secretary General made an effort to find an alternative location. Based on the discussions in the Minneapolis EC meeting, he contacted Leni Vershofstadt-Denève in Ghent (Belgium) and was able to persuade her to assume the responsibility of General Chair of the XVIIIth meetings. Later on, a Programme Committee and a Local Organization Committee was formed, the Secretary General being a member of both. The preparations for the XVIIth congress are in very good shape. The Secretary General also provided support to the Local Organization Committee of the XVIIth Meetings through sending documents and letters necessary for their grant applications, and through offering needed information to Barry Schneider.

4.2. Elections

The Secretary General conducted the Election process, together with the chair of the Election Committee, Richard Tremblay. Although the number of valid ballots was disappointingly low, the society succeeded in attracting competent and experienced officers. The results of this year's elections for a President-elect, a Secretary General, a Treasurer/Membership Secretary and three regular members of the EC were as follows:

One hundred and twenty-five ballots were received; from these 9 were invalid, because of missing signatures, and because of unclear indications of preferences; another 7 came in far after the deadline of March 1st, 2002. Votes were counted according to "The Rules for Counting Ballots in Private Elections under the Hare System of Proportional Representations."

The outcome of the counting process was the election of Anne Petersen as the President-elect, Jari-Erik Nurmi as the Secretary General and Barry Schneider as the Membership Secretary/Treasurer, and the election of the following candidates as EC members: Xinyin Chen, Avi Sagi, and Peter Smith. The counting of the ballots revealed the election was tight, an indication that the Society has several excellent candidates for the positions. The EC concluded that it will make an effort to find ways to engage the non-elected candidates in the organizational work of the Society.

In leaving office after the having served in his position during the period from 1996-2002, Koops expressed his feelings that acting as the Secretary General has been an honor and a pleasure.

Recently, Willem Koops was elected as President of the European Society of Developmental Psychology. He expressed his hope of restoring the relationship between this regional society and ISSBD, which once used to be so fruitful for both parties.

The report of the Secretary General, Willem Koops, was approved unanimously. The EC and GBM thanked Willem Koops for his dedication to the Society.

5. Report from the Treasurer/Membership Secretary

5.1. Membership Secretary

Table 1 provides an overview of paid ISSBD membership for 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. ISSBD membership typically fluctuates from conference to non-conference years, so 1999 (a non-conference year) is a better point of comparison for 2001 membership than is 2000 (a conference year). Total paid membership in 2001 was 1,029. This represents an increase of 8.9% ($n = 84$) over 2000 total membership, and an increase of 7.4% ($n = 71$) over 1999 total membership. In 2001, total paid membership included 627 Full members. This represents a 2.5% ($n = 16$) decrease in Full membership over 2000, but no change in Full membership over 1999. In 2001, total paid membership included 318 Regional members. This represents a 53.6% ($n = 111$) increase in Regional membership over 2000, and a

Table 1: 1998 to 2001 Paid Membership

Category	1998	1999	2000	2001
Full	741	627	643	627
Regional	217	235	207	318
Student	65	40	35	29
Spouse	23	25	20	14
Emeritus	30	31	40	41
Totals	1076	958	945	1029

35.3% ($n = 83$) increase in Regional membership over 1999. According to Membership Secretary Laursen, during his term, the Full membership has vacillated from a low of 431 in 1995 to a high of 831 in 1996; total membership has mirrored these trends. Thus, membership continues to be primarily a function of the location of the biennial meetings.

The regular activities of the Membership Secretary include distributing membership renewals, responding to new membership requests, addressing membership status queries, maintaining the membership data base, assisting the Membership Committee with recruiting activities, coordinating Regional Office operations, and providing the publisher with up-to-date membership information. Psychology Press maintains the online version of the ISSBD Membership Directory, and is also responsible for publishing and distributing the printed version of the ISSBD Membership Directory.

With the closing of the West and Central Africa (Francophone) Regional Office in 2000 and the Baltic States Regional Office in 2001, ISSBD recognized five Regional Offices in 2001. Regional operations are clearly thriving in China and India; operations in Belarus appear to be on an even keel. Operations in Russia continue their downward spiral. The office in Indonesia has been virtually inactive for the past four years.

