Towards a Multisystem, Strength-Based Model of Social Inequities in US Latinx Youth

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Abstract

US Latinx youth are overrepresented across numerous social inequity domains (e.g., education, incarceration, health) in US society. Such concerning data call for culturally sensitive and strength-based models to guide future research to better understand, and perhaps mitigate, such inequities. The present paper presents a conceptual model that highlights the roles of multiple systems (cultural, relational, intrapersonal, behavioral) that predict US Latinx youth social inequities. The proposed model incorporates a culture- and strength-based approach to further our understanding of US Latinx youth developmental trajectories associated with social inequalities. We also highlight a set of culture-specific and non-culture-specific risk and protective factors (e.g., ethnic identity, social support, neighborhood characteristics) that can exacerbate or mitigate social inequities, with a focus on positive social behaviors. The extant research literature that yields supportive evidence for the model and gaps in the research are briefly reviewed. The essay concludes with recommendations for future research.

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Systemic racism in the USA permeates institutions and impacts the experiences and trajectories of ethnic and racial minority youth and families, including US Latinx families (Espinola et al., 2019). Racism is defined as a system of power assigned to racial groups rooted in historical experiences, wherein the dominant group maintains the systems that benefit them while marginalized groups, who are perceived as inferior, are excluded from such benefits (Harrell, 2000). The systemic oppression resulting from racism can be seen in disparities across many indicators of health, including physical health, education, socioeconomic conditions, and the overrepresentation of ethnic and racial minority individuals incarcerated and exposed to violence (Espinola et al., 2019). Latinx families in the USA live under multiple systems of racism (e.g., disparities in education, criminal justice, and neighborhood segregation) and still face systemic barriers because of these disparities (Espinola et al., 2019). Because Latinx families are still often viewed as outsiders and inferior to European American families in US society, US Latinx families often face institutions and societal policies that limit access to opportunities, such as economic opportunities and education (Espinola et al., 2019). US Latinx students also experience higher “push-out” rates (students are often pushed out of the education system as opposed to simply dropping out; Doll et al., 2013) than their White

peers and are thus at risk for living in poverty (Espinola et al., 2019). Structural inequalities are pervasive, resulting in experiences of discrimination that can impact family processes and youth adjustment (Flores et al., 2008).

Ethnic/racial discrimination is defined as unfair treatment based on one's ethnic or racial background or characteristics associated with race/ethnicity (Flores et al., 2008). Discrimination on the basis of one's ethnicity or race, including both covert and overt forms of harassment, hostility, and violence, are felt stressful experiences (Espinola et al., 2019; Zeiders et al., 2012). Because of the political and social rhetoric focused on federal immigration policies by the Trump administration, for example, there are prevalent negative characterizations and portrayals of Latinx individuals (Anbinder, 2019). These negative characterizations have coincided with increases in discrimination, racism, and hate crimes in recent years (Espinola et al., 2019). One dramatic recent example is the federal policy that forcibly separated Latinx children from their parents at the border (Bouza et al., 2018). Thus, these federal government politically driven policies and the associated increased militarization of the US border jointly promote the criminalization of Latinx individuals and families (Espinola et al., 2019). Because of these actions, US Latinx adults currently report that their experience in society is worse than in previous years, highlighting the role of federal policy and rhetoric in shaping the experiences of Latinx families (Pew Research Center, 2017). Therefore, considering the antecedents and correlates of discrimination and the resulting social inequities in contemporary society is increasingly important.

Discrimination experiences are salient for many US Latinx families because of the long history of White supremacy, which results in negative stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes towards this ethnic group (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). As a result of these derogatory and inaccurate stereotypes, Latinx families and individuals are viewed by some as threats to workforces and a drain on social systems (Espinola et al., 2019). Therefore, working to eradicate White supremacy while also examining the effects of White supremacy on marginalized populations should remain a primary goal among scholars.

US Latinx populations also face discrimination experiences based on language (fluency, accent), socioeconomic status, and geographic location (Davis & Carlo, 2019), highlighting the complexity of discrimination experiences among this population. Additionally, many Latinx youth and families must navigate both acculturative (process of adjusting to a new culture and community when the host culture differs from the individual's traditional

culture; see Berry, 1997) and enculturative (learning about and maintaining traditional cultural values; Berry, 1997) processes that are taxing and demanding as persons learn to adapt and navigate complex systems. Indeed, there is substantive evidence that exposure to discriminatory acts and stressors are linked to a higher risk for maladjustment and pathology among US Latinx families and youth (Davis et al., 2016; Lee & Ahn, 2012; Zeiders et al., 2013). The accumulation of such research demonstrates that more discrimination experiences are associated with depressive symptoms over time (Davis et al., 2016), alcohol use, anxiety symptoms, lower academic achievement, and teacher-reported problem behaviors in schools for US Latinx adolescents (Espinola et al., 2019).

