

MORE SIMILARITIES THAN DIFFERENCES IN CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT?: A PLEA FOR THEORY BRIDGING

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Abstract

Many contemporary theories of social development are similar and/or share complementary constructs. Yet, there have been relatively few efforts toward theoretical integration. The present chapter represents a call for increased theory bridging. The problem of theoretical

fragmentation in psychology is reviewed. Seven highlighted reasons for this predicament include differences between behavioral sciences and other sciences, theoretical paradigms as social identities, the uniqueness assumption, information overload, field fixation, linguistic fragmentation, and few incentives for theoretical integration. Afterward, the feasibility of theoretical synthesis is considered. Finally, some possible directions are proposed for theoretical integration among five contemporary theories of social and gender development: social cognitive theory, expectancy-value theory, cognitive-developmental theory, gender schema theory, and self-categorization theory.