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Theories of Human Development

Barbara M. Newman and Philip R. Newman



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Theories of Human Development

Second Edition

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Theories of Human Development

Key human development theories that continue to guide research and practice are examined in this engaging text. Ten key theories are grouped into three families—those that emphasize biological systems, environmental factors, and those that reflect an interaction between the two. This organization enhances students' ability to evaluate, compare, and contrast theories both within and across families. Each family is introduced with an overview of their unique perspectives and the rationale for grouping them together. Discussion of each theory includes the cultural/historical context during the theory's development, its key concepts and ideas, extensions of the theory in contemporary work, an example showing a modification of the theory, an application of how the theory is used to inform practice, and an analysis of how the theory answers six basic questions that a human development theory should address. Each chapter includes an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the theories to facilitate comparisons. Theories that have a clear life-span focus along with cases and examples that address issues across the life span are included.

The second edition features:

- A new chapter on bioecological theory that highlights the increased use of this theory in the development of family, school, and community intervention programs.
- A new epilogue that examines the same case via each of the ten theories, illustrating their similarities and differences and how these ideas cast a unique light on a common situation.
- New *opening cases* that bring theory to life along with narrative that links the case to the chapter's concepts, *guiding questions* that help students compare theoretical perspectives, *critical thinking questions* that focus on using the theory to interpret the case and personal life experiences, and recommended resources that extend students' understanding.
- More examples from various disciplines that address topics students are likely to encounter as professionals.
- A new glossary that defines the boldfaced key terms.

- Enhanced website at www.psypress.com/9781848726673 that provides *instructors* with a test bank, PowerPoints, discussion questions and activities, additional cases with questions, teaching notes for using the book with various types of majors, and a conversion guide outlining changes to the new edition, and *students* with key terms with hot links to their definitions, chapter summaries and outlines, and additional resources for further study.
- Updated research and applications highlight the latest scientific developments.

Ideal for advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate courses in theories of development, life-span or child development taught in psychology, human development, family studies, education, and social work.

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Preface

Think about the power of ideas. Consider how concepts like freedom, justice, or equality have inspired action, or how ideas like loyalty, authority, and discipline have influenced family and military life. Scientific theories are logical, empirically grounded sets of ideas that can have a profound impact on the way one understands oneself and others. Theories draw you into a world of ideas, leading you to consider relationships, processes, time, culture, and self in new ways and suggesting methods for exploring human behavior. The goal of this book is to provide an engaging introduction to theoretical perspectives about human development. The ten theories that are presented have guided research, intervention, and practice in numerous fields including developmental psychology, life-span development, education, medicine and nursing, social work, human services, counseling, parenting, therapy, and mental health.

One weakness of several current books in this area is that they offer a “shotgun” approach to theory. Each chapter is typically devoted to a separate theory, but students have no idea why these theories were selected or how they relate to one another. In contrast, this book is designed to focus on three major families of theories: those that emphasize biological systems in guiding the direction of development; those that emphasize environmental factors in guiding the direction of development; and those that emphasize a dynamic interaction between biological, environmental, and self-directed forces in guiding the direction of development. Within each family, a small number of influential theories are presented. These theories were selected because they have had a major impact on developmental science and continue to evolve because of new insights from contemporary scholarly work. Our hope is that, in examining the concepts and perspectives of the ten theories, students will have new resources to think critically about theoretical ideas, begin to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the theories, and gain a deeper understanding of how the particular emphasis of a theory guides research, application, policy, and public opinion.

The book highlights the role of theories in building a knowledge base. Theories guide research, help to interpret behavior, and guide the design of interventions. Students will appreciate how theories are revised and extended as new issues are brought to light. They will observe, through examples, how the research process contributes to the evaluation and modification of theories. They will be able to appreciate how, over time, ideas that may have been introduced in one theory are revisited in another theoretical framework, and how an emerging societal issue or new research capability brings back the relevance of a theoretical concept from the past. Students will also be encouraged to consider the historical and cultural context within which each theory was developed. This perspective suggests that there are inevitable biases that accompany any individual's efforts to explain and predict human behavior, situated as they are in the prevailing

scientific environment and influenced by the theorist's particular scholarly training, values, and beliefs.

The book was written for upper division undergraduates and beginning graduate students who have already taken one course in human development or developmental psychology. It is comprised of 12 chapters: an introduction, ten theory chapters divided into three families, and an epilogue. The introduction (Chapter 1) reviews the role that theories play in guiding the development of knowledge and the design of interventions. It also highlights some of the challenges of understanding human development across the life span. The introductory chapter introduces six guiding questions that a theory of human development is expected to address. These questions are addressed in each theory chapter, providing a vehicle for students to compare and contrast the contributions of each theory. Each family of theories is introduced with a brief interlude that provides some highlights of each theory and its unique perspectives, and an explanation for why the theories in that section have been grouped together.