However, there has been much interest in conceptual models that are culturally grounded and that emphasize resiliency and positive developmental processes in US Latinx youth and families (Cabrera, 2013; García Coll et al., 1996; Quintana et al., 2006; Raffaelli et al., 2005). Scholars have previously argued that acculturation and developmental processes are part of adaptive culture for youth, and understanding these specific processes is important in order to better understand cultural strengths and positive adjustment (White et al., 2018). These integrative models are necessary to avoid an overemphasis on deficit and pathology-focused models of ethnic/racial minorities. The present paper builds upon these prior models in specific, important ways and explicitly links such models to social inequities in US Latinx youth, while focusing on prosocial behavior as a primary adjustment mechanism. Thus, we present an elaborated conceptual model of social inequities in US Latinx youth that highlights both risk and protective roles of the relational, culture-related, intrapersonal, and positive behavioral processes.

A US Latinx Youth Model of Social Inequities

The present model builds on prior models and integrates aspects from various theories including social ecological, stress and coping, socialization, cultural development, and prosocial development (Berry, 1997; Davis & Carlo, 2019; García Coll et al., 1996; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These models also integrate culture-specific and non-culture-specific mechanisms in ethnic/racial models of youth development (Raffaelli et al., 2005). For example, García Coll et al. (1996) asserted that discrimination and oppression are salient predictors of developmental trajectories, ultimately shaping ethnic/racial minority youth

Fig. 1. Model incorporating culture-specific and non-culture-specific US Latinx youth developmental competencies and explicitly linking these competencies to social equity and integration.

adjustment through various culture-specific (e.g., ethnic/racial identity, assimilation), non-culture-specific (e.g., temperament, biological) and contextual variables (e.g., neighborhood experiences, family processes). García-Coll's integrative model helps us understand youth developmental competencies (e.g., cognitive, linguistic, emotional) at the individual level. Berry (1997) similarly notes how acculturative stress (which can include discrimination) predicts immigrant youth outcomes. These prior theories highlight several culture-related mechanisms that further our understanding of ethnic/racial minority youth adjustment and have important implications for policy and intervention efforts.

However, these existing theories do not explicitly demonstrate how youth developmental and cultural mechanisms help us understand social integration and inequities. First, the present model incorporates culture-specific and non-culture-specific US Latinx youth developmental competencies and explicitly links these competencies to social equity and integration (Fig. 1). Second,

based on prior work that empathy, moral reasoning, and moral behaviors are strength-based influences and indices of US Latinx youth well-being (Carlo, 2014), we integrate such mechanisms to better understand social inequity and injustice. The inclusion of these strength-based, prosocial developmental variables is a unique and important contribution of this model, because these prosocial competencies play an important role in social integration and resilience among US Latinx youth (Carlo, 2014). Moreover, based on the work of Berry (1997) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984), we highlight the role of coping and self-regulation mechanisms. And third, we delineate the cyclical and complex relations among the various mechanisms such that cultural stressors influence relational systems, which in turn, influence behavioral adjustment via intrapersonal characteristics. Behavioral adjustment then affects social inequalities, and social inequalities can result in cultural stress. There are also various direct paths, and the paths can be moderated by various demographic, social contextual, and intrapersonal characteristics. The

model provides examples of specific mechanisms within each broad construct (depicted by the boxes in Fig. 1). In the next sections, we briefly review pertinent evidence for each path in the model.

Cultural Stress and Relational Systems (Path A)

Several scholars have yielded evidence on the central role of stress in understanding adjustment and well-being (Berry, 1997; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Other scholars have noted how stress can impact relational systems. Importantly, the family unit is deemed a central institution in Latinx cultures, and familism (i.e., obligation to, support to and from, and referent to, the family) has been identified as a core value in most US Latinx families (Fuligni et al., 1999). Work on the family stress model of economic hardship demonstrates that family-level stressful experiences impact parents' psychological functioning, which results in reduced parenting quality/higher levels of conflict and ultimately increased behavioral problems for youth (Conger et al., 1994), and there is support for this model among US Latinx families (Davis et al., 2020; Parke et al., 2004). Thus, this prior work yields evidence on how stress can impact family functioning and subsequent youth adjustment.

