

EDITORIAL

Regulatory processes in development and psychopathology

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Developmental theorists consider psychopathology to arise through the ongoing transactions occurring among regulatory processes operating at different levels of organization (Cicchetti, 1993; Cicchetti & Tucker, 1994; Sameroff, 1989). As articulated by Sameroff (1983, 1987), Cicchetti (1990), and Schore (1994), these regulatory processes can be examined contemporaneously along several separate, yet interrelated dimensions ranging from microlevels of biological organization through macrolevels of social, cultural, and familial organization. Biological and sociocultural systems are conceived as the prominent regulators in normal and pathological development. Just as biological organization (i.e., the genotype) is thought to provide the basis for internal developmental regulation, social and cultural organization (i.e., the environment) regulates the adaptation of the individual to society (Sameroff, 1989). Development takes place in the dynamic transactions among the evolving capacities of the individual, his or her active self-organizing strivings for adaptation, and the internal and external regulatory context (Cicchetti & Tucker, 1994).

The contributors to this Special Issue draw upon theory, review, and empirical

work to elucidate their respective viewpoints on regulatory processes in development and psychopathology. Authors examine internal and/or external aspects of regulation, and focus on a variety of samples that span the prenatal through adulthood periods. This attention to a range of developmental epochs imparts a life span approach to the study of regulatory processes. The specific populations addressed in this Special Issue include: extreme variations within typical populations, neonates who have experienced birth complications, monozygotic and dizygotic twins, offspring of depressed parents and offspring of cocaine addicted mothers, and children who have experienced maltreatment or who have witnessed marital conflict or domestic violence. Moreover, numerous psychopathological conditions are represented, including autism, anxiety disorders, depressive and manic-depressive illness, and personality disorders. Various domains of regulatory processes, such as neural, physiological, emotional, cognitive, representational, and social-interactional, also are examined. The breadth and diversity reflected in the papers included in this Special Issue result in significant enhancements in our comprehension of the development of organismic regulation in typical and atypical populations and represent an exciting integration of the developmental fields of pediatrics, psychology, psychopathology, and neurobiology.

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