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**Main Summary of Theory**
- Address the interaction, conflict and cultural change that results from contact between minority and dominant cultures
- Explain the different modes of adaptation of racial and ethnic minorities to the dominant culture
- Describe the stressors involved in socialization to two cultures
- Guide assessment and practice with racial and ethnic minorities

**Psychodynamic Theory**
- Describe the intrapsychic processes involved in personality development
- Emphasize the importance of early childhood experiences on psychosocial development
- Delineate the role of defense mechanisms in adaptive functioning
- Focus on either pathological or adaptive functioning
- Help in formulating questions used in a psychosocial history
- Widely used in social work practice with individuals and groups

**Theories of Life Span Development**
- Focus on growth and development concepts
- Age spans or “bands” of development
- Development is contextual, multidirectional, malleable
- Many paths to follow, opportunities for change
- How people develop, change, and grow over their entire life span

**Variations of the Theory**
- Dual perspective
- Bicultural socialization
- Transactional model
- Deficiency theory
- Multidimensional model of bicultural identity
- Cultural pluralism
- Assimilation & Acculturation

- Ego psychology
- Object relations theory
- Object relations theory—a feminist revision
- Self psychology

- Erikson's epigenetic life span theory
- Staude – life is series of transitions, each with a crisis to resolve
- Havighurst – age-related tasks throughout life span
- Vaillant – adaptation to life; defense mechanisms are not an illness, but adaptive and necessary to well-being
- GLBT Identity Development
- Shame Resilience Theory
### Difference or Uniqueness of the Theory
- Major focus is on social and cultural forces and processes
- Assimilation, acculturation, melting pot theory, and cultural pluralism are linear
- Bicultural socialization, deficiency theory, dual perspective are two ways
- Transactional model is contextual

- Substantial core of knowledge about intrapsychic and interpersonal behavior
- Primarily concerned with internal psychological processes
- The importance of early childhood experiences in personality development
- Existence of unconscious and preconscious motivation
- Existence of the ego, which assist in rational action
- Existence of defense mechanisms
- Feelings of ambivalence, in which people concurrently experience opposite emotions such as love and hate

- Uses distinct stages/ages of development
- Offers development into adult years
- Indicates that change (personality) is possible throughout lifespan
- Multi-dimensional: considers biological, psychological, and cultural perspectives
- Recognizes differences between gender
- Recognizes uniqueness of GLBT individuals and offers developmental differences for this population
- Views defense mechanisms as necessary for adaptation and not as an illness

### What it helps explain and/or predict
- Better at explanation than prediction
- Helps explain different stages of cultural identity

- Better at explanation than prediction of behavior
- Explains the stages people typically progress through in life
- Explains how failure to progress successfully may lead to maladaptive behavior.
- Explains how interaction with family, peer groups, organizations, institutions, and communities allow people to resolve developmental difficulties.
- May predict developmental milestones.

### Empirical Evidence
- Few studies on bicultural identity and adaptation
- Empirical evidence on Anglo Saxon worldview is flawed
- Quantitative research exaggerates differences between cultures and minimizes variations within the group

- Influence of unconscious on behavior has yet to be proven
- Methodological constraints difficult, if not impossible, to measure
- Repression has not been supported in controlled studies
- Historically, validation from clinical observations was sufficient
- Studies have failed to support main ideas about the centrality of childhood experiences in determining adult personality and psychopathology

- Conflicting views on mid-life crisis theories
- Supports defense mechanisms as necessary for adaptation (Valliant 1995)
- 6 Stages of development; midlife crisis (Gould 1978)
- No gender differences in patterns of work, life, and love (Marriam & Clark, 1991)
- Disproves stability of personality throughout life cycle
- Gender-based differences of fear and success not supported
| Consistency with current Social Work values, ethics, and practices | • Focus on the importance of bicultural adaptation, multiculturality or transculturality  
Social work literature has not often addressed empowerment, advocacy, and social action for people of color | • No longer the predominant theory but has produced enduring practice models  
Focus on pathology and deficiency rather than well-being and strengths  
Women characterized as deficient  
View of homosexuality not as negative as view of women  
Do not adequately address diversity  
Complexity of human behavior should not be reduced so simplistically | • The idea that people are inherently adaptive and creative and able to transform their lives with the proper social supports is consistent with strengths perspective.  
Evaluates the person and environment  
Provides resources for GLBT population in regards to development and difficulties |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pros of Theory | • Progressive overtime taking into account different facets of life and time  
View ethnic identity formation and acculturation as being dynamic, adaptive, and self-affirming  
Use practice methods appropriate for ethnic minority clients | Credited with bringing sexual issues to the forefront  
Constructs such as defense mechanisms are widely used in practice  
Used in practice with clients who want to explore psychosexual development  
Behavior can be predicted in the context of stage development | Provides universal framework with which to view clients' developmental processes  
Can help explain or predict how one responds to crisis, conflict, and life changes  
Useful in formulating assessment and intervention plans for individuals, families, and small groups |
| Cons of Theory | • Theories do not address biological processes; spirituality and psychological processes receive little attention  
The influence of gender is ignored for the most part  
Later theories based on quantitative data based on mainstream norms – so ethnic minorities were viewed as deficient  
Acculturation is viewed as being necessary for economic success | • Use with clients may not be practical  
Constructs cannot be tested empirically  
Doesn’t consider environmental influences on development  
Theory was developed on a non-representative sample  
some constructs such as penis envy are considered sexist and outdated  
Little attempt to discuss spiritual factors  
Stem from biological foundations but ignore current empirical knowledge about infant’s biological knowledge | Contradictory research findings  
Rigidly defined life stages  
Missing spirituality component (with the exception of Erikson and Jung)  
Does not take sociocultural diversity into account - often not as applicable to those in low socioeconomic positions |