While the bulk of research on family stress has focused on economic stressors as predictors of parenting, cultural stress (including discrimination) is also a salient experience for ethnic and racial minority families that is related to parenting behaviors. It could be that when youth experience discrimination, the family system is impacted, and parents react to such experiences. Specifically, parents tend to engage in targeted behaviors aimed at preparing youth for a world of bias and discrimination by utilizing racial and ethnic socialization practices (Hughes et al., 2006). These messages foster a stronger understanding of and identification with one's ethnic group, which protects individuals from the negative consequences of discrimination. Subsequently, messages about cultural pride can prepare youth for a world in which ethnic/racial discrimination is salient and encourage effective coping mechanisms that help youth deal with these experiences by fostering a connection with their own culture and ethnic heritage.

Experiencing stress, including discrimination, also relates to parental discipline practices. Negative parenting practices such as harsh parenting (i.e., frequent use of corporal punishment) and high levels of psychological control (i.e., shame-inducing practices and manipulation

techniques) are linked to low levels of prosocial behaviors (i.e., actions intended to benefit others) among Latinx adolescents (Halgunseth et al., 2006), and such practices can be shaped by stressful experiences, including cultural stress, within the family. Indeed, higher levels of stress have been linked to harsher control and punitive discipline among US Latinx families (Calzada et al., 2019; Parke et al., 2004).

Other salient relationships, including those with siblings and peers, could be impacted by cultural stress. While there is limited research on the consequences of discrimination in sibling relationships, discrimination can impact sibling dynamics by promoting intimacy or conflict among siblings. Latinx youth exposed to cultural stress sometimes seek comfort and support from siblings, thereby increasing intimacy and closeness. Alternatively, relatively high levels of cultural stress could overwhelm Latinx youth and trigger conflict and tension between siblings. There is evidence that maternal reports of depression are more common in families where siblings have negative relationships than in families where siblings have positive relationships (McHale et al., 2007). With regard to the relations between cultural stress and peer relationships, there is evidence that more discrimination experiences are associated with higher instances of deviant peer affiliation (Delgado et al., 2011). However, this is an area of much need for further research.

Relational Systems and Prosocial Behaviors via Intrapersonal Characteristics (Paths B and C)

Relational systems are important for shaping youth's psychological development, which subsequently relates to positive behavioral adjustment. Scholars have examined the links between parenting and adolescents' negative adjustment, but there is also evidence that parents predict positive development, including prosocial behaviors, in youth. To address the previous overemphasis on pathology and deficit-oriented research on marginalized youth, including US Latinx youth, scholars have identified various indices of health and well-being (Carlo, 2014). One indicator of positive adjustment is prosocial behaviors, which are defined as actions intended to benefit others (Carlo, 2014). Prosocial behaviors include a variety of helping behaviors with differing motivations, situational characteristics, and different targets of helping. Prosocial behaviors are not only indicative of morality and care for others, but they are also indicators of health and social well-being. Therefore, they represent an

important behavioral outcome from both individual and community health perspectives (Carlo, 2014). Prosocial behaviors are linked with better academic performance, social competence and healthy relationships, and physical and mental health (Carlo, 2014; Davis et al., 2016; Streit et al., 2018) among diverse populations, including Latinx populations. In addition to the positive individual and relational correlates of prosocial behaviors, engaging in prosocial behaviors is also beneficial for the broader society because of the promotion of social harmony and positive community dynamics. Therefore, it is important to consider prosocial behaviors as a developmental outcome in order to promote health and well-being among Latinx youth (Carlo, 2014).

Scholars have argued that warm, responsive parenting positively shapes adolescents' positive development because parents provide adolescents with a positive affective environment in which moral internalization of values, including prosociality, can occur (Hoffman, 2000). Mothers who are warm toward their youth also model positive interpersonal skills, which foster social competence and higher levels of empathic concern and moral reasoning (Janssens & Gerris, 1992). Parental warmth plays a primary role in the socialization of empathic concern and youth self-regulation because parents' positive emotional expression and connection with their youth foster a sense of security and an orientation toward the needs of others (Janssens & Gerris, 1992). On the other hand, harsh, coercive and uninvolved parents can disrupt parent-youth relationships and impede positive development (Laible et al., 2019). Harsh parenting, including corporal punishment and harsh discipline, of youth has been consistently linked to lower levels of prosocial behaviors (Halgunseth et al., 2006).

