

# Osaka Interviews

The Osaka Entrepreneur Factory  
Meets Otto Laske, IDM  
September 2022

# Table of Contents

- Session One: Introduction to Otto Laske's Work
- Session Two: CDF, the Constructive Developmental Framework
- Session Three: Adult Development and Mental Growth Seen Anthropologically, as Components of Social Transformation
- Conclusion: IDM Teaching and Coaching: How to become a user of CDF

# Session 1

## Introduction

# Sources of Inspiration in Laske's Social Science Work

- Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer: Critical Theory; (teaching of) dialectical thinking
- Herbert Simon: AI; Information Processing Psychology
- Marvin Minsky: AI; Software-inspired Theory of Mind
- Robert Kegan & Michael Basseches: Social-emotional and cognitive adult assessment
- William James College, MA: Clinical Psychology
- Elliott Jaques: Theory of Requisite Organization based on a Theory of Cognitive Development
- Roy Bhaskar: Social Ontology; Theory of Mind as a Causal Power
- Margaret Archer: Theory of Human Agency and Internal Conversations
- Bernhard Stiegler: Relationship of anthropo-genesis to techno-genesis, feeding into CDF as a theory of human agency

# A Critical View of Two Schools

## *Frankfurt School*

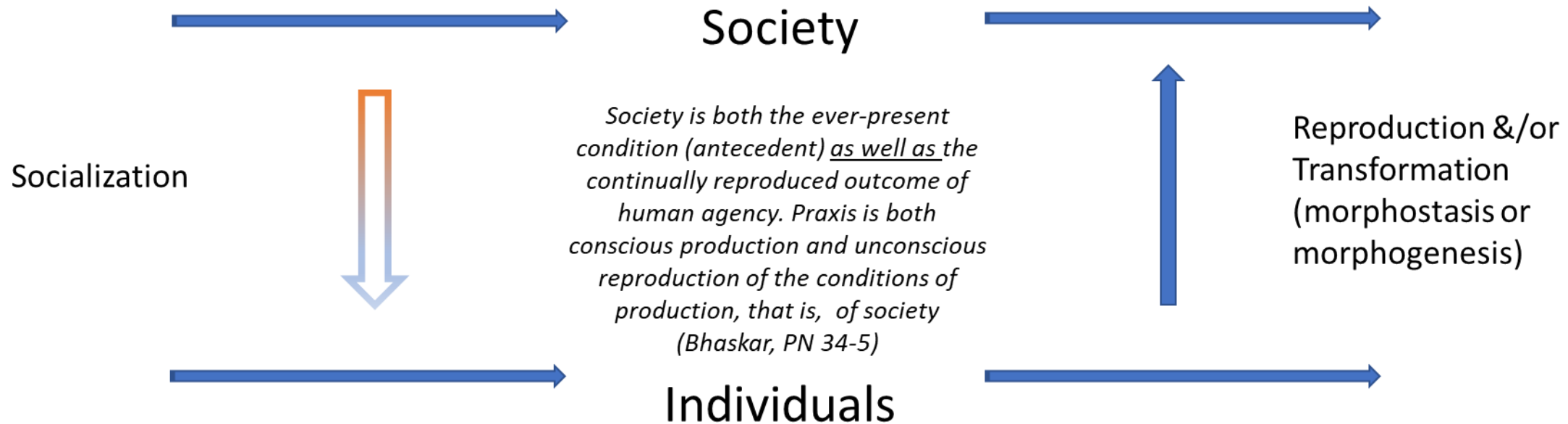
- The School places human development in a social context rather than isolating it from that context; it provides insight into the pervasive influence of society on all facets of adult development.
- Its greatest contribution is to have developed a practice of teaching dialectical thinking.
- Its social-science theory is, however, either downwardly (Adorno) or upwardly conflationist (Habermas), in that it is unable to explain convincingly how human agency interacts with social reality *without* either reducing or overstating its impact.

