

CULTURE & SOCIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT LAB



ABOUT OUR LAB & RESEARCH

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In the Culture and Social Identity Development Laboratory, we aim to understand the experiences of diverse children as they begin to form their gender and racial/ethnic identities. We seek to investigate children's early attitudes (e.g. towards girls and boys), thoughts (e.g. group stereotypes), and behaviors (e.g. choosing feminine or masculine clothing) that are linked with their developing identities with the goal of encouraging academic achievement, respectful peer relationships, and a positive sense of self.

This newsletter describes some of the studies that we are currently working on or have already completed. We hope that you and your child have enjoyed being a part of our research. We encourage you to sign up and participate this upcoming semester as well!

PARTICIPATING CENTERS 2018–2019

Much of the research described in this newsletter has been made possible by many parents, children, schools, centers, programs, teachers and staff. We thank these schools and centers for their participation.



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COMPLETED STUDIES

Children's Perceptions of Gender and Status

When do children show knowledge of women's, men's, girls', and boys' social status (e.g., political influence and importance, economic power, and respect)? Do children's perceptions of social status for gender groups vary by age and gender? To address these questions, researchers interviewed kindergarteners, 2nd graders, and 4th graders. Children answered questions about girls' and boys' influence (e.g., how many girls/boys they saw as leaders) and how they viewed women and men (e.g., who made important decisions, earned more money). Across all measures and ages, boys believed that boys and men had more influence and status. Girls believed that girls had more influence than boys, but women and men had equal status or men had higher status (depending on the measure). This suggests that same-gender favoritism may influence children's early perceptions of status related to gender, especially when making judgements about other children. Future work is needed to test if perceptions of status could have implications for children's (i) engagement with or avoidance of gender-stereotyped activities and interests, and (ii) respect and value for girls and boys.

- *CSULB undergraduates: Melissa Ehlers, Julyssa Juarez, Elaine Scenters-Zapico*
- *Data was collected at Arizona State University: Rachel E. Cook, Dr. Carol Lynn Martin (Principal Investigator)*

COMPLETED STUDIES

Psychological Distress Among African–American and Latina Immigrant Mothers and Links to Their Children's Psychological Adjustment

Many women experience psychological distress (e.g., feeling depressed or hopeless) after major life events such as childbirth. Ethnic minority women from low-income backgrounds may be especially at risk because they often lack resources, yet their experiences have been understudied. In addition, mothers' mental health may have far-reaching implications for their families, particularly for their child's psychological adjustment. Researchers interviewed African-American, Mexican immigrant, and Dominican immigrant mothers annually from when their children were 6 months old until 1st grade, asking about their psychological distress and their child's adjustment. We found evidence for 2 types of distress patterns: 8.5% of mothers experienced moderate distress levels, and 91.5% of mothers experienced low distress levels, both with little change over time. Further, children of mothers with moderate distress tended to exhibit greater internalizing symptoms (e.g., feeling sad, being withdrawn), externalizing symptoms (e.g., hitting, yelling), and hyperactivity in the first grade compared to children of mothers with low distress. These findings underscore the importance of supporting the mental health of mothers, as it has implications for both mother's and children's well-being.

- *CSULB graduate student: Alisha Osornio; Collaborator: Dr. Sean Lane (Purdue University)*
- *Data collected at New York University, Dr. Catherine Tamis-LeMonda, Dr. Hirokazu Yoshikawa (Principal Investigators)*

CURRENT STUDIES

Valuing Physical Appearance and Strength in Early Childhood

As children develop a sense of being a girl or a boy, do they start to adopt gender-stereotypical values? For instance, do girls with a strong sense of gender identity care a lot about looking pretty? Do boys with a strong sense of being a boy care a lot about being physically strong? We are currently conducting a study examining children’s developing identities and girls and boys in relation to how much they value their physical appearance or strength. We will assess these aspects by asking the children some questions about gender (e.g. “Do you think about being a girl?”) and appearances/strength (e.g. “Is it important to be strong or not important to be strong?”), as well as having them complete several activities related to valuing appearance and strength.



Gender and Racial/Ethnic Attitudes Across the US

People vary in their attitudes towards girls, boys, women, men, and people from different racial and ethnic groups. Some people may feel positively or negatively towards certain groups without realizing it. How do we come to have these attitudes, and when do these attitudes start to develop? We are currently conducting a study to examine children’s developing attitudes towards girls, boys, and children from various racial/ethnic backgrounds. We are specifically examining if where a child lives might impact these attitudes. This study is part of a collaboration among 5 universities from different regions in the U.S. (Hawaii, Seattle, North Carolina, Connecticut, and California). We will assess these aspects by asking the children some questions (e.g. “Who do you think is in charge?” “This kid is sitting here. Where do you wanna sit?”), showing them some pictures, and having them complete some interactive games using a tablet device. With this study, we hope to understand how biases can first form in order to promote equality, fair treatment, and respect for all groups.

