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Member Spotlight: Fernando Salinas-Quiroz

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Why did you decide to choose developmental science as a course of study or career?

Well, let's just say I have a thing for *change* – the messier, the better! I'm deeply engaged in studying how people trans-form over time.

Christopher Goodey's 2021 book, *Development: The History of a Psychological Concept*, presents a thought-provoking challenge to the traditional view of human development, suggesting that what we often refer to as "development" is actually a process of change that is not linear or goal-driven. He argues that our understanding of change is historically and culturally shaped, particularly by the transition from religious to secular views of human potential. Goodey encourages us to reconsider whether humans genuinely "develop" in a fixed sequence or if our trans-formations are more dynamic and unpredictable than commonly assumed. This perspective resonates with me, especially in the context of gender, which is not

necessarily constant or stable. I am particularly interested in moving beyond outdated, inflexible theories surrounding gender identity and expression.

As someone juggling psychology, education, and transgender studies, I'm fascinated by how young people are flipping the script on gender norms. These young rebels are challenging the binary and making us rethink everything we thought we knew about identity and growth.

So yeah, I chose developmental science because I want to be part of this revolution. I want to understand how people – especially those coloring outside the lines of gender and family norms – navigate their social lives and shape their identities.

Is it a career? Maybe. Is it a passion? Absolutely. Am I here for the wild ride of challenging old ideas and embracing the beautiful complexity and fluidity of human change? You bet I am!

Is there a mentor or mentors who have been instrumental to your studies and career path so far, and, if so, who and how?

Oh honey, where do I start? Buckle up for a whirlwind tour of my academic rhizome!

First off, let's get real – we've all got more mentors than just our Ph.D. advisor. As my Muma, or grandmother, used to say, "una no se hace sola," which means "no one is self-made." So, in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month too, let's shout out to the brilliant minds from Mexico, Colombia, and Portugal who guided me before I came to the US.

For my bachelor's, Silvia Morales Chainé and Alejandra Domínguez Espinosa pushed me beyond my initial goal of becoming a therapist, encouraging me to engage in research and scholarly pursuits.

With my master's, Lea Goldberg, my "bobe" supported my innovative idea of using myself as a case study, exploring how an analyzant can influence the analyst beyond typical countertransference. Her passing midway through my studies necessitated a change in my research direction, as continuing this unconventional approach without her guidance proved challenging.

For my Ph.D., my advisor, Francisco Morales-Carmona, demonstrated great wisdom in recognizing that while he wasn't an expert in my specific topic, his methodological expertise could be complemented by an excellent committee. This collaborative approach was invaluable. Olga Alicia Carbonell, who is from Colombia, provided exceptional support as a thorough reviewer and role model, embodying the idea that great scholarship and humaneness go hand in hand. Juan José Sánchez-Sosa and Sofía Rivera Aragón have been a constant source of support, particularly in navigating the complexities of UNAM.

There's a faculty life plot twist as well. Turns out, mentors can be peers! As faculty at the National Pedagogic University, Mexico, I learned the value of peer mentorship. Fabiola Rodríguez Sánchez taught me about revolutionary and empowering teaching, while Pedro A. Costa, Portugal, shared insights on publishing in a second language and conducting rigorous research with limited funding.

U.S. adventure: Ann Easterbrooks, Ellen Pinderhughes, and Eileen Crehan at Tufts have been instrumental in helping me acclimate to a new academic system. And now, saving the best for last, let me introduce my "Jackson 5." L. Alan Sroufe, Linda C. Halgunseth, Ilan H. Meyer, Judi Mesman - who is from the Netherlands - and Hirokazu Yoshikawa. Their willingness to support and guide me has been truly remarkable. When I showed up at their doors begging to be adopted, they didn't just sign the papers - they rolled out the red carpet!

So yeah, it takes a village to raise a scholar. And what a fabulous, diverse, heart-on-their-sleeve village I've got!

What advice would you give to a prospective graduate student thinking about beginning their Ph.D. studies in the developmental science field?

One, perfection is a myth. There's no "perfect" program out there. Sure, there are some amazing ones, but thinking you'll find one that ticks every box? That's a one-way ticket to Disappointment City. Keep those expectations real, folks!

Two, advisors aren't fairy godparents. They're humans, not magical beings who'll solve all your academic woes. Look for a good enough fit, not perfection.

Three, be an academic explorer. Universities are like all-you-can-eat buffets of knowledge. Don't just stick to your plate - sample courses from other programs, departments, and institutions! How can we yap about parenting without knowing our feminist waves? Social sciences and humanities have so much to offer!

Four, it's all about relationships. Choosing an advisor or research group? It's like online dating. Profiles look great, but you need that second or third "date" to really feel the vibe. Get to know the human behind the CV. Build those connections! And here's a pro tip: Be mindful of your approach. Avoid the extractive logic of "what can I get from this person?" Instead, think "how can we grow together?" Your future self and your colleagues will thank you.

Five, enjoy the ride. I keep hearing Ph.D. horror stories, and I'm like, "Wait, aren't you getting paid to learn cool stuff?" If your lab feels like a sweatshop, run! Working weekends? Future you will not be impressed. No time for exercise or friends? Make time!

Six, change the narrative. There's this weird American culture of bragging about overwork and sleep deprivation. Don't buy into it! That's just neoliberalism whispering, "You're never doing enough." Tell it to take a hike!

Seven, *be* the change. Remember, you're not just studying development – you're part of academia's Trans-formation. Challenge the status quo. Promote work-life balance. Show that brilliant research doesn't require burnout. Be compassionate.

Bottom line. Your Ph.D. should be challenging, not soul-crushing. It's a journey of changes, discovery, and yes, even fun. So go forth, be curious, build meaningful relationships, and don't forget to enjoy the ride. You've got this!

What is your best SRCD memory?

It was June 2021, when I had the absolute pleasure of engaging in an amazing conversation with her majesty, Charlotte Patterson, the world's expert on psychological research on children and youths raised by queer parents. The topic? "Child Development in Gay and Lesbian Parents and Families". And the best part? It was recorded and is available for everyone to enjoy!

Now, I must admit, I was super nervous during our chat, so my apologies if I stumbled over my words. As Celia Cruz said, “My English is not very good looking!” But hey, you won't want to miss it—grab your popcorn and check it out!

Why did you join the SOGIE Caucus and how does it facilitate connection among members all year long?

I had the privilege of being involved with the SOGIE Caucus from its inception in 2019, joining as a founding member and part of the steering committee at the invitation of Stephen Russell. The decision to participate was driven by a recognition of the crucial need for focused research on SOGIE within developmental science. The Caucus advances studies on sexual and gender minority young people and families while advocating for broader attention to SOGIE issues in our field.

Year-round, the Caucus fosters connections through forums, workshops, and mentoring programs, building both academic collaboration and community support. It also helped me build meaningful relationships, such as my friendship with Paul Poteat, which started through the Caucus and deepened after I moved to Boston, where we now both live.

The SOGIE Caucus has proven to be an essential platform for professional growth and meaningful contributions to developmental science.