## *Kohlberg School*

- The School primarily deals with developmental *outcomes* but cannot explain the *actual process* of mental growth.
- It has produced individual theories that are unrelated to each other and has never provided a cogent synthesis of them (as was attempted in CDF).
- *Its theories do not talk to each other, nor do their authors.*
- It has never addressed the issue of how social-emotional and cognitive development relate *internally*, in addition leaving them unconnected to psychological and spiritual development.

# Work With CDF Refines Bhaskar's Model of Social Transformation

In terms of Bhaskar's model, the individual is 'thrown' into, and develops on account of, society and, due to his/her agency, can change society as well as him- or herself.

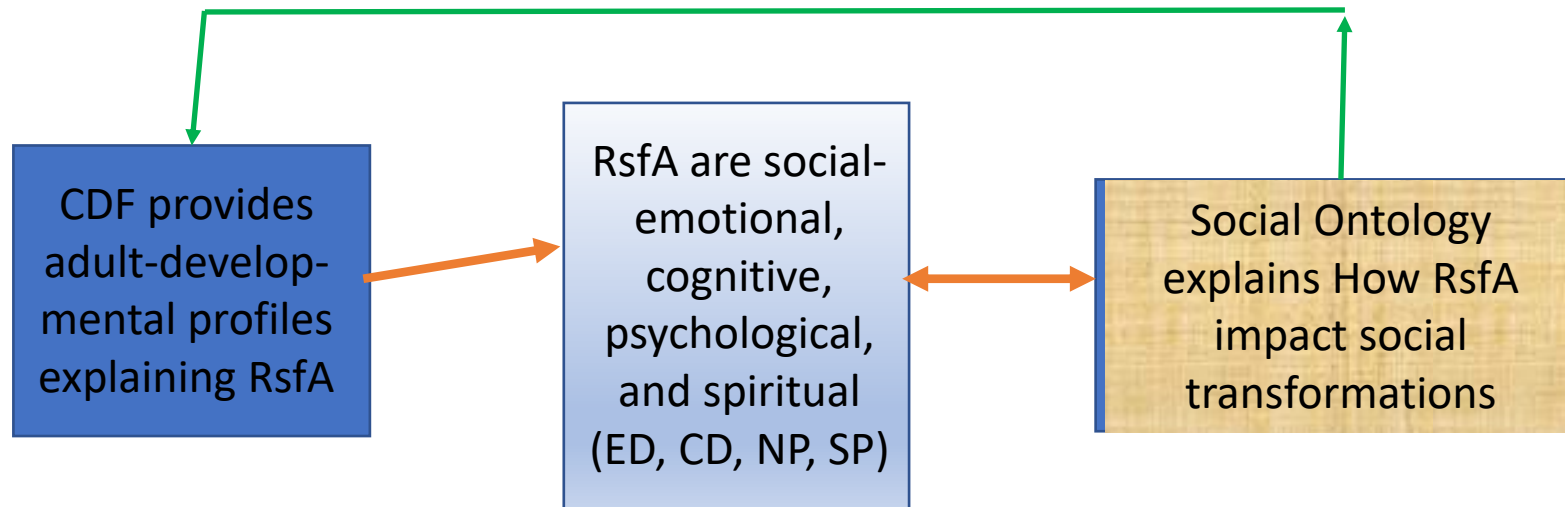


Bhaskar has little to say about the **internal structure of Human Agency.**

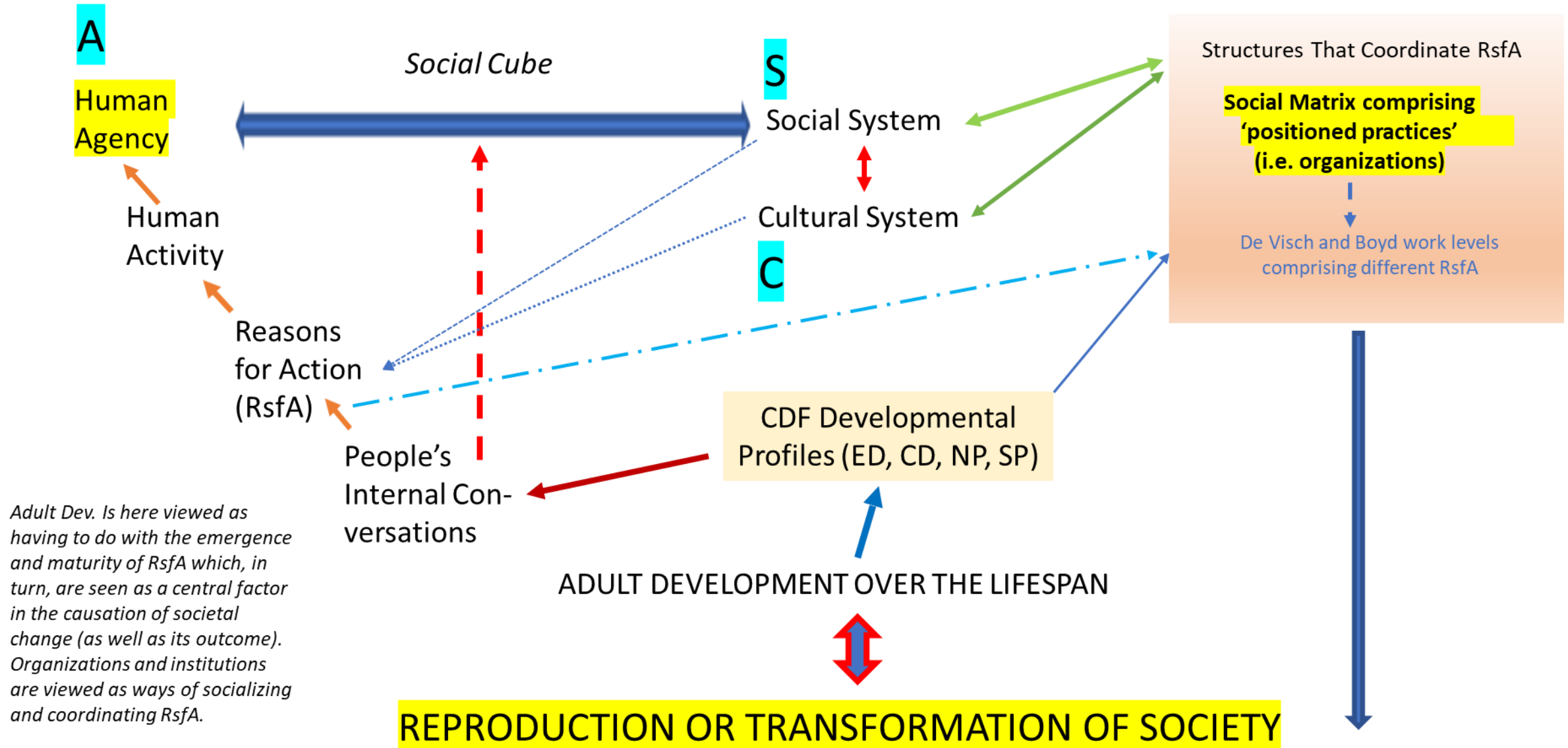
CDF shows how social actors generate and execute reasons for action (RsFA) based on their *developmentally structured* internal conversations, and thereby causally co-determine the ways in which society reproduces and/or transforms itself (as well as they do themselves).

# CDF's Contribution to Social Ontology as a Science of Social Transformation

Reasons for Action (Rsfa) are co-determined by social and cultural structures



# Adult Development is a Core Ingredient of Societal Transformation





# Session Two

## Constructive Developmental Framework (CDF)

# What is CDF? Three Overlapping Answers

- CDF combines Critical Theory with developmental theory; it is:
  - a *theory of mind as a causal power* (in the sense of Bhaskar) that develops anew in every individual over his or her lifetime
  - a *theory of human agency* (both in the sense of Archer and Simondon)
  - a *theory of individuation* (being uniquely different from others)
- These aspects are related in the following way:
  - Human agency as a causal power is rooted in the mind; it is fueled by 'reasons for action' (RsfA) as causes of social and cultural transformation (Bhaskar).
  - Human agency emerges from people's unceasing *internal conversations* (Archer) which change over the course of adult development, manifesting 'mental growth'.
  - Mental growth (maturation) is triggered and sustained by human agency, which simultaneously brings about *individuation*, making people different from each other.
  - For M. Archer, how (social) structure relates to human agency is the central sociological problem. As a theory of human agency, CDF sheds light on the relationship between social structure and human agency by showing *through semi-structured interviews* how 'reasons for action' (RsfA) emerge from people's unceasing internal conversations.