The EC expressed gratitude to the Florida Atlantic University for continued substantial financial and personal support. In particular, the society owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Charles White, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Mr. William Burk who served as the Administrative Assistant and Ms. Jenna Rivera who provided clerical support.

The membership secretary report was approved unanimously.

5.2. Treasurer

Table 2 provides a summary of the ISSBD finances, and contrasts revenue and disbursements from 2001 with those from each of the previous two years. Because finances vary considerably from conference to non-conference years, 1999 (a non-conference year) provides a better point of comparison to 2001 finances than does 2000 (a conference year). All figures given are in US dollars.

The 2001 closing balance was \$395,821.73, an increase of 14.8% (\$50,898.88) from the 2001 opening balance. The closing balance was distributed across four types of accounts: \$52,384.93 was held in an interest free checking account, \$51,146.69 was held in two interest-bearing money market accounts, \$138,639.71 was invested in corporate bonds and mutual fund bond accounts, and \$153,650.40 was invested in mutual fund stock accounts.

The primary source of regular (i.e. non-grant) revenue was member dues and journal income. Dues income totalled \$50,286.00 in 2001. A total of \$25,000.00 was received in 2001 from Taylor & Francis Press for the rights to publish the International Journal of Behavioral Development. A total of \$27,156.00 was received in 2001 from Taylor & Francis press for 2000 royalties from the International Journal of Behavioral Development. Interests, changes in the market value of investments, capital gains, and dividends produced \$9,781.44 in revenue for 2001.

The largest category of regular (i.e. non-grant) expense was stipends for officer and publication offices. A total of \$39,500.00

**Table 2: 1998–2001 Summary Financial Report**

	1998	1999	2000	2001
Opening Balance	\$166,000.03	\$251,277.21	\$309,198.60	\$344,922.85
Revenues	\$166,204.04	\$156,485.28	\$191,958.88	\$154,610.44
	\$332,204.07	\$407,762.49	\$501,157.48	\$499,533.29
Disbursements	\$(80,926.86)	\$(98,563.89)	\$(156,234.63)	\$(103,711.56)
Closing Balance	\$251,277.21	\$309,198.60	\$344,922.85	\$395,821.73

was distributed in 2001 to the officers of ISSBD and to the newsletter and journal editors. Workshop advances totalled \$9,850.00 in 2001, and conference loans \$19,000.00 in 2001. Generous support for the workshop in Peru was provided by the Jacobs Foundation (\$15,000.00) and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (\$15,000.00).

At the 1997 Executive Committee meeting in Rennes, France, a plan was approved that prescribed new long-term investments of at least \$75,000.00 per biennium (while retaining at least one year's worth of operating expenses in available cash). Taken together, the total value of ISSBD long-term investments at the close of 2001 was \$292,290.11.

Full member dues in 2001 were unchanged from 2000. Thus, Full member dues were \$85 for 2001 or \$150 for 2001 and 2002. Modifications to the Spouse and Emeritus dues structure, approved at the 1999 Executive Committee meeting in Albuquerque, USA, and at the 2000 Business meeting in Beijing, China, were implemented in 2001. Spouse, Emeritus, and Student dues were \$47 for 2001 or \$80 for 2001 and 2002. The Student Nonjournal membership category was eliminated.

In response to a motion introduced from the floor at the 2000 Business meeting in Beijing, two categories of Reduced Regional membership dues were created, commensurate with World Bank economic development groupings. The \$10 Category I group included all members affiliated with Regional Offices (except Estonia) and most other members who previously paid reduced fees. The \$15 Category II group included members from several countries in Latin America and Southern and Eastern Europe who previously qualified for Full membership only.

At the Executive Committee meeting in Minneapolis, USA, it was decided that it would be preferable to request an increase in the subsidy provided by Full members rather than raising dues for Reduced Regional members. As a consequence, the Executive Committee approved a \$10 increase in annual and biennial Full member dues. This motion was approved at the Business Meeting in Ottawa, Canada; the increase would take effect in 2003. Thus, one-year Full membership for 2003 would be \$95 and two-year Full memberships for 2003 and 2004 would be \$160.