Moreover, cognitive-developmental and social cognitive theorists have identified several important mechanisms that could account for the relations between parenting styles and practices and social behaviors including perspective taking (i.e., understanding the thoughts, feelings, and social situations of others), empathic concern (i.e., feelings of sorrow or concern for others; see Carlo, 2014), and moral reasoning (i.e., thinking about moral issues when the needs of another are in conflict with the needs of the self). According to scholars, warm and responsive parenting and positive disciplining practices (such as inductions) can orient the child to the needs of others, foster empathic traits, and transmit strong moral norms and principles. These traits, in turn, could facilitate prosocial behavioral tendencies.

Positive parenting practices, such as warmth, responsiveness, involvement, and use of social rewards as behavioral reinforcers have been consistently linked to multiple forms of prosocial behaviors among Latinx and Hispanic youth (Knight & Carlo, 2012). Parents who are warm and supportive provide an outlet for adolescents who are experiencing cultural stressors and help buffer youth from potentially negative consequences of these experiences (Degarmo & Martinez, 2006). Indicators of positive parenting, such as responsiveness, support, and relationship quality have been positively linked to sociocognitive and socioemotional traits (including perspective taking, empathic concern, and moral reasoning) in Latinx adolescents (Knight & Carlo, 2012). Additionally, in one study, parent attachment was related to higher levels of empathy, which positively predicted altruistic prosocial behaviors in a sample of US Mexican young adults (Carlo et al., 2012). Parental discipline has also been linked to sociocognitive and socioemotional traits, which are related to prosocial behaviors among US Latinx youth. Specifically, higher levels of parental inductions (parents' discussions with children after a transgression aimed at helping children understand how their actions impacted others; Eisenberg & Valiente, 1995) are related to higher levels of empathic concern, which are positively associated with prosocial behaviors (Carlo et al., 2011b). On the contrary, harsh parenting (including harsh control and corporal punishment) can be detrimental for moral development, which results in lower levels of prosocial behaviors (Hastings et al., 2007).

Although prosocial and moral traits are linked to positive parenting, culture-specific mechanisms (e.g., cultural values, ethnic identity) are needed to account for culture-related group differences in moral and behavioral outcomes in US Latinx individuals. Latinx parents are known to socialize culture-specific values with the goal of transmitting such values to their children. For example, Latinx parents often promote familism values (defined as a sense of obligation to the family and viewing the family as part of the self; Sabogal et al., 1987) to their children, and such values are associated with relatively high levels of prosocial behaviors (Calderón-Tena et al., 2011). Familism values are most predictive of helping behaviors that are common in the home and occur between family members, such as emotional, direct, and compliant prosocial behaviors (e.g., Davis et al., 2018a, b). There is supportive evidence that mothers' and fathers' familism values predict ethnic socialization practices, which predict familism values and higher levels of multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Knight et al., 2016).

There is also evidence that parenting practices predict other traditional cultural values. Specifically, among US Mexican adolescents, higher levels of firm parenting were associated with greater respect values, which were positively related to multiple forms of prosocial behaviors (Davis et al., 2015). Additionally, supportive parenting was negatively associated with traditional gender role values. Traditional gender roles, in turn, positively related to public prosocial behaviors and negatively related to altruistic prosocial behaviors (Davis et al., 2015). In a sample of recent immigrant Latinx adolescents, there is longitudinal evidence that maternal involvement positively predicted collectivism, which positively predicted prosocial behaviors (Davis et al., 2018a, b).

Parents also promote racial/ethnic identity in Latinx youth, which is associated with higher levels of prosocial behaviors (Knight et al., 2016; Streit et al., 2020). One study of US Mexican adolescents found that parents' traditional cultural values predicted ethnic socialization, which was associated with adolescents' prosocial behaviors via ethnic identity over time (Knight et al., 2016). Other researchers have shown more positive youth outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, self-esteem) and less negative youth outcomes (e.g., mental health problems) among US Latinx youth (Stein et al., 2020; Zeiders et al., 2016). These findings highlight the various avenues by which parents socialize cultural values and ethnic identity, which in turn, protect US Latinx youth from adversity and promote positive social development.

