Expectations and resources in different contexts of development: Towards positive developmental outcomes among Filipino youth

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The field of positive youth development gives value to young persons' capacities to actualize their potentials and to volitionally work towards their own development. Young persons' efforts, however, need to be sustained by the resources and support provided by adults and peers in various contexts of development. This special issue of the Philippine Journal of Psychology contains focus groups studies of Filipino youth's articulations and perspectives of their experiences in the family, peer group, school, and workplace. There are also papers examining select developmental outcomes (mental health, political participation, and spirituality). This introduction to the special issue gives an overview of how Filipino youth are socialized into performing duties for the family, nurturing relationships, and working towards one's personal growth. Various resources are available to the youth to pursue these tasks; foremost of these are supportive relationships and their own valuing of both self and others. Together, these expectations and resources engender in youth prosocial involvement and lakas ng loob (strength of inner self). In conclusion, this paper proposes that the integration of self and others in the young person’s emerging identity is a central theme of Filipino positive youth development.

Keywords: positive youth development, identity, youth, Philippines

The field of positive youth development is built on the tenet that young persons, given the needed resources and support, can harness their qualities for healthy development (Damon, 2004; Lerner, et al., 2005). The term
“thriving” (Lerner, Dowling & Anderson, 2003) aptly describes how the youth’s community involvements and relations with caring adults and peers (e.g. Damon, 2004) set them on the path towards becoming mature adults who contribute to self, others, and society (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 2006).

Just what characterizes a “thriving” young person has been identified. There is the “Five Cs” of positive youth development (1) competence in academic, social, emotional, and occupational areas, (2) a sense of connection to self and others (even the transcendent), (3) confidence in one’s identity, (3) a character based on virtues and values, and (4) caring or compassion (Lerner, et al., 2003; Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg, 2000). There also are the “character strengths” of positive psychology, deemed as protective factors against physical and mental health problems and as enabling factors for development (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Relatedly, youth development programs aim at developing character and critical life skills, such as self-determination, self-efficacy, resilience, belief in the future, spirituality, bonding, and prosocial involvement (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Youth programs also target “developmental strengths” (cf. Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006), or personal attributes, competencies, and dispositions for successful engagement with the community. Whether referred to as thriving, outcomes, or strengths, these constructs represent positive youth development and can even be considered as markers for successful young-adult development (Benson & Scales, 2004).

An important question about positive youth development pertains to the factors that facilitate the development of youth’s capacities, such as life circumstances and experiences (Catalano et al., 2004), and family and social capital resources and support systems (Edwards & Taub, 2009; King & Furrow, 2004). It is not only external factors, however, that facilitate development but so do the youth’s own qualities, such as their perceptions of caring from others (Garno-Overway et al., 2009) and their intentional self-regulatory capacities (Gestsdóttir & Lerner, 2007).

Research inquiries on how external factors and personal qualities jointly contribute to development are consistent with the systems development viewpoint of human development theory, which emphasizes the dynamic and systemic relations among the biological, psychological, and ecological levels of organization of the human development system (Lerner, 2006). Of particular importance to youth development research is the predication of the systems development viewpoint that the key process to human development lies in the relations between the individual and his or her
ecological contexts of development (Gestsdöttir & Lerner, 2007; Kagıtçibabı, 2007), with contexts including the family, the community, and culture (Lerner, 2006). These contexts provide the youth with the regularity and complexity of interactions that are necessary for development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The Papers in this Special Issue

It is the perspective of positive youth development, together with the systems development viewpoint of human development theory, that serves as basis for the investigations on Filipino positive youth development that now appear in this special issue of the *Philippine Journal of Psychology*.

Exploratory in nature, these investigations involve seven sets of focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted among Filipino middle-to-late adolescents with heterogeneous socio-economic and geographical backgrounds. The objective is to document Filipino youth's accounts of their socialization experiences in important contexts of development. Thus, there are papers about the family, the school, the peer group, and the workplace (in the case of working youth).

The paper "Adolescent identity in the context of the Filipino family" (Garo-Santiago, Mansukhani, & Resurreccion, in this volume) shows the centrality of role taking and enactment in forming adolescent identity. Through meaningful and strategic role-taking and involvement in family activities, which is anchored on adult support, adolescents acquire an identity supportive of family and aware of social concerns affecting it. On the other hand, the adolescents' negotiations with adult family members on how they ought to fulfill their roles and obligations form in them a sense of autonomy.