In October 2001, letters were sent to all Regional Coordinators encouraging each to forward a detailed account of 2001 revenues and expenses. In accordance with ISSBD policy, the Treasurer requested the return of the annual balance of funds to offset the Society's operating expenses. Two Regional Offices transferred a total of \$245.00 in 2001 and two Regional Offices transferred a total of \$460.00 in 2000.

In addition to Steering Committee responsibilities, the regular activities of the Treasurer include processing dues received from members, corresponding with members concerning payment problems, responding to requests for the purchase of mailing lists, maintaining the financial data base, managing grants and submitting applications for funds to external sources, coordinating activities with conference and workshop organizers, supervising the investment portfolio, preparing tax documents, and paying the Society's bills.

Treasurer Laursen concluded the development of the ISSBD finances during his term 1995–2002 as follows: "In 1995, ISSBD was worth approximately \$75,000, divided between a checking account and a savings account. Member dues were our only

source of income. As I leave office in 2002, our net worth approaches \$400,000, spread across a variety of investment devices. Publication revenue now rivals that of member dues, with additional revenue accruing from investment earnings."

The report of the Treasurer, Brett Laursen, was approved unanimously by the EC. The GBM approved the suggested fee-structure, and upon recommendation of the EC, the GBM also unanimously accepted the Treasurer's report, the annual account for 2001 and the (current and budgeted) account for 2002.

The EC and GBM thanked and praised Brett Laursen for his dedication and skills as a Treasurer who has improved the financial condition of the Society.

6. Publications

6.1. International Journal of Behavioral Development

The editor of the IJBD changed in 2001. During the hand-over period from July 1 – December 31, the office move from Jena, Germany (Editor Rainer K. Silbereisen) to Concordia University, Canada (Editor William Bukowski).

The former editor of the IJBD, Rainer K. Silbereisen reported the following developments. Since the beginning of the editorial term in January 1996, the main aim of editorial policy has been to encourage submissions from authors in newly emerging fields, such as behavioral genetics, neuroscience and developmental psychopathology, whilst maintaining a life-span view of behavioral development. In 2001, 6 Issues of IJBD were published containing 61 manuscripts (including 8 Special Section papers), 5 book reviews, 1 Editorial Comment, and an 'in memoriam' tribute to Jan de Wit. IJBD has been available via the electronic journal database "Psychology Online" offered by Psychology Press, for some time now.

Of the 30 new manuscripts submitted to the Jena office between March 1 and June 30, 2001, 7 (26%) were accepted, 19 (63%) rejected, and 3 (10%) are still pending final decision. When the accept/reject rate for the whole editorship (i.e., for all manuscripts submitted and handled between July 1, 1995 and December 31, 2001) is calculated, results show an overall acceptance rate of 38% and a rejection rate of 62%. The statistics for the period also show that the lead times from manuscript submission to final editorial decision, 'accept,' have, on average, taken 11.3 months, and from submission to final editorial decision 'reject', 5 months. When the time from submission to first editorial decision is calculated then the average is an impressive 53 days.

The Journal remains truly international. A breakdown of the countries of origin of the 58 manuscripts received by the Jena office between March 1 and December 31, 2001 shows that the manuscripts have come from across the world, from 18 different countries in all. However, once again, the largest number of submissions are from North America and Western Europe (49), forming just over 84% of all submissions—suggesting once again that the geographical distribution of submissions is an area for concern.

During the period from March 1, to December 31, 2001, one issue of IJBD included a special section, i.e., 'Emotional Development in Interpersonal Relationships,' guest Editors Maria von Salisch and Carolyn Saarni. Another special section, 'Collaborative Cognition in Later Adulthood' was edited by

JoNell Strough and Jennifer Margrett, and was published in the January issue, 2002. As with all IJBD special sections, contributions were solicited both by Calls for Papers placed in IJBD and/or the ISSBD Newsletter, and occasionally by invitation to individual scholars working within the given field.