This study is supported by the **National Science Foundation**



- Data is also being collected by Dr. Yarrow Dunham (Yale University), Dr. Sarah Gaither (Duke University), Dr. Kristina Olson (University of Washington), and Dr. Kristin Pauker (University of Hawaii)

CURRENT STUDIES

Play and Learning Across a Year

Infant behavior is important to the study of development; however, recently the study of infant behavior has often been either overlooked or only conducted in structured lab settings. At this age, infants' and toddlers' movement abilities, language, object manipulation, and social interactions are changing rapidly. To better examine infant behavior, we and several other researchers will observe the behavior of infants and toddlers with their mothers in natural play at home. Videos will be taken of the natural play and home settings to examine infant behavior in a manner that reflects real-time development. These videos will later be combined into a large database contributed to by 60+ experts from across the U.S., with our site representing Southern California. This project will be the first of its kind. With this large-scale project, we can achieve a better understanding of infant behavior and answer questions related to the influence of environment and experience on infants' learning and development.

- *This study will take place in 2020. Infants 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months of age may participate.*
- *This study is supported by the National Institutes of Health for Child Health and Human Development, Fisher-Price, and The LEGO Foundation.*
- *Principal Investigators: Dr. Karen Adolph (New York University), Dr. Catherine Tamis-LeMonda (New York University), and Dr. Rick Gilmore (Penn State University)*



RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

Talks

- ***The Society for Research in Child Development***, Biennial Meeting, Baltimore, MD

Conferences

- ***California State University, Long Beach, Psychology Day***, Long Beach, CA
- ***Western Psychological Association***, Pasadena, CA
- ***The Society for Personality and Social Psychology***, Portland, OR
- ***The Society for Research in Child Development***, Baltimore, MD

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Gutierrez, B. C.*, Halim, M. D., Martinez, M. A.*, & Arredondo, M.* (2019, Online first). The heroes and the helpless: The development of benevolent sexism in children. *Sex Roles*. <https://rdcu.be/bMN5X>
- Gutierrez, B.C.*, Halim, M.D., Ng, F.F., Kwak, K., Ortiz-Cubias, S.*, Cheng, G.Y., & Sze, I.N. (2019) Gendered appearances among young children and in the media: An East-West cultural comparison. *Sex Roles*.
- Martinez, M.A.*, Osornio, A.*, Halim, M.D., & Zosuls, K.M. (2019). Gender: Awareness, identity, and stereotyping. In Bronwell, J. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Infant and Early Child Development (2nd ed.)*. New York, NY: Elsevier.

*denotes current or former CSULB undergraduate or graduate students

—STUDENT AWARDS & HONORS—

- Western Psychological Association, International Psychology, Honorable Mention for student 1st-authored poster award: *Alisha Osornio*
- CSULB Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Student Summer Research Award: *Alisha Osornio*
- CSULB Psychology Most Outstanding Senior in Psychology Award: *Elaine Scenters-Zapico*
- CSULB Psychology Outstanding Senior in Psychology Award: *Julie Rossi*
- CSULB Psychology Poster Competition – Proposed Undergraduate Research 1st place: *Julie Rossi, Emerald Lee, Sachiko Tawa, Dylan Sakamoto*
- CSULB Psychology Poster Competition – Proposed Graduate Research 1st place: *Alisha Osornio*

—SPECIAL SHOUT-OUTS

It has been a wonderful year of accomplishments for students in our lab. Congratulations to:

- ***Samantha Sanders*** for her recent acceptance into the San Diego State University's Master Program for School Psychology and Education Specialist
- For graduating with a B.A. in Psychology:
 - ***Elaine Scenters-Zapico, Julie Rossi, Emily Wang, Megan Fisher, Eric Cortez***



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your lab.

- We are researchers from the psychology department at California State University, Long Beach. Dr. May Ling Halim is the director of the lab and the principal investigator. Our research focuses on children's social identity (gender, race/ethnicity) development. All researchers are graduate and undergraduate students that were screened through a competitive application process and were selected by Dr. Halim. They have all been trained specifically to work with children by Dr. Halim. They have also completed IRB ethics training.

2. My child has already participated in one (or more) of your studies, should I still participate this year?

- Our current studies can only interview children who have not yet participated. However, please let us know if your child has friends who are interested in participating, and we are actively looking for infants for the PLAY study. Our researchers can go to the child's home or children can come to our research lab. Participants will be compensated for their time.

3. I know of a center that would be interested in your research. Is there a way to put you in contact with each other?

- Yes! We are always interested in working with different institutions and would appreciate a referral. You can send information about the center and your name to CLA-ChildDev.research@csulb.edu or call our lab at: (562) 985-7195.

4. How can I learn more/participate in your studies?

- For more information about our studies and participation please email us at CLA-ChildDev.research@csulb.edu or call us at: (562) 985-7195. You may also visit our website at <http://web.csulb.edu/~mhalim/index.html>.

5. Where can I find the results of the study?

- For past studies, if you'd like to be put on a list for notification of publication, email us at CLA-ChildDev.research@csulb.edu, call us at: (562) 985-7195 or inform a research assistant. You may also ask to subscribe to our newsletter to keep up-to-date with our research studies. It also allows you to be informed of studies during the research process. For current studies, we are still collecting data. When data collection is completed we then interpret our data and results. Then comes publication. This may take a long time, as it involves writing, reviewing, editing, and rewriting.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

If you would like more information on any of our studies, would like to participate in a study at our on-campus laboratory, or would like to know if we will be revisiting your school/center, we can be reached through:

Email: CLA-ChildDev.research@csulb.edu

Lab phone: (562) 985-7195

Website: <http://web.csulb.edu/~mhalim/participate.html>



We also plan to conduct further research at various sites in Long Beach and other surrounding areas during the 2019-2020 school year. Thank you so much for your participation and interest in our research! None of this could have been achieved without your participation.