Prosocial Behaviors and Social Inequities (Path D)

US Latinx youth who frequently engage in prosocial behaviors develop a trajectory of social connection and integration. The consequences of prosocial behaviors can benefit the self, individuals, groups, and communities, which ultimately promotes positive youth adaptation as well as social justice and social equity. With regard to health inequities and disparities, for example, youth prosocial behaviors and positive social relationships are predictors of health and well-being (Carlo, 2014; Sheldon, 2004). Therefore, promoting prosocial engagement can create a positive trajectory for youth that fosters better health outcomes and reduces health inequities. For example, researchers have demonstrated that prosocial behaviors predict decreases in depressive symptoms for US Latinx immigrant youth (Davis et al., 2016; Memmott-Elison et al., 2020). Although there is no direct evidence with US Latinx youth, there is also evidence that increases

in prosocial behaviors are associated with increases in physical health (Schreier et al., 2013). Researchers have demonstrated that prosocial behaviors buffer the negative effects of stress on physical health by promoting neurotransmitters, such as oxytocin, that promote physical health (Brown & Brown, 2015; Poulin & Holman, 2013). The overall evidence, then, suggests that prosocial behaviors might be a mechanism that promotes healthy functioning and begins to address health inequities.

Prosocial behaviors also contribute to social integration. Specifically, prosociality has also been linked to a deeper sense of community and social engagement in samples of Latinx youth (Frisco et al., 2004; Perez et al., 2010). There is evidence that prosocial youth are more involved in their communities, as prosocial youth are more likely to vote than youth who are less prosocial (Frisco et al., 2004). A strong sense of community has been linked to a deeper trust and respect for teachers, concern for others, and prosocial motivation (Watson et al., 1997). This evidence suggests that prosocial behaviors reflect a connection with others and with the broader community and motivations to engage in the community through social connection. Therefore, prosocial behaviors promote social integration and mitigate isolation and marginalization among US Latinx youth.

Additionally, civic engagement (including activism) in US Latinx undocumented students has been linked to academic performance, leadership positions within schools, and participation in extracurricular activities (Perez et al., 2010). There is also evidence that Latinx youth who are prosocial are likely to be high achievers academically (Carlo et al., 2018), which is associated with a higher socioeconomic status over time. This finding is consistent with research on non-Latinx youth that shows early prosocial behaviors as predictors of positive educational outcomes (Emagnaw & Hong, 2018; Gerbino et al., 2018). While more research is needed on the role of prosociality in possibly reducing social inequities, including educational inequities, among US Latinx youth, there is reason to believe that such positive social behaviors help youth become engaged citizens who can better navigate social and educational systems.

Researchers have demonstrated that socially disinterested youth are more prone to violent behaviors (Niño et al., 2017). The "school to prison pipeline" phenomenon highlights the importance of considering youth trajectories in order to mitigate risk for social isolation and a lack of economic resources for marginalized young adults (Espinola et al., 2019). Because US Latinx youth are disproportionately involved in the justice system because of sys-

temic racism disproportionately impacting people of color (Espinola et al., 2019), it is important to understand protective factors, such as prosocial behaviors, that might promote social integration and civic engagement and dismantle the systems that allow inequities to persist. Consistent with this notion, there is growing evidence that prosocial behaviors are negatively linked to aggression, illegal drug use, and other antisocial behaviors (e.g., vandalism, delinquency) in US Latinx youth (Carlo et al., 2011a, 2012; Zamboanga et al., 2004).

Importantly, US Latinx youth behavioral trajectories occur under conditions of sociocultural inequality, cultural stressors, and a myriad of other risk factors. However, theorists assert that individuals strive to maintain consistency in their social interactions (Bandura, 1986), suggesting that youth who are committed to prosociality avoid negative behavioral interactions over time. Youth who frequently engage in prosocial behaviors and who are involved in other positive activities at school or in the community tend to engage with peers who are prosocial and avoid affiliating with deviant peers (Carlo et al., 2014). These patterns of prosocial behaviors are also consistent with youth's own prosocial values and identity (Barber et al., 2001; Carlo & Randall, 2001). Therefore, prosocial behaviors can act as a salient protective factor for youth and promote positive social integration while activists continue to advocate for evidence-based cultural change and social justice.