The paper "Motivational and social aspects of the Filipino college experience (Reyes & Galang, in this volume) shows that even in a task-oriented setting such as the school, Filipino youth's motivations for completing school work go beyond desires for task mastery and personal achievement. While the youth have motivations that are academic or professional, they also have motivations that are social: the positive and edifying relationships between themselves and their classmates and teachers, the development of self that goes beyond the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, and the filial and familial piety and gratitude that drive them to excel.

The paper "Barkadahan: A study of peer group norms and values among Filipino adolescents" (Lajom, Canoy, Amarnani, Parcon, & Valera, in this volume) explores the role of the barkada (peer group) as socialization agents. Belonging to a barkada enables the youth to discover their capacities as
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social beings, to broaden their understanding of self and the other, and to develop social-emotional maturity. These outcomes are achieved as the youth take part in processes salient in the life of the barkada: pagiging kadamay (empathizing and commiserating), which leads to the development of prosocial perspective and behavior; and, pakikisama (smooth interpersonal relationship), which teaches adolescents the rules for participation in collective life outside of one’s family.

The paper “Filipino working adolescents’ conceptions of work” (Yabut, Amarnani, Mendoza, Lee, & Valencia, in this volume) looks at the meanings and values ascribed to work by working adolescents. On one hand, working adolescents perceive work as an important way of showing their concern for and support for their families, specially in difficult financial situations. On the other hand, adolescents perceive work as a means towards personal growth, as it gives them experience and the wherewithal for their schooling. Thus, while work provides adolescents the opportunity to perform prosocial acts towards their families, work also enables them to exercise personal agency as they initiate and act upon their own personal goals.

While some papers in this special issue focus on a specific context of development, there also are papers that focus on some positive developmental outcomes. Thus, there are papers on mental health, political participation, and spirituality.

The paper “Filipino youth’s concerns and worries and their ways of coping” (Lapeña, Tarroja, Tirazona, & Fernando, in this volume) documents youth’s common problems and how they cope with these. The youth participants worry about the lack of resources for meeting their families’ needs, the uncertainty of their futures, and the conflicts they experience within and with others. They manage to maintain a stable mental health because of support from a wide social network that includes family, peers, and older figures and authorities in the community. While these persons have provided them with material resources, they also support the youth primarily by listening to, empathizing, and guiding them. Certain perspectives and skills also help the youth cope: hopefulness and youthfulness, faith in the strength of their inner selves (lakas ng loob) and in God, cognitive and emotional management, and resourcefulness and perseverance.

The paper “The youth speak: Forms, facilitators and obstacles to their political participation” (Sta. Maria & Diestro, in this volume) aims to determine the reasons for political participation and nonparticipation of Filipino high school students. Discussions with the participants reveal that young people engage themselves politically only when they see that they have fulfilled certain expectations, such as valuing education, possessing
sufficient knowledge for participation in the adult world, and being motivated to directly contribute to the betterment of others. The participants offer an array of forms of political participation, from taking their studies seriously, engaging in prosocial acts, being good citizens, to participating in community activities while rightfully availing of community resources. Interesting is a rural-urban difference, with rural participants emphasizing community involvement and urban participants emphasizing civic activities learned in school.

The paper “Spirituality and the development of positive character among Filipino adolescents” (Mansukhani & Resurreccion, in this volume) examines adolescents’ spiritual experiences and development, and their conceptions of spirituality. Spiritual engagement is fostered through the socialization provided by adults, the positive influence of peer models, and participation in community spiritual activities. The adolescent participants think of spirituality largely as pertaining to faith in and relationship with God, which they see as embodied in positive qualities for developing self and for relating to others. Pertaining to development of self, the participants discuss spiritual experiences as self-transforming and they regard spirituality as a guide for developing character and for attaining personal growth, adjustment, and well-being. On the other hand, with regard to relating to others, the participants see the spiritual person as embodying morality, altruism, and prosocial behavior.

