

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-08795-7 - Comparisons in Human Development: Understanding Time and Context

Edited by Jonathan Tudge, Michael J. Shanahan and Jaan Valsiner

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This important volume deals with the challenges posed by comparative strategies in human development, challenges that reflect the dynamic and multilevel nature of development. Comparative strategies represent basic heuristic tools for studying the change and stability of both people and their environments. Yet developmentalists make comparisons that focus on the magnitude of differences between groups (based, for example, on age or gender), often neglecting issues of variability and process. *Comparisons in Human Development* examines the problems and promise of comparisons in the study of development and provides empirical examples of diverse comparative approaches to human activity and thought.

Although the contributors come from many disciplines and countries, they share the view that developmental research must be concerned with processes that operate through time and are regulated by their biological, social, and cultural contexts. Development is thus understood in systemic terms, with bidirectional influences crossing levels of analysis, including the cellular, individual, group, cultural, and historical. This volume identifies comparative strategies as a fundamental research issue for developmentalists faced with the complexities of this systemic model.

Comparisons in Human Development examines central issues raised by the use of comparisons in theoretical and methodological terms. It then offers empirical examples of comparative strategies, exploring the intricate comparisons of cultural psychology. In the concluding section, an international team of leading developmentalists critically evaluates the book's contributions. *Comparisons in Human Development* complements *Developmental Science*, by Robert B. Cairns, Glen H. Elder, Jr., and E. Jane Costello (Cambridge University Press, 1996), which describes in theoretical terms an interdisciplinary approach to the change and stability of behavior.

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Comparisons in Human Development

Understanding Time and Context

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