Social Inequities and Cultural Stress (Path E)

Finally, social inequities further predict experiences of cultural stress among Latinx youth. When youth live under systems of inequality, such as educational, neighborhood, and economic inequalities, they become aware of the biases that surround ethnic minority groups, including Latinx populations who are often excluded from social systems in the USA. There is evidence, for example, that Latinx youth have high educational aspirations, but the inequalities in educational opportunities often impact how Latinx youth perceive their opportunities, as youth are aware of the injustices and societal expectations (Oyserman et al., 2011). There is also evidence among Latinx adolescents that neighborhood risk, which is a function of segregation and structural racism, is positively correlated with perceptions of discrimination (Behnke et al., 2011). While there is some evidence linking social inequities to perceptions of cultural stress, including discrimination, this link has not been the primary focus of

research, as much of the existing research examines microlevel correlates of discrimination. Therefore, more research is needed to better understand how structural inequalities are perceived by youth and how such processes shape experiences of cultural stress in order to fully understand the cyclical process of cultural stress and inequity.

Direct Paths between Cultural Stress and Intrapersonal Characteristics and Prosocial Behaviors

Cultural Stress and Intrapersonal Characteristics

There are also direct relations between cultural stress and intrapersonal characteristics, as cultural stress is a risk factor for US Latinx youth's psychological development. Experiencing cultural stress can lead to a lack of trust in social relationships among youth, which contributes to internalizing symptoms (i.e., anxiety and depressive symptoms; Davis et al., 2016; Nair et al., 2013) and difficulties in self-regulation (Park et al., 2017). While discrimination experiences often contribute to anxiety and depressive symptoms among adolescents, experiencing such stress could also be associated with higher levels of empathic concern. Some scholars have proposed that under specific resilience circumstances (e.g., access to strong social support), stress experiences promote consideration of injustices (e.g., moral reasoning) and sensitivity to the plight of others (i.e., empathic concern), which can contribute to gains in psychological adjustment and to increases in prosocial engagement (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Weiss & Berger, 2010).

Research examining links between discrimination and social cognitions and emotions is limited. One relevant study found that experiencing acculturative stress is related to higher levels of sympathy for men (McGinley et al., 2010), suggesting that cultural stress could promote empathic responses toward others. There is also some evidence that cultural stress predicts cultural values. One study with US Latinx college students found that acculturative stress was related to a greater endorsement of familism values (Davis et al., 2018a, b). While cultural stress is a risk factor for internalizing symptoms, including depressive symptoms, such experiences can also promote identification with traditional cultural values, increases in moral reasoning, and greater concern for others, although more research is needed. In addition, research specifically examining posttraumatic growth

(i.e., increases in resilience that can result from traumatic stress exposure) as a result of culture-specific trauma and stressors is lacking.

Cultural Stress and Prosocial Behaviors

Cultural stress can also directly predict prosocial behaviors. Prosocial behaviors require a connection and engagement with others and recognition of the needs of others. However, the potential negative consequences of discrimination experiences, including social exclusion and marginalization, can undermine youth's ability to engage in prosocial behaviors effectively (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Social exclusion also contributes to adolescents' experiences of isolation as well as limited opportunities and reduced motivations to engage in helping behaviors, particularly when such behaviors invoke a cost to the self, as is the case with selfless (i.e., altruistic) prosocial behaviors. Stress that results from experiencing discrimination also depletes adolescents of the cognitive and emotional resources necessary to engage in prosocial behaviors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When youth become depleted of personal resources, they tend to be less inclined to engage in helpful behaviors toward others, particularly when such behaviors require a cost to the self, such as altruistic helping (e.g., Davis et al., 2016). Therefore, there are conceptual reasons to believe that discrimination experiences negatively predict adolescents' prosocial behaviors. It is important to note, however, that stressful experiences do not always negatively predict prosocial behaviors. Indeed, there is accumulating evidence that altruistic actions can result from exposure to trauma and stress (e.g., Taylor & Hanna, 2018). Moreover, Latinx youth who experience cultural stress are likely to engage in specific forms of prosocial behaviors, such as public helping, in order to maintain a positive reputation in an effort to combat negative stereotypes (McGinley et al., 2010). Therefore, discrimination experiences could impede some forms of helping but promote other forms under certain circumstances. Unfortunately, we know little about the conditions under which specific forms of prosocial behaviors can emanate after experiencing stress and trauma.