The former editor, Rainer Silberesen, expressed his gratitude to the editorial team in Jena (Editorial Assistant, Verona Christmas-Best; Secretarial Assistant, Katrin Müller), to the associate editors (Kathleen Bloom, Canada; Philip Hwang, Sweden; Christopher Hertzog, USA; Lynne Vernon-Feagans, USA; Marcel van Aken, The Netherlands; and Brian Barber, USA), to the editorial board and to all the reviewers. Silbereisen also thanked the University of Jena and all at Psychology Press for their support, flexibility in handling unforeseen situations, willingness to help, and generosity in supporting the IJBD.

The report of the former editor, Rainer K. Silbereisen, was approved unanimously. The EC congratulated Rainer Silbereisen for his most successful work for the IJBD, and expressed gratitude to the University of Jena for its support for the journal.

New editor, William Bukowski, reported plans for the future developments of IJBD. The move from the Jena office to the new office in Montreal has progressed smoothly. Moreover, the new editors and editorial board have been set. There are also plans for several special issues. One will focus on the study of change and be edited by Todd Little, and there are other topics under development. One key focus of the present editor is to move to a fully electronic system to handle manuscripts. This means receiving manuscripts electronically, circulating them to reviewers, and also receiving the reviews in electronic form. Such a system has many advantages, for example, decrease in lead times.

The report of the editor, William Bukowski, was approved unanimously.

6.2. Newsletter

The editors of the Newsletter, Joan Miller and Xinying Chen, reported that the Newsletter continues to publish Special Sections devoted to central topics in cultural/cross-cultural and life span developmental psychology, while serving as a forum for dissemination of organizational news of ISSBD and announcements of general interest to its members. Recent Special Sections of the Newsletter have been devoted to the topics of "Culture and Parenting", "Child Rights and Well-Being: Psychological, Behavioral, and Policy Concerns" as well as "Aging and Close Relationships". Forthcoming Special Sections center on "Aggression and Violence in Youth" (Fall, 2002) and on "The Brain Factor in Understanding Psychological Development" (Spring, 2003).

Two new sections have been added to the Newsletter. As recently announced, a "Comment" Section has been initiated for publishing short reader-submitted essays on topics that are relevant to themes presented in recent Special Sections of the Newsletter. Also, a "News About Members" Section has been added to report on awards, honors, or special activities of ISSBD members.

A correction has recently been made in the numbering system of the Newsletter, in response to errors made in numbering of the issues published during 2000 and 2001. With this correction, the Newsletter has been brought into conformity with its longstanding practice of assigning serial numbers consecutively to each new Newsletter, with the spring issue of every calendar year designated number 1 and the fall issue designated number 2.

An excellent working relationship is in place with Psychology Press and with its Production Editor, Kirsten Buchanan. The Press continues to do a high quality job in production of the Newsletter.

The report of the Newsletter editors was approved unanimously. The EC thanked the Newsletter editors Joan Miller and

Xinying Chen for their dedication in handling and developing the Newsletter.

6.3. Publisher

The representative of the Psychology Press, Rohays Perry, reported some recent developments. For example, the publisher is presently taking care of the Society's web-site and membership catalogue. Moreover, she raised several ideas regarding how the publisher could develop future activities. Examples of such developments include a move to electronic journals and electronic offprints. Also the possibility of including a current news section in the web-pages was raised. The EC suggested that these issues will be discussed further later on with the publisher. One further issue that was raised was the redesign of the ISSBD website. The EC decided that this should be done in co-operation with the incoming Secretary General.

7. Biennial Meetings

Barry Schneider, General Chair of the XVIIth Biennial Meetings of the ISSBD in Ottawa, reported that approximately 950 people from 47 countries registered for the conference. Consequently, the finances of the meeting should be in good shape. Xinying Chen, the organizers of the pre-conference program, further reported that 90 young scholars from many countries participated in the pre-conference workshop on 'Observational methodology'.