# Differences Between CDF & Developmental Psychology

## Developmental Psychology

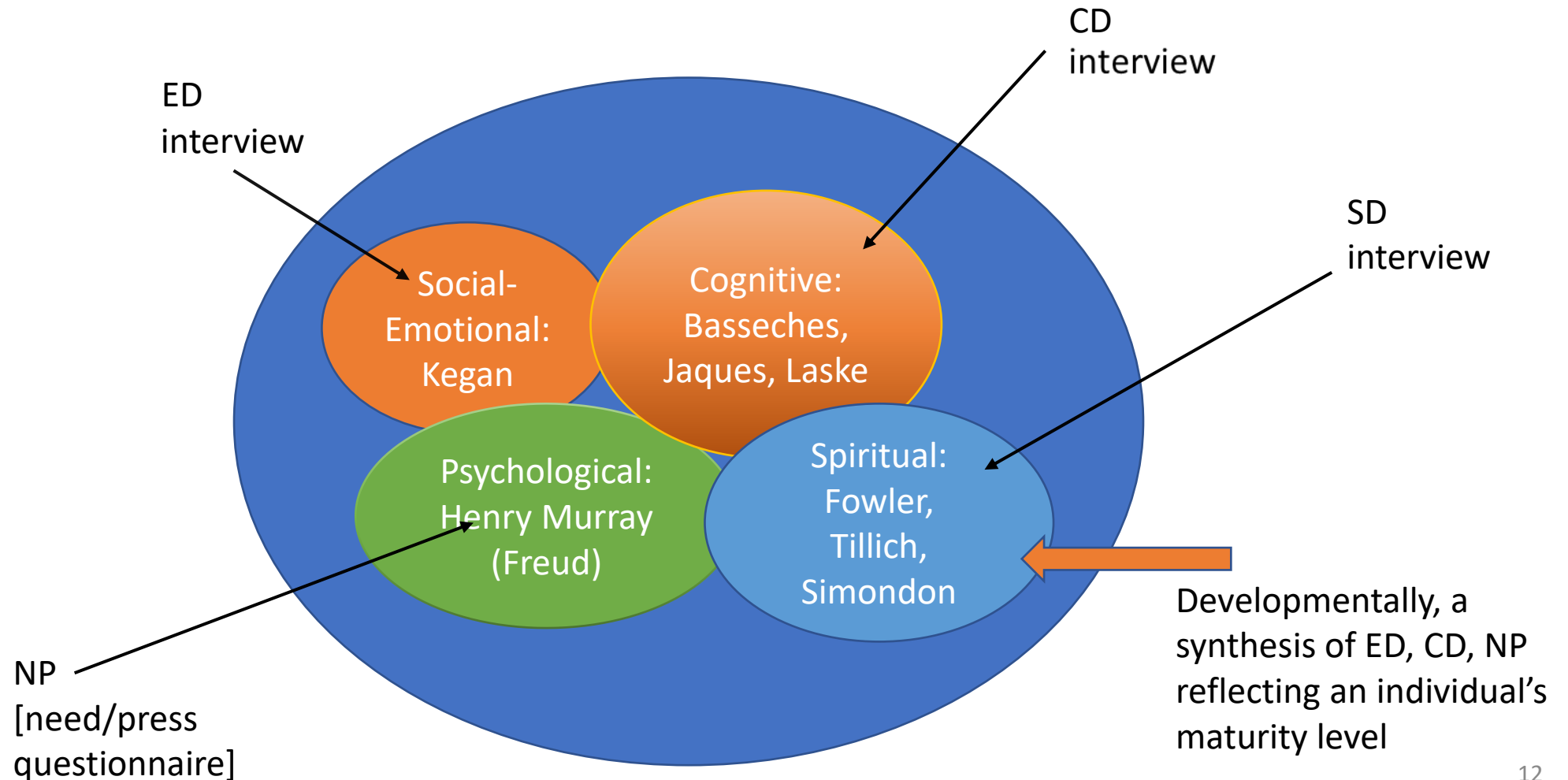
- Is restricted to a single dimension of adult development (social-emotional or cognitive).
- Reduces 'mind' to individual consciousness.
- Disregards that one and the same social-emotional stage description is valid for millions of individuals *simultaneously* but does not characterize a specific person (see slide 25).
- Neglects or bypasses the close relationship of social-emotional and cognitive adult development.
- Is cut off from social science, thus unable to provide answers to the question of how society maintains and transforms itself.