Scholars have examined cultural stress experiences, including discrimination and acculturative stress, and prosocial behaviors among US Latinx youth. There is longitudinal evidence that higher levels of discrimination predict more public prosocial behaviors and less altruistic prosocial behaviors among US Latinx adolescents, in-

cluding immigrant adolescents (Brittian et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2016). There is also evidence that more acculturative stress experiences are negatively associated with multiple forms of prosocial behaviors among US Latinx adolescents (Davis et al., 2018a, b). These findings suggest that acculturative stress has mitigating effects on costly, selfless forms of prosocial behaviors but not other forms. In another study, sympathy mediated the relations between acculturative stress and two forms of prosocial behaviors for men only (McGinley et al., 2010). Similar to the complex links between discrimination and prosocial behaviors, there is also evidence that suggests that acculturative stress does not always mitigate prosocial behaviors. Specifically, social stressors associated with acculturating to mainstream US culture have been positively linked to prosocial behaviors among US Mexican college students (Davis & Carlo, 2019). The general positive relations between most forms of acculturative stress and prosocial behaviors could be evidence that prosocial behaviors are adaptive coping responses to such stressors. Alternatively, perhaps young adults who experience cultural stress respond empathically to others and help others who show distress, particularly if they share experiences of marginalization.

Moderating Factors

Individual Variables

In addition to mediating variables, there are also factors that might moderate the links between cultural stress and US Latinx youth's social behaviors. These variables may operate at different levels (i.e., individual characteristics, social supports, and contextual characteristics). On an individual level, stress appraisals might play a salient role in modulating the link between cultural stress and prosocial behaviors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Adolescents who perceive the stress as a threat might be at higher risk for negative outcomes than adolescents who perceive the stressor as a challenge that they can overcome (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). There is some evidence that active coping strategies buffer Latinx youth from negative experiences associated with discrimination (Edwards & Romero, 2008). However, more research is needed to better understand the role of stress appraisals among Latinx youth.

Another individual factor that might play a protective role in the links between cultural stress and prosocial behaviors is ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is defined as the

subjective sense of belonging to a cultural group (Phinney, 1990). Youth who have a positive connection with their ethnic group might be protected from the negative consequences of discrimination because they may have a strong sense of self and confidence in their group membership that helps them remain confident in the face of discriminatory experiences. There is evidence that ethnic identity has been linked to higher self-esteem among Latinx and African American youth (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). Additionally, one study demonstrated that ethnic affirmation (positive feelings about one's ethnic group) buffered the negative links between discrimination and self-esteem among Latinx youth (Romero & Roberts, 2003).

In addition to ethnic identity, cultural values play an important role in moderating the links between cultural stress and prosocial behaviors. Specifically, in one recent study, researchers demonstrated that for US Latinx young adults who are low in familism values, pressure to acculturate was associated with higher levels of emotional prosocial behaviors (Davis et al., 2018a, b). In contrast, for young adults who were high in familism values, pressure to acculturate was associated with lower levels of emotional prosocial behaviors. Youth who are experiencing acculturative stress might perceive tensions and pressures from peers, which might contribute to internalizing symptoms and withdrawal among adolescents. This study suggests that cultural values might both moderate and mediate relations between cultural stress and prosocial behaviors. More research is needed to better understand the distinct role of cultural values, including additional values aside from familism values (e.g., respect, *bien educado*).

Social and Contextual Variables

While individual-level factors are important to consider when examining cultural stress and prosocial behaviors, family-level and peer-related variables might also act as risk or protective factors. There is ample evidence that social support systems can protect youth from the deleterious consequences of stress (e.g., Dubow et al., 1991). However, the lack of access to social support or low-quality relationships with family or peers can place youth at risk for lower levels of prosocial behaviors. Moreover, given the importance of the family unit among most Latinx youth, parents, siblings, and extended family members are all potential sources of family support.

Additionally, specific parenting practices, such as racial socialization, might play a moderating role in the links between discrimination and behavioral adjustment. Racial socialization practices aim to arm youth with the tools they can use to cope with bias and discrimination, including messages of preparation for bias (Hughes et al., 2006). Research shows evidence that ethnic and racial socialization and culturally based parenting practices positively predict prosocial behaviors in US Latinx youth (Calderón-Tena et al., 2011). Research has consistently documented the moderating role of ethnic and racial socialization practices for youth experiencing discrimination (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2009), but research is needed to understand how racial socialization might moderate the link between discrimination and prosocial behaviors, as this evidence is lacking.