Leni Vershofstad-Denève, General Chair of the XVIIIth Biennial Meetings of the ISSBD in Ghent, Belgium, from July 11-15, 2004, offered detailed information concerning the progress of the preparations for this meeting, and a lively presentation concerning the program and location (International Congress Center; University of Ghent) of the conference. A general outline of the program was introduced. The Programme Committee consists of the following members: Leni Verhofstadt-Denève (General Chair), Avshalom Caspi, Hui-Chang Chen, Silvia Koller, Willem Koops, Brett Laursen, Rolf Loeber, Ivan Mervielde, Bame Nsamenang, Jari-Erik Nurmi, Marie-Germaine Pecheux, Anne Petersen, Candida Peterson, Kenneth Rubin, Barry Schneider, Rainer K. Silbereisen (co-chair). The EC discussed and suggested that a pre-conference workshop on 'How to disseminate the results of scientific research' will be organized in the context of the Ghent Congress.

Ann Sanson presented a preliminary offer to host the XIXth Biennial Meetings of the ISSBD, 2006, in Melbourne, Australia. The EC and the GBM welcomed the offer and look forward to receiving the final bid during Fall 2002.

President Kenneth Rubin and President-elect Rainer K. Silbereisen reported about a preliminary proposal of Wolfgang Schneider to have the XXth Biennial Meetings of the ISSBD, 2008, in Wurtzburg, Germany. The EC welcomed the offer and look forward to receiving the final bid at the EC meeting in Ghent, 2004.

8. Workshop Programme

The EC planned in the short term the following four workshops:

8a. Regional Workshops

Korea, 2003 (organizers: Ock Boon Chung, chair, Korea University; Bok Hee Cho, co-chair, Kyung Hee University; and Seong-Yeon Park, Ewha Women's University). This workshop on 'Parenting and Parent-Child Relationships Across the Life-Span' is a part of the Asian/South Pacific Workshops, and was accepted by the Executive Committee in 2001. Speakers have been invited and all have accepted the invitation. Currently, the proposed budget approximates \$33,500. It is anticipated that, in addition to ISSBD, support will be provided by the Korea Research Foundation, the Korean Association of Child Studies and the host university. The EC decided to give an extra \$5000 funding for the workshop.



Cameroon, 2003 (organizers: Therese M. Tchombe and Bame Nsamenang). The proposed theme of the workshop is "Transitions to adulthood: Across cultures and disciplines", and it is planned to be the 6th African Workshop of the ISSBD. The anticipated budget is \$38,000. The organizations of the workshop are in progress.

India, 2003 (organizer: Suman Verma). The proposed theme of the workshop is 'Qualitative Research Methods' and it will be organized in Bombay, Fall 2003. The planned number of participants is 30-35. The workshop is partly funded by the ISSBD regional office in India.

8b. Workshops

Russia, 2003 (organizers: Tatiana Yermolova, chair, Psychology Institute, Moscow; and Natalia Avdeeva, co-chair, the Institute of Man, Moscow, in conjunction with colleagues from other institutions). The members of the Program Committee include Rainer K. Silbereisen and Kenneth Rubin. Although a list of potential speakers has been generated, invitations have not been sent out yet. The current budget stands at \$35,000 with promised support from ISSBD.

The President, Kenneth Rubin, suggested that the amount of funding used to support the workshop program in 2003 will be raised to \$ 35,000. The EC approved the proposal.

9. Ad Hoc Advisors

The EC decided to extend by two years the terms of the ad hoc advisors, whose terms end in 2002.

10. Ad Hoc Membership Committee

A written report of the Chair of the Membership Committee, W. Andrew Collins, was approved by the EC. It was concluded that the committee has done very important work, resulting in recruitment of new members and in the provision of opportunities for members to get in touch with the Society. The EC thanks Andrew Collins and his committee for the important work that they did for the society.

11. Report from the ISSBD-WHO Collaboration

Suman Verma, ISSBD representative to WHO, reported about recent developments in the collaboration with WHO. The EC approved her report.