The works presented in this special issue contribute findings and insights on how socialization processes in different developmental contexts shape Filipino youth to be resources for their own development. The papers that focus on a context of development underscore the importance of providing the youth the opportunity to craft roles that are meaningful to the family, the school, the peer group, and the larger community. On the other hand, the papers on mental health, political participation, and spirituality show how these dimensions of development are shaped in different contexts. Findings from these studies can deepen our understanding of the contextual requirements that will inspire and enable young persons to invest their emerging capacities and strengths in the pursuit of so-called positive life trajectories (Damon, 2004; Larson, 2000) that, in turn, will benefit society and others.

The following sections offer an integration and analysis of the papers’ conclusions. First, it discusses what the youth participants perceive as expectations others have of them across different socialization contexts. Next, it discusses the resources availed by the participants to meet these expectations. Finally, we offer specifications of developmental outcomes
that we think are engendered by these expectations and resources and are of concern to, or valued by, young Filipinos.

Expectations Conveyed to the Youth through Socializations in the Different Contexts of Development

The family, peer group, school, and the workplace convey certain expectations on the youth on how they should be or what they should do. Oftentimes, these norms of behaviors are not explicitly articulated to the youth, but are conveyed through day-to-day social interactions (Arnett, 1995).

These expectations have been documented in literature, such as assisting in household tasks (Liwag, de la Cruz, & Macapagal, 1999), being loyal to one’s peer group (Lanuza, 2000), doing well in school (Gastardo-Conaco, Jimenez, & Billedo, 2003), and keeping a job to contribute to the family’s finances (Liwag, et al., 1999). The Filipino youth in fact has been noted to capably assume multiple roles and responsibilities (Puyat, 2003). Many expectations described in literature are also included in the findings of the papers this issue. That this journal issue presents these expectations across contexts facilitates an examination of commonalities. One observation is that expectations from different contexts can be categorized into (a) performing duties to the family and to others, (b) nurturing relationships with others, and (c) taking advantage of opportunities for personal growth.

The expectation to perform duties for the family. The Filipino youth’s participation in improving the welfare of the family has been well-documented in literature (e.g., Liwag, et al., 1999; Telzer & Fuligni, 2009). The articles that appear in this issue also document this kind of participation.

The article on the Filipino family (Garo-Santiago, Mansukhani, & Resurreccion, in this issue) documents the duty of the youth to help in household tasks and in the care and bringing up of younger siblings. Also documented in this article are the parental demands on the youth to improve one’s and the family’s social and financial status by getting an education and even by holding a job to help with the family’s current expenses. In fact, it is evident from the FGDs about school and work that the youth see their school and work involvements as instrumental to meeting their family’s economic aspirations.

Another familial expectation on youth is to exhibit socially appropriate choices and behavior, for example, in their clothing, appearance, demeanor, and choice of friends (Garo-Santiago, et al., in this issue). The fact that many of the participants in the FGDs on the family not only articulated
these behavioral expectations, but also their need for continued parental approval of their behaviors, suggests that the family continues to have a major say on what behaviors are socially acceptable or desirable. That the family continues to exert influence on the youth in this regard is not at all surprising considering how family socialization literature has highlighted the strong influence of the family in youth's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Arnett, 1995; Barber, 1997; Liwag, et al., 1999).

The expectation to maintain and nurture relationships with others. FGD participants for the family, school, and peer-group contexts mention the norm of maintaining reciprocal obligations with others. As they recognize the good that others have done to them, so also do they feel the need, or at least recognize the expectation, to reciprocate. For example, participants recognize that the give-and-take in the peer group enables acceptance of oneself by peers and nurturance of peer relationships. The expectation to maintain and nurture relationships with others may be salient in the minds of the participants given that they define the salient construct of "family" in terms of mutuality of support. The youth may well be aware of such expectations not only in the family but also in larger contexts given previous findings of Filipino youth's endorsement of volunteerism and community involvement coupled with their awareness of rewards in exchange for these practices (Ogena, 1999).

Filipino youth, however, do not necessarily subscribe to a strict reciprocity in which one party makes an accounting of what the other party has given and then gives exactly just as much. In the article on youth's political participation, for example, there are no clear indications that the youth are looking for gains, whether material or nonmaterial, from political involvements. Previous literature, in fact, tells of the unselfish qualities of a politically mature individual, in particular, the demand on oneself to be a good person and to be good to others, even to the extent of sacrificing personal interest for the common good (Gomez & Fausto, 1986 as cited in Ogena, 1999). Even in contexts outside the political arena, helping may be done volitionally for the good of the other, rather than out of the desire to please others, to obey commands, or to feed one's ego.