The discussion of each theory includes the following sections:

- A. Guiding questions: each chapter begins with a small set of guiding questions to help orient the reader to some big ideas and to introduce issues that will be central to the focus of the theory.
- B. An opening case and brief narrative that links the case to themes from the theory.
- C. The historical and cultural context in which the theory was developed.
- D. An overview of the theory's key concepts and important ideas.
- E. New directions that extend the theory in contemporary scientific work.
- F. A research example that shows how the theory has been tested and modified.
- G. An application that shows how the theory has guided the design of an intervention or program, or has been used to inform practice.
- H. An analysis of how the theory answers six basic questions that a theory of human development is expected to address.
- I. A critique of the theory, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, and a table which summarizes these points.
- J. A set of critical thinking questions and exercises.
- K. Key terms.
- L. Recommended resources.

A major objective of this book is to foster critical thinking and an active approach to learning. The book is written in a clear, comprehensible style without sacrificing the integrity and complexity of ideas. Concepts are explained so that students can grasp the underlying logic of the theory and its basic contributions. Each theory chapter follows the same organization to allow students to do their own comparisons and to learn to anticipate the issues that are likely to be raised. By emphasizing three families of theories and selecting a few examples within each family, we hope to help students begin to grasp the essential features of the family of theories and appreciate how new theories they will encounter fit within one orientation or another. Within each chapter, the use of case material encourages application of concepts to real-life situations. By returning to the six questions that a theory of human development is expected to address, students begin to accumulate a broad and comparative view of the theories, and their relevance for understanding the complexities of human behavior. After reading the critique of each theory, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, students can begin to add their own ideas, possibly combining ideas from several theories to address limitations.

The Epilogue, Chapter 12, is new to this edition. The Epilogue describes a single case that is interpreted using each of the ten theories presented in the text. This approach is intended to foster complex thinking by illustrating how the variety of theoretical ideas and principles can cast a unique light on a common situation. The Epilogue also summarizes some of the similarities and differences among the theories, culminating in a table that compares the theories with regard to basic processes; conceptualizations about periods of life; the universal versus contextual emphasis of the theory; and the timescale that the theory features in its approach to development.

PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES

The pedagogical features of the text are intended to foster understanding and stimulate conceptual development. An initial outline provides a roadmap of ideas that will be covered in the chapter. The guiding questions help students to formulate a basis for their critical analysis of the theories. As they read several theories, these questions will become increasingly useful to guide efforts to compare and contrast the theories. The initial case vignette provides a real-life situation to help illustrate how the theory can be useful in dealing with individual, family, and/or organizational situations. The narrative that follows the case vignette provides a link from the case to the concepts of the theory, even before the students have explored the theory in depth. Each chapter includes a discussion of strengths and weaknesses of the theory, in order to facilitate comparing theories and evaluating their usefulness for specific educational, counseling, human service, or policy goals.

The chapters close with a set of critical thinking questions and exercises which are intended to promote an analytical review of concepts, link the theory to personal life experiences, and encourage students to return to the opening case with enhanced appreciation for the insights provided by the theoretical lens. Key terms are boldfaced throughout each chapter, and the definition of these words and phrases can be found in the glossary as well as in the student e-resource. These glossary terms will support student assessment and outcomes. Recommended resources are suggested that extend the ideas of the theory through lectures, videos, websites, and additional readings. These resources suggest ways that students who are motivated can continue their exploration of the theory by examining its past as well as its current trends and application.

NEW TO THE SECOND EDITION

This edition preserves the basic organization and writing style of the first edition. It has been thoroughly updated with new references and contemporary examples of theoretical extensions, research, and applications. As noted above, many pedagogical elements were added to this edition. With respect to the content, a stronger emphasis on application can be seen in the use of opening cases for each theory chapter, a basic question about the practical implications of the theory, and critical thinking questions that focus on using the theory to interpret the case and personal life experiences. A new theory chapter, Chapter 10, Bioecological Theory, was added, based on its importance as a foundational framework in education, human services, and social work. The Epilogue, Chapter 12, was also added to provide a supplemental stimulus for analysis and comparison.

New topics are incorporated into the chapters. A few examples include: research on free-riders in Chapter 2; new research on the cognitive unconscious in Chapter 3; Robbie Case's theory of central conceptual structures in Chapter 4; a discussion of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory

in Chapter 5; an expanded discussion of gender role development in Chapter 6; a discussion of the effects of the accumulation of advantage and disadvantage over the life course in Chapter 7; a discussion of the practical implications of psychosocial theory in Chapter 8; an explanation of cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) in Chapter 9; and an explanation of Gilbert Gottlieb's concept of probabilistic epigenesis in Chapter 11.

This edition is accompanied by a website at www.psypress.com/9781848726673. The website provides *instructors* with a test bank, PowerPoints, cases, discussion questions and activities, tips for using the book with various types of majors, and a conversion guide outlining changes to the new edition. *Students* will find a summary, chapter outline, key terms with definitions, and additional readings and websites for further study.

We hope the text will serve instructors well in bringing the realm of theory to life. We hope the content will encourage students to see the field of human development as a living science that invites their critical thinking and creative contributions.

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Together, the Newmans have co-authored 13 books in the field of human development as well as numerous journal articles and book chapters on adolescent development, parenting, and psychosocial theory. Their life-span developmental text, *Development through life: A psychosocial approach*, is in its 12th edition.

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