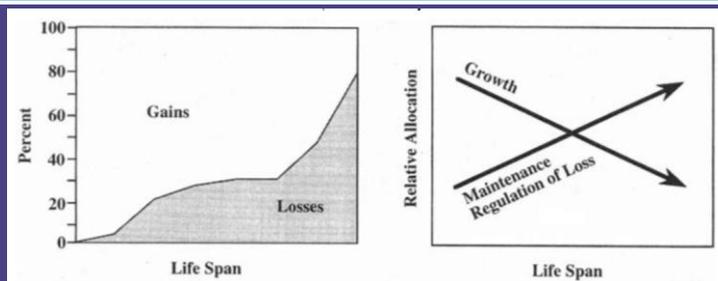


THE DIRECTION OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT: AN EVALUATIVE REVIEW

Dr Oliver Robinson, University of Greenwich

Adulthood as a period of gain, maintenance and loss



- Change in adulthood occurs in many directions
- Is development the sum total of these changes?
 - ▣ The 'value-neutral' definition



Paul Baltes

The direction question is this...

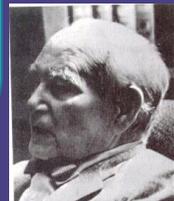
- Amongst these many possible changes, what is the **optimal/positive** direction, in which enduring adult change can move?
 - This requires a value-judgment about what it means to be a *better* adult human being or to lead a *better* life

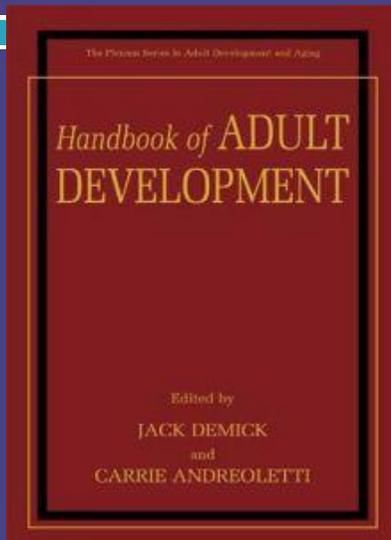
The orthogenetic principle

A value-free description of organismic development

“Developmental psychology postulates one regulative principle of development; it is an orthogenetic principle which states that wherever development occurs it proceeds from a state of relative globality and lack of differentiation to a state of increasing differentiation, articulation and hierarchical integration.” (Werner, 1957, p.126)

Heinz Werner





2003

- Chapter 1: raised the question of whether increased complexity is enough
 - “They [orthogenetic, dynamic systems and ecological models] may predict movement toward greater complexity, but they don’t tell us whether that complexity is good or mature or wise.”

The eudaimonic direction

“By development, we mean a succession of events which follows a certain order, forms a definite pattern, has direction and represents a whole. In the person’s subjective experience, this *direction* is towards certain *results*. These results, which are hoped for or expected during as well as toward the end of the life course, are seen by different people in different outcomes or experiences and are given varying names. They may be called happiness or success, possessions or accomplishments, belonging or contributing, self-improvement or self-development... We suggest the concept of *fulfilment* as one which would cover any result to which a person might aspire.” (Charlotte Bühler, 1964, p.1)



Charlotte Bühler

The adaptive direction

“Our Motivational Theory of Life-Span Development proposes that the key criterion for adaptive development is the extent to which the individual realizes control of his or her environment (i.e., primary control) across different domains of life and across the life span.” (Heckhausen, Wrosch & Schultz, 2010, p.35)

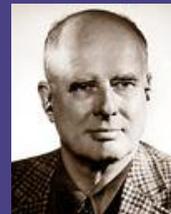


Jutta Heckhausen

The epistemic direction



Jean Piaget



William Perry

“Development means constructing systems of transformations that correspond, more or less adequately, to reality.” Piaget

The ethical direction

- ❑ The journey towards other-directedness, generativity, justice and care



“Self-actualizing people are, without one single exception, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside of themselves. They are devoted, working at something, something which is very precious to them...One devotes his life to the law, another to justice, another to beauty or truth.” (Maslow, 1971, p.42)



Conclusion

- ❑ The notion of *optimal development* requires a direction for change
- ❑ This in turn requires a description of how growth occurs + a value-judgment about what it means to become a better person or live a better life
- ❑ In summary: **ORTHOGENESIS + A VIRTUE**

Eudaimonic virtue: fulfilment and happiness

Adaptive virtue: survival and reproduction

Epistemic virtue: truth and knowledge

Ethical virtue: justice and generativity