

Dynamics and indeterminism in Developmental and Social Processes



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One of the most profound insights of the dynamic systems perspective is that new structures resulting from the developmental process do not need to be planned in advance, nor is it necessary to have these structures represented in genetic or neurological templates prior to their emergence. Rather, new structures can emerge as components of the individual and the environment self-organize; that is, as they mutually constrain each other's actions, new patterns and structures may arise. This theoretical possibility brings into developmental theory the important concept of indeterminism--the possibility that developmental outcomes may not be predictable in any simple linear causal way from their antecedents.

This is the first book to take a critical and serious look at the role of indeterminism in psychological and behavioral development.

- * What is the source of this indeterminism?
- * What is its role in developmental change?
- * Is it merely the result of incomplete observational data or error in measurement?

It reviews the concepts of indeterminism and determinism in their historical, philosophical, and theoretical perspectives--particularly in relation to dynamic systems thinking--and applies these general ideas to systems of nonverbal communication. Stressing the indeterminacy inherent to symbols and meaning making in social systems, several chapters address the issue of indeterminism from metaphorical, modeling, and narrative perspectives. Others discuss those indeterministic processes within the individual related to emotional, social, and cognitive development.



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