When examining risk and protective factors in the links between cultural stress and social behaviors, it is also important to consider the role of the broader community and social contexts. For example, considering the intersection between gender and ethnicity when examining the sociocultural experiences of Latinx families is important. Latinx individuals belong to a variety of racial groups and therefore have distinct experiences in society based on phenotypic characteristics (Uzogara, 2018). Research has demonstrated that lighter skinned, Latinx women from relatively high SES brackets endorsed internalized racism to a greater degree and experienced less discrimination than their darker skinned counterparts (Uzogara, 2018). However, this pattern was not significant for men. These results highlight the important role of race and gender in shaping experiences of Latinx individuals. Therefore, future research should continue exploring the intersectional roles of gender, race, and class in predicting sociocultural risk among Latinx youth and families.

There is evidence that specific contextual factors might place adolescents at higher risk for experiencing discrimination, and ultimately relatively low levels of prosocial behaviors. Because language and phenotypic characteristics, including skin color, can impact implicit racial bias among police officers and individuals working within the legal system (e.g., judges), Latinx youth may be impacted by these biases from others in the community and may perceive differential treatment associated with their ethnic/racial group membership (Espinola et al., 2019). Neighborhood factors, such as exposure to violence, might also place youth at increased risk. There is evidence that exposure to violence is linked to depressive symptoms, and neighborhood opportunities have been linked to higher levels of prosocial behaviors among youth (Len-

zi et al., 2012). These latter findings suggest that witnessing neighborhood violence might result in stressful experiences among youth, which may ultimately impede their ability to engage prosocially with others.

Additionally, US Latinx youth might experience additional stressors, such as economic stressors, in combination with discrimination experiences. Recent research on stress and youth outcomes emphasizes the need to examine cumulative risk factors, as stressors often occur in combination with other forms of stress, which can increase risk (Evans et al., 2013). Research has demonstrated links between economic stressors and prosocial behaviors, such that economic stress is related to higher levels of altruistic prosocial behaviors and lower levels of public prosocial behaviors in US Latinx adolescents (Davis et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to consider how cultural stress might interact with economic stress to predict multiple forms of prosocial behaviors. It is also important to consider additional sociodemographic and neighborhood factors, as there may be neighborhood factors that protect youth when they experience cultural stressors. For example, adolescents in neighborhoods with high collective efficacy and social cohesion may be motivated to engage in prosocial behaviors, as opposed to adolescents in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of violence and low social cohesion (Edwards & Bromfield, 2009; Harp et al., 2017).

Conclusions

Considering the complex interplay of multiple influences of systemic marginalization and social inequities in US Latinx individuals is an important area of inquiry. The present paper extends prior conceptual models and highlights the roles of relational, psychological, behavioral, and culture-specific mechanisms to inform US Latinx youth marginalization and social inequalities. We present a developmental and culturally integrative approach that incorporates prosocial and resiliency traits and behaviors as mechanisms that can protect from social inequities. Youth living in at-risk communities often lack access opportunities to engage in community service and to develop prosocial and resiliency characteristics, which contributes to social disparities among youth (Hart et al., 1998). Additionally, social inequities and marginalization further contribute to cultural stress experiences (including discrimination experiences) for youth, suggesting a cyclical process of sociocultural risk and inequities. However, long-term longitudinal studies are needed to better

examine the links among these processes over time. Moreover, understanding protective factors at multiple levels (behavioral, relational, intrapersonal, and contextual) is important in order to mitigate the risk and pathology for youth navigating a system of bias and historical oppression.

Practitioners and educators should be aware of the risk and protective factors associated with systemic inequalities for US Latinx youth. For example, the evidence suggests that promoting a strong sense of identity, including ethnic identity, as well as self-efficacy, can help youth cope with the negative experiences they face in society (Hughes et al., 2006). Additionally, promoting traditional cultural values, such as familism values, and cohesion among family members also allows youth to develop deeper familial relationships that are ultimately protective and subsequently promote prosocial behaviors (Brittian et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2018a, b). Fostering prosocial behavioral trajectories for youth might buffer them from marginalization and promote social integration. This strength-based and asset approach has become increasingly important to counter societies that condone discrimination, detrimental political rhetoric, and marginalization toward minority groups. Importantly, this strength-based approach suggests that primary intervention strategies should focus on identifying protective and enhance factors in the lives of US Latinx families and youth that reduce societal inequalities and oppressive systems.

Statement of Ethics

No ethical approval was required for the preparation of this paper, as no human or animal subjects were used.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Author Contributions

Alexandra N. Davis, Gustavo Carlo, and Sahitya Maiya contributed to the development and writing of the paper.

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