12. The President closed the EC Meeting by thanking the members for their time.

Jari-Erik Nurmi
Secretary General

Executive Committee Meeting: Ottawa, Canada, August 6, 2002

Members of the EC present: Xinyin Chen, Patricia Greenfield, Jari-Erik Nurmi (Secretary General), Anne Petersen (President-Elect), Kenneth Rubin (Past President), Avi Sagi, Barry Schneider (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Rainer K. Silbereisen (President), Peter Smith, Suman Verma.

Ad hoc advisors present: Tatiana Yermolova.

Apologies for absence received from: Avshalom Caspi, Roger Dixon, Candida Peterson, Richard Tremblay

1. Opening

The President, Rainer K. Silbereisen, welcomed the Executive Meeting (EC) members and ad hoc members.

2. Future Plans of the Society

The President, Silbereisen, raised six key topics for the future development of the ISSBD.

First, there is a need to find ways to increase the membership, in particular, among younger scholars. This is due to the fact that the ISSBD is currently facing a change in the generations of its members. The President will select a new Membership Committee and work together with them to develop the membership policy of the Society. The EC also discussed some technical developments related to the membership, such as a need to move to an online membership directory.

Second, there is a need to work on long-range plans to provide a more steady basis for financing the Society's activities, such as workshops. For example, to guarantee financial support for the ISSBD workshops, Silbereisen suggested that the Society prepare a master plan for the future workshop series. The preparation of the master plan will be done by Rainer K. Silbereisen and Anne Petersen. Third, extra effort should be invested to further develop the Biennial Meetings. For instance, there is a need to work in the direction of Congress programs covering all the key fields of behavioral development. As another example, the EC discussed the possibility of building up special interest groups in future biennial meetings.

Fourth, there is a need to develop the Society in a more professional direction. For instance, the Steering Committee will search for the possibility to build up a central office that is able to take care of some of the key activities of the society, and to help Congress organizers in some activities. Moreover, the possibility of outsourcing some of the Society's activities was discussed. There is also a need to develop co-operation with

allied disciplines and related societies, such as SRCD and IUPSY. The importance of identifying regional societies for behavioral development as possible partners was also discussed.

Fifth, the Society should develop ways to give recognition for people who have made substantial contribution to the Society or to the field of behavioral development, in general. Kenneth Rubin will work on the structure of awards and recognitions. In this context, alternative forms of prizes and recognitions were suggested and discussed. Finally, the EC applauded the efforts of the European Society of Developmental Psychology to increase co-operation between the two societies.

The EC approved the President's suggestions.

3. The Biennial Meetings

The EC discussed the XVIIIth Biennial Meetings in Ghent, and concluded with a few suggestions to the Programme and Organizing Committees of the meeting.

4. Elections

The EC discussed the upcoming elections and the timing of the election process. Past President, Kenneth Rubin, will chair the elections and act together with the Secretary General. The next Newsletter will include the Call for Nominations.

5. Other Relevant Business

It was decided that the next Meeting of the Executive Committee will be in Tampa, Florida, U.S.A., on Thursday, April 24th, 2003, 8.00-10.00 before the SRCD meetings.

6. The President closed the EC Meeting by thanking the members for their time.

Jari-Erik Nurmi
Secretary General



18th Biennial ISSBD Meeting

The 2004 meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development will be held in **Ghent**, an exquisite medieval town in the heart of Flanders (Belgium) between Bruges, Antwerp and Brussels, **July 11-15, 2004**.

website: <http://allserv.rug.ac.be/ISSBD2004> (from Feb. 2003 onwards).

issbd@rug.ac.be

Submission deadlines:

- **Symposia:** September 10, 2003
- **Posters:** October 1, 2003

If you want to receive regularly updated information about this meeting send an e-mail with your name and address to issbd@rug.ac.be

The complete announcement, including submission forms, will be available in February 2003 and sent to all ISSBD members and anyone who requested it.

Information about the conference is available from the **Dept. of Developmental and Personality Psychology Ghent University, Henri Dunantlaan 2 B-9000 Ghent BELGIUM**
Fax: + 32 (0) 9 2646486

The social program will be available from September 2003, and will feature various pre- and post-conference tours.

Editorial

Editor

Joan G. Miller

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