## Constructive Developmental Framework\*

- Explicates four interrelated dimensions of adult development: social-emotional (Kegan), cognitive (Basseches, Jaques, Bhaskar); psychological (Freud, Henry Murray) seen as synthesized in spiritual development (Simondon).
- Answers questions about the synthesis of developmental strands that makes a 'person', thereby addressing the problem of *individuation*.
- Details aspects of *human agency*, thus is relevant for refining social ontology and anthropology (and its link to the study of technology as an ingredient of mental growth).

- A social-emotional score in CDF comprises not simply a Kegan stage but an '**RCP**' or "risk-clarity-potential index, such as **4 {5:10:3}** which indicates the oscillation around a center of gravity of 10, a risk for regression of 5, and a potential for subsequent growth of 3.

# CDF is a Tool Set for Elaborating Four Developmental Profiles Through Qualitative Interviewing



# Ontogenetic Hypothesis

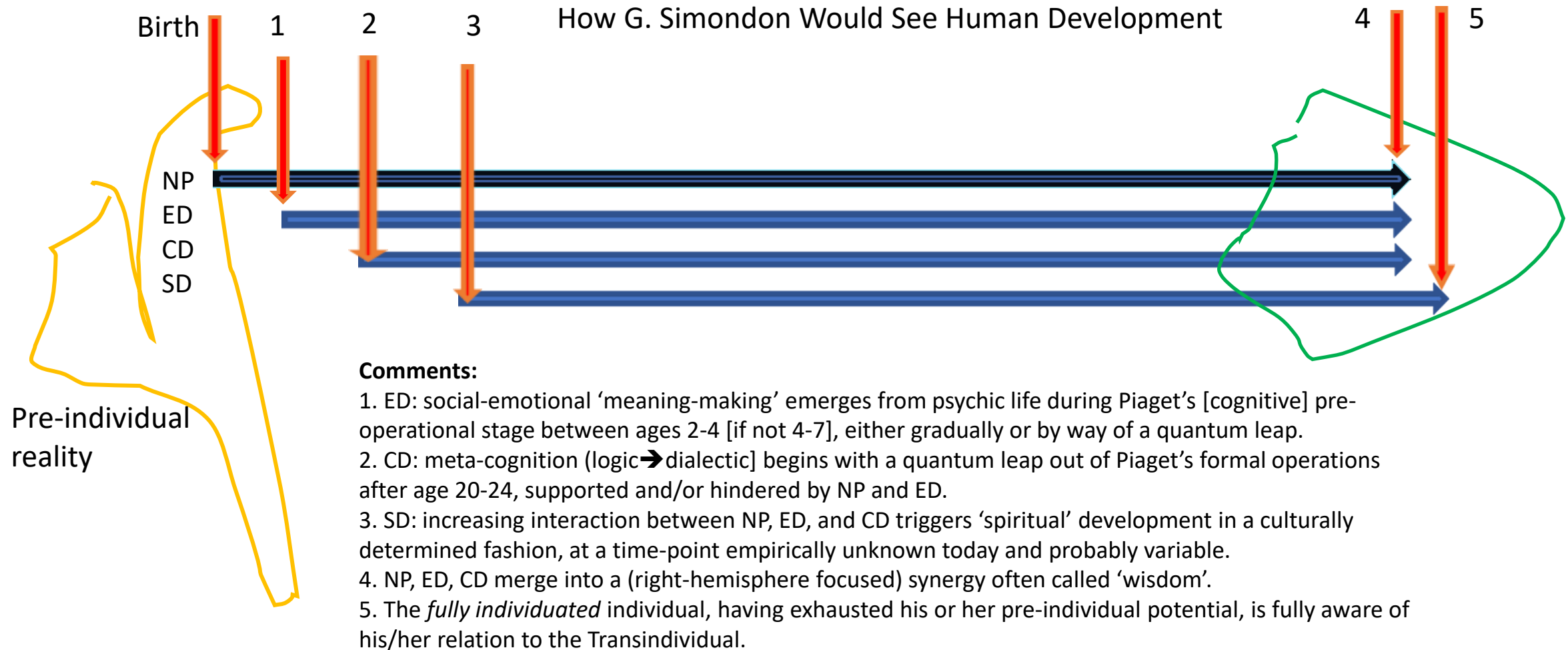
- CDF hypothesizes that consciousness develops along four intrinsically related mental-growth trajectories that develop across an individual's lifespan.
- Most likely, this development starts from psychic life (NP) and from there expands into a social-emotional (ED), cognitive (CD) and spiritual (SP) direction, such that trajectories increasingly merge and enter in a synthesis in SD.
- Initially, these trajectories themselves are as little developed than what develops 'along' them; they are initially not fully individualized.
- CDF interviewers have no direct access to these trajectories as ontologically *real* ones; however, they are able to gather empirical evidence as to what 'structures' have accrued in an individual's consciousness up to a specific timepoint.
- To speak with Bhaskar, NP, ED, CD, and SD point to *intransitive* dimensions of social reality that can be empirically investigated through social science.
- A 'developmental score' in CDF is thus an empirical approximation to an intransitive ontological reality whose cogency depends on the cogency with which the CDF methodology is used by an interviewer.

# Human Development Is Rooted in Pre-individual Reality

[G. Simondon]

- Human development is primarily oriented toward individuation, not maturation; however, the latter is a precondition of the former. (S3 individuals are less 'individuated' than S4 individuals).
- In CDF, human development viewed as **individuation** is grounded in 4 developmental trajectories that are grounded in a *pre-individual reality* (PRR); these trajectories emerge from a pre-individual reality at different speeds alongside each other in the form of parallel *phases*.
- Human development follows a requisite (natural) sequence of individuation, in CDF written as NP→ED→CD→SD, where SD indicates a 'synthetic' phase in which all trajectories merge.
- While human development starts from psychic (in contrast to biological) life, the psychic phase (at some point) triggers a social-emotional phase in which psychic events are *interpreted* as a higher epistemic level, often dubiously referred to as 'meaning'. Most likely, this phase has its roots in Piaget's (cognitive) pre-operational stage (ages 2-7), either symbolic (ages 2-4) or intuitive (ages 4-7).
- How NP and ED together influence, or even trigger, **the start of CD** is empirically unknown. The start of CD [in the sense of a move from logic to dialectic] is the beginning of human *metacognition* -- an awareness of one's own thinking; it most likely is the result of a 'quantum leap' from Piaget's formal operations (age 16 f), supported or hindered by social-emotional development, if not also NP.
- There is increasing interaction between phases (trajectories) of individuation, most likely traversed by different individuals at different speeds; this interaction culminates in a synthesis on 'spiritual' grounds, so called because the individual has become aware of his/her existing in relation to a *transindividual* reality into which s(he) is inserted from the start of life.

# The (Culture-Specific) Emergence of CDF Trajectories From Pre-Individual Reality



# Emerging Research Questions

- Since the four developmental trajectories of CDF are intrinsically linked within a pre-individual reality and increasingly merge on their path toward transindividual reality, thus shaping individuation along the way, the following research questions arise:
  - 1. What compels living systems to develop a psychic trajectory?
  - 2. Is there a *constitutive*, pre-individual charge that informs all 4 trajectories?
  - 3. If so, is this charge purely psychic, or does it ground all four trajectories equally?
  - 4. Do personal individuation paths represent different types of differentiation of trajectories from each other?
  - 5. If the trajectories 'are' their relation to each other -- rather than 'having' relationships with each other -- are there *generative mechanisms* that developmental science can discover [in the sense of Bhaskar's Naturalism]?
  - 6. In what way are such generative mechanisms proto-psychic?
  - 7. How can developmental researchers optimally think about individual trajectories as 'emissaries' or 'projections' of a pre-individual reality in other than purely logical ways?
  - 8. How does DTF dialectical thinking have to be amplified to make such thinking possible?



# What Can Be Empirically Known ...

# Structured Interviewing and Interview Evaluation

## Are the Bridge Between Developmental Theory and Practice

- It is a mistaken expectation that it is possible to develop a *professional* developmental and dialectical-thinking practice simply by studying adult development through workshops in adult development.
- **This is so because to internalize and embody knowledge about adult development requires a deep change of one's own notions of how a human being makes meaning and sense of the world based on his or her internal conversations, as well as developing corresponding practices.**
- Internal conversations are largely unconscious, thus unknown to a typical speaker. They are optimally captured through *structured qualitative interviewing*.
- Structured interviewing, taught at IDM through 'case studies', is an art as well as a science. It is the **bridge between developmental theory and practice** and requires entirely different skills than conventional content-focused interviewing.
- Task 1: To capture by qualitative interview the nature of an interviewee's internal conversation, one needs to learn the technique of "prompting" based on which one can elicit from interviewees -- *at the right time and in the right way* -- **developmental structures** – e.g., Kegan-levels and dialectical thought form constellations, that the interviewee cannot be aware of.
- Task 2: By evaluating recorded interviews, **a learner of CDF expands his/her own internal conversations developmentally**, by imbuing these conversations with the knowledge of developmental theory and dialectic; through case studies, s(he) can continuously test the accuracy of her internal listening and can step by step develop her capacity for accurate developmental and dialectical listening – in whatever situation s(he) is in.
- For details about case studies, see the information about case study work at <https://interdevelopmentals.org/services/>

# How Does Adult Development Happen?

## *Through Internal Conversations*

- By way of CDF-based interviewing (taught in IDM workshops), we can move away from simply categorizing developmental *outcomes* and proceed to *explicating* the structure of mental growth processes in real time.
- As CDF interview analysis shows, these growth processes occur based on relationships an individual establishes within him- or herself that take the form of unceasing *internal conversations with oneself*.
- We show through structured interviews that these relationships are configured in four different ways: *social-emotional, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual*, thereby constituting four different milieus of mental growth.
- In each of these milieus (see the next slide), *based on different internal relationships with themselves*, individuals ask *themselves* different questions, answers to which are documented, explored and evaluated through CDF interviews as their mental structure.
- Internal conversations are both pre-linguistic (right brain hemisphere) and linguistic (left hemisphere), using language as an advanced technology.

# Through the CDF Methodology We Research the Structure of Internal Conversations That Deliver ‘Reasons for Action’ to Human Agency

- A user of the CDF methodology strives to understand how a person *relates to him- or herself* in terms of answers s(he) gives to four different questions:
  - “what should I and for whom?” – the social-emotional question of Kegan’s
  - “what can I do and what are my options?” – the cognitive question raised by Basseches, Jaques, and Laske
  - “how am I doing?” – the psychological question raised by Freud and Henry Murray.
  - “what is my ultimate concern in life?” – the spiritual question [which is an individual’s way of calling him- or herself into question on which the outcome of the individual’s process of *individuation*\* depends]
- A CDF assessment yields four closely linked developmental *profiles* of the person assessed that show how these interrelated questions are answered at a specific point of a person’s life journey.
- For a CDF user, being able to evaluate a client’s answers to the above questions (i.e., the relationships to him- or herself a client is able to establish) is a foundation of developmental coaching, facilitation, team development, consulting, mentoring, etc.