The expectation to take advantage of opportunities for personal growth. Filipino youth respect others' expectations and wishes (Puyat, 2003) but without necessarily sacrificing their individuality or personal goals (Ogena, 1999). The youth participants for both school and work in fact recognize that the reasons for their engagement in these contexts are not limited to pragmatic reasons but also include character development and personal growth.
While the participants in the study about school aim to develop academic and professional competencies in order to fulfill their family’s aspirations, some of them recognize, too, the intrinsic value of these competencies and thus seek to acquire knowledge and skills for their own advantage. They also value education as it develops self and provides one with the criteria for right living.

A similar appreciation of the contribution of work to self-development is evident among participants in the FGDs about work. They recognize that participation in the workforce calls for maturity and responsibility (“to be an adult”) and that it can very well prepare them for future adult roles. It is important for youth to see work as critical to one’s development and maturity given findings that work seen as personally meaningful has been found to be more satisfying than work seen as means for monetary and material gains (Chaves, et al., 2004).

The expectation to take advantage of opportunities for personal growth is present in the peer group as well, albeit this expectation assumes a different form. Indicated in the findings are two behaviors much expected in the peer group. First, the young person is expected to interact in a genuine, sincere, and consistent manner. This behavior is seen as necessary for gaining and maintaining membership in the peer group. Second, the young person is expected to show adherence to beliefs, to exhibit traits, and to practice behaviors that the peer group subscribes to. Thus, while young persons have to be true to oneself so as to live up to the first expectation, they are also expected to be loyal to the peer group’s beliefs and norms. Balancing these two expectations requires authenticity to, and consistency in dealings with, one’s self and one’s peers. Authenticity and consistency in turn presuppose or require that the young person comes to know and acknowledge who one is, perhaps seeing oneself with the peer group as backdrop, and then presenting one’s true self to the peers. When this true self is consistent with the group’s beliefs and norms, the person gains and maintains membership in the peer group. We interpret these behavioral expectations as expectations for personal growth and identity formation, given the findings from personal narratives of identity formation of young adults (Schachter, 2002) that consistency and authenticity are two basic structural criteria for adopting or rejecting an identity.

Resources Given to the Youth through Socializations in the Different Contexts of Development

Apart from conveying behavioral expectations on the youth, the different contexts of development also provide youth the various resources to meet
these expectation (Hobfoll, 1989). In this section, we look at youths’ relationships with significant socializing agents as resource. While young persons’ relations place expectations on the youth, they also provide the support and the wherewithal for meeting expectations.

Another resource discussed in this section is the set of values into which youth are socialized through their interactions in different contexts (cf. Allen, Weissberg, & Hawkins, 1989). Values are often reflected in the expectations placed on the youth (e.g., looking after the family’s needs while setting aside one’s concerns reflects valuing the family). It should be noted, however, that values are not located in obligations per se, but in the self, that is, in how one wants to act in ways that reflect such valuing (Wringe, 1998). In other words, if obligations are valued or as seen as important, then they are owned and one’s behaviors become governed not so much by others’ expectations but by one’s initiative and volition. In this section, we discuss the valuing of relationships, of self, and of family. The findings reported in this issue suggest that these values together lead to a social agentic self, who shows sensitivity, responsiveness, and responsibility to others.

**Family and peers as resources.** The major role of the family and of parents in child and adolescent development is almost universally acknowledged. By emulating their parents’ behaviors and through the opportunities accorded to them in the family, children develop their potentials and acquire values and interpersonal and communications skills (Carandang & Lee-Chua, 2008). How a child behaves in part mirrors the family. Thus, when trying to understand or explain a child’s behavior, a clinician must be aware of the goings-on in the family and examine how these events trigger, maintain, or sustain the child’s behavior (Carandang, 2002). Even a child’s future behaviors may in part be traced to family. Tan (2002), for example, relates a child’s potential for coping well as an adult to the father’s active involvement in the child’s life and his show of positive affect to the child.

How the youth see their family as contributing to their development is documented in this issue’s article on the family. The youth participants acknowledge the financial support for their education of their parents, older siblings, or extended family, often amidst economic hardships; the mutual care and support among family members; and the advices given by their parents and older family members.

The peer group is another important resource for youth development. Although negative influences of peers on the young person has been documented (e.g., drinking), peers are documented to be doing worthwhile activities together, such as studying, playing sports, and going to church (Miralao, 2004). Peers also give each other help and support by being open
to each other about their views and problems; they can easily understand each other, given their common experiences (Miralao, 2004).

The article on the peer group also documents peer companionship, help, and support. In particular, pakikisama (smooth interpersonal relationship) is mentioned in the form of genuinely wishing to be involved in the peer group’s conversations, experiences, and decisions. For these youth, pakikisama is the vehicle for showing emotional support and concrete forms of help, such as giving advises and helping in their friends’ studies. The articles on school and mental health issue also document other sources of support for the youth, including a wider circle of classmates and school acquaintances, extended family, teachers, and authorities in the community.

Valuing relationships as a resource. The articles in this issue consistently indicate that valuing relationships is a primary value for the youth. While Cruz, Laguna, and Raymundo (2002) describe Filipino adolescent as “socially restrained”, because only about half engage in social activities such as parties and sports. The FGD participants’ frequent and clear articulations of their relationships reveal the richness of their social selves and their valuing of relationships. Admittedly, the participants refer to mere day-to-day ordinary social dealings, but what is striking is how the participants value these for the mutual care and support they experience.

That Filipino youth are social and that they value relationships are consistent with social concepts being salient to and valued by Filipinos, as documented in literature. For example, Filipinos ranked the concepts of concern for others and interpersonal warmth (Church, Katigbak, & Castañeda, 2002) as top healthy concepts. A study on the Kapwa theory (Clemente, et al., 2008) shows the youth’s endorsement of kagandahang-loob (goodness of heart), katarungan (justice), pakikipagkapwa (relating benevolently or compassionately with others), and paggalang (respect for others). This study also shows that values can be set on two dimensions: a continuum between self and others and a continuum between one’s immediate circle and the larger society.

Valuing family as a resource. Notwithstanding literature on the importance of peers during the period of adolescence, it is family relationships that are valued most by the FGD participants across this issue’s articles. This is suggested by the participants’ articulations of strong positive sentiments towards family members (especially to parents), their respect and obedience to parents, and their participation to processes that lead to family harmony. Not only do the youth put a premium on filial love and family cohesion and support, they also ascribe to family as their primary motivation for meeting the expectations of school and of present and future employment.
The primacy of the family in the youth's hierarchy of values is evident in how the youth regard economic and emotional problems brought about by separation of parents, unemployment in the family, or a sibling's early marriage. Although these circumstances lessen the support the youth receive from family (e.g., decreased financial support, decreased parental guidance and attention), the youth nevertheless understand these circumstances in terms of self-ascribed expectations, for example, to strive harder in school, to bear the situation with greater fortitude, and to be more dependable and responsible. It is possible that, at least for some youth, the expectation to put family before self is internalized early on with little ill-feeling or resentment. This is not to say that the youth tend to develop a servile attitude or blind obedience to family, given how participants are reported to negotiate with parents their roles in the family. The youth's willing but intelligent assumptions of expectations suggest that the tagasalo personality (Arellano-Carandang, 1987; Tian, 2004), or someone who shoulders the problems and anxieties of others, has a positive and healthy slant.

Admittedly, family is not always a resource. That family problems do arise and children and youth are negatively affected by these have been documented by Carandang and colleagues. Carandang and Lee-Chua (2008), for example, discuss how familial expectations on academically gifted children to excel may lead to unhappiness in these children, who miss out on the joys of play and who become too hard on themselves. Arrelano-Carandang (1987) discusses how stresses in the family negatively influence its young, vulnerable members, and Arellano-Carandang, Sison, and Carandang (2007) examine Filipino family difficulties when mothers leave home to work abroad.

What the articles in this issue remind us, however, is the positive side of valuing the family. While the traditional Asian value of familialism (that is, a reliance on family in dealing with one's concerns, problems, and conflicts) is recently undermined by globalization trends (Inoguchi, Mikamim & Fujii, 2007), it remains to be a resource for the youth, a value they can hold on to, as anchor and guide, given the rapid changes happening to them developmentally and societally.

Valuing self as a resource. The self can be seen as a resource for its own development since it is the young persons themselves who take on duties and responsibilities; ultimately, their relations cannot do these for themselves. The concrete ways in which the youth can and do depend on themselves are documented in the articles on mental health, political participation, and spirituality. Thus, the youth cope positively with their problems (e.g., seeking help, talking about and actively resolving their problems, managing one's emotions and cognitions); they are engaged in
their studies and in prosocial activities and see both of these as contributing to political participation; and, they practice altruism, religion, and forms of spiritual coping, seeing meaning, and deriving strength in them.

The fact that the self is valued may very well be true for a significant number of youth. The youth’s valuing of their contributions, for example, runs across the different focus groups accounts. That adolescents derive a sense of purpose and fulfillment from assisting their families (Telzer & Fuligni, 2009) also points towards adolescents’ appreciation of themselves.

Still the self can be seen as a resource for its own development in a different, perhaps deeper, sense. A recurring underlying theme in the articles in this issue is the youth’s understanding of the importance and necessity of the roles they play in different contexts, especially in the family, and in their acceptance of these roles. What these roles are and how the self accepts and enacts them are taken to be integral components of a young person’s emerging identity, not only evident in the young person’s emotions and behaviors (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995 cited in Goldblatt & Eisikovits, 2005), but also potentially becoming integral aspects of how they come to see and define themselves.

The conclusions of the articles in this issue suggest how the youth’s current and future roles may become integrated into their adult identities. Thus, the young, maturing person is in the process of having a positive view of self, defined in terms of commitment to and trust in the family and other relationships; of authenticity and consistency in one’s behaviors; and, of katatagan (fortitude), lakas ng loob (courage), and trust in oneself amidst adversities. Obviously, these so-called aspects of self-commitment, authenticity of character, fortitude, and the like – make for a strong self, are needed in many situations, and are in themselves (inner) resources.

Positive Developmental OutcomesPossibly Engendered by Expectations and Resources Present in Different Contexts of Development

Literature has shown how the opportunities, support, and resources provided by different developmental contexts promote positive youth development (Benson, et al., 2006). The papers in this special issue also suggest so; that is, when young persons respond positively to expectations and when they take on the values socialized therein, they develop competencies for successfully engaging with the world. While it is not the objective of these papers to conclusively attribute positive outcomes to certain characteristics of developmental contexts, these papers provide Filipino youth’s accounts of what they have acquired, learned, or developed.
Specifically, two developmental outcomes mentioned in literature are clearly and consistently depicted across the papers in this issue: prosocial involvement and (strength of inner self).

Across developmental contexts, youth participants are involved in activities and roles with the expressed goal of assisting and serving others. Thus, their engagements, to the extent that these are voluntary and intended to help or benefit others, can be called "prosocial behavior" (cf. Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010).

In the peer group, on the other hand, the youth participants report learning and exhibiting skills intricately linked to the development of prosocial attitudes and involvement (Lajom, et al., in this volume). These skills include regulating emotions and empathizing so as to understand and relate to peers; consensus decision-making and managing conflicts so as to get along with others; and, performing mutual acts of (depending on each other in times of need) so as to provide support and protection to peers in need. These social skills correspond to some of the skills identified by Barr and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2007) as necessary for prosocial behaviors, namely, being perceptive of the feelings and perspective of others, getting along well with others, and being generous and thoughtful.

Even in the more personal domains of spirituality and mental health, the youth regard prosocial behaviors as relevant and important. Participants in the FGDs on spirituality consider as spiritual their experiencing a sense of well-being when they act altruistically towards someone in need without expecting anything in return. In the domain of mental health, on the other hand, the youth participants acknowledge as a valuable resource for coping with their problems the prosocial behaviors in the family (theirs and their family members), in particular (mutual helping) and (unity).

The fact that, across developmental contexts, prosocial involvement emerges as a theme, along side its established correlates, supports existing conjectures on the development of prosocial involvement. For example, the youth's accounts of prosocial involvement documented in this issue are congruent with the finding of a six-culture study that Filipino children (as well as those from Kenya and Mexico) scored relatively higher in offering help and support and in making helpful suggestions than do children from other cultures (Whiting & Whiting, 1975, as cited in Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006). These authors note that prosocial behavior possibly stems from assigning chores to children at an early age and these children's accepting responsibility for their family's welfare and well-being. Moreover - and as documented in this special issue - youth's prosocial attitudes and
behaviors continue to develop as they are socialized into cultural values of relating meaningfully with others, such as *pakikiramay* (empathy for the suffering of another person) and *malasakit* (deep concern for the other).

Apart from the socialization of youth into prosocial values, another way of understanding the development of prosocial involvement is through the concept of *loob* (inner space). The quality of Filipino youth’s interactions in different environments engenders in them a consciousness that, according to Alejo (1990), allows the young person’s *damdamin* (feelings) to encompass both *sarili* (self) and *kapwa* (others) within *loob* (one’s inner space). As Alejo (1990) succinctly and aptly puts it, “Dama ko, abot ng aking pandama: *may kapwa sa loob ng tao*” (p. 93) (My feelings can encompass, it is within my feelings’ reach, there is the other in a person’s inner space); and, “Hindi lamang ang sarili ko ang aking naisasaloob. Pati ang aking kapwa ay nasa loob ko” (p.86). (My consciousness of my inner space encompasses not only myself but also other people). Alejo (1990) even expands the concept of *loob* by having it encompass *daigdig* (the world) and *Maykapal* (the divine).

With *sarili, kapwa, daigdig, and Maykapal* fused or intertwined within *loob*, the self readily connects to others, affording the young person to understand and take on others’ perspectives, to regulate emotions for others’ benefit, and to empathize with others—skills that are important in the development of prosocial involvement (Anderson, Sabatelli & Kosutic, 2007). Thus, the fusion of self and others in *loob* can perhaps explain why goals that are, on the outset, personal, such as determination to succeed in school or to continue working, are done for the sake of family and mirror the young person’s prosocial attitude. The centrality of *loob* is also aptly captured in the youth’s deep-seated and emotion-laden descriptions of helping behaviors (*damayan*, or helping each other in times of need), of mutual support among peers (“...nagiging dingding...haligi... sandalan”, becoming a wall, a foundation, something to lean on), of feeling so deeply about a friend’s suffering that that they will be moved to show *malasakit* (genuine concern) and *pakikiramay* (bearing another’s burden) (Lajom, Canoy, Amarnani, Parcon, & Valera, in this volume).

**Strength of inner self and related attributes.** Lakas ng *loob* (or strength of inner self) is a developmental outcome consistently alluded to in the participants’ articulations of positive attributes: *tiwala sa sarili* (trust in oneself or self-efficacy), *katatagan* (fortitude), *determinasyon* (determination), and *diskarte sa buhay* (resourcefulness). These attributes are akin to what Benson, et al. (2006) refer to as developmental strengths.

Developmental strengths enable the youth to deal with various demands, challenges, and problems in life (Benson, et al., 2006). In particular, strength
of inner self likely develops initiative (the ability to direct attention and effort towards a goal) and its supporting skills (Watts & Caldwell, 2008). Having initiative allows the youth to set realistic goals, to exercise effort and perseverance, to apply time management skills, and to assume responsibility for one's actions, with all of these serving the adolescent well into adulthood (Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003; Larson, 2000). Thus, what appears to be concomitant to initiative is a sense of agency in pursuing life goals.

Indeed, the youth participants themselves perceive strength of inner self as crucial in accomplishing personal life goals and tasks and, thus, see it as much called for in the goal- and task-oriented contexts of school and work. Student participants, for example, identify focus and determination as enabling them to achieve academic goals, and trust or faith in oneself as strengthening them so they persevere despite obstacles. In experiencing stress and various challenges, working-student participants draw from the strength of their inner selves so as to remain engaged in the interlocking contexts of school and work.

The fact, however, that the youth's acknowledged reasons for school engagement are not limited to practical reasons but also include character and self development (Reyes & Galang, in this volume) suggests that, likewise, strength of inner self is developed not only for practical reasons or for goal attainment, but also for character development – or, at least, the youth participants see character development as an outcome concomitant to the development of strength of inner self.

Aside from goal attainment and character development, another possible correlate of the development of strength of inner self is social engagement. The participants acknowledge Goldblatt, H. & Eisikovits, Z. (2005). Role taking of youth in a family context: Adolescents exposed to interparental violence. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 75:644-657., invariably, that they develop lakas ng loob and tiwala sa sarili for civic or political engagement, consistent with the reported link in literature between positive developmental outcomes on the one hand and a moral and civic identity on the other hand (Lerner, et al., 2003). Some participants even report experiencing self-transformation when they changed from a disconnected self (i.e., misguided and lacking in spirituality) to a positive self capable of spiritual and civic engagements (Mansukhani & Resurreccion, in this volume).

An important theoretical and empirical question suggested by the papers in this issue, therefore, is the extent to which the development of strengths and of character can, or cannot be, disentangled from the relational character of the different contexts of development. For one, these qualities possibly
are engendered by positive, caring relationships. Participants in the peer-group FGDs, for example, articulate how their *tiwala sa sarili* (trust or faith in self) is fostered by the peer group's trust in them and even by their capacity to trust their *kabarkada.* Moreover, while describing how they muster inner strength in pursuing personal goals, participants in the FGDs on the family unavoidably link personal goals to family goals, giving vivid portrayals of their caring for siblings and parents and the positive qualities of family relationships and dynamics (warmth, harmony, acceptance, forgiveness).

The Integration of Self and Others as a Central Theme of Filipino Positive Youth Development

Across the papers in this special issue are the youth's accounts of the expectations set and the resources provided by different socialization agents in different social contexts, as well as their accounts of their capacities and potentials for engaging in their tasks and roles and with their social worlds.

The themes emerging in these accounts are discussed in this paper and lead the authors to think that youth's identity cannot be altogether disentangled from its social contexts: that is, what appears to develop from youth's socializations is an identity that bears the qualities of an independent self (e.g., competence and autonomy) harmoniously intertwined with the qualities of an other-oriented self (e.g., connectedness and commitment). That much of the self can be understood when set at the stage of one’s relationships and interactions is a position earlier taken by Sta. Maria (1999). Specifically, Sta. Maria says that meanings and representations of self are very much linked to one's interactions, say in how one understands and is understood by others, or how one takes on responsibilities in relationships, or how one gives importance to relationships. That self can both be independent and other-oriented and that relationships are central to meanings and representations of self are consistent with Alejo's (1990) notion of *loob* as an encapsulation of self and of others.

We are inclined to believe that Filipino positive youth development is propelled by the *loob* (inner space) increasingly encompassing self and others. Thus, the development of agency in young persons, as they attempt to individuate and expand the self and to develop their potentials and independence, is not contradictory to the development of communion, as young persons try to engage in the world and to integrate into wider social circles (c.f. Abele & Wojciszke, 2007).
Put another way, the main message conveyed to the youth in the different socialization contexts is to achieve their potentials through and along side their involvement and integration in society. This integration is consistent with what Kagitçibapi’s (2007) model of human development that sees the developed self as an autonomous-related self.

Kagitçibapi’s (2007) view of self represents a movement towards theorizing in terms of both autonomy and relatedness. This view, according to Neff (2003), springs from a growing consensus among developmental psychologists that the developmental goals of independence and interdependence are too sharply dichotomized, and that an increased amount of evidence is available to show adolescent development is characterized by increased individuation that is facilitated by, and likewise results in close, connected relationships with others.

Concluding Comments on the Cross-contextual Perspective of Positive Youth Development

The papers in this special issue affords readers a cross-contextual perspective of positive youth development and the opportunity to explore similarities in expectations, resources, and outcomes across the contexts of family, peers, school, and work. In their assessment of formulations of youth development, Anderson, Sabatelli, and Kosutic (2007) observe that studies have shifted from investigating single sources of influence on the youth to investigating multiple sources. Furthermore, Anderson, et al. (2007) note the various labels attached to these sources of influence: external developmental assets by Benson in 2002, positive developmental settings by Eccles and Gootman also in 2002, and multilevel ecology of human development by Bronfenbrenner in 2005, labels that capture the pivotal roles of environments to positive youth development. Behind theorists’ emphasis on multiple sources of influence to positive youth development is the recognition of the finding that the more sources of influences accessible to the youth, the more likely they are to develop positive outcomes, to avoid risk behaviors, and to be more positively engaged with self, family, and community (Anderson, et al., 2007).

Through a cross-contextual approach, researchers can identify which of these competencies, endorsed by different contexts at different levels, will allow the youth to be productively engaged in society. The present set of articles in Filipino positive youth development presents an initial attempt to document the outcomes emphasized to the youth through the expectations
communicated and the resources provided to the youth in the different developmental contexts. It is hoped, too, that the present set of articles will provide researchers the ecologically valid constructs and models needed for research on Filipino positive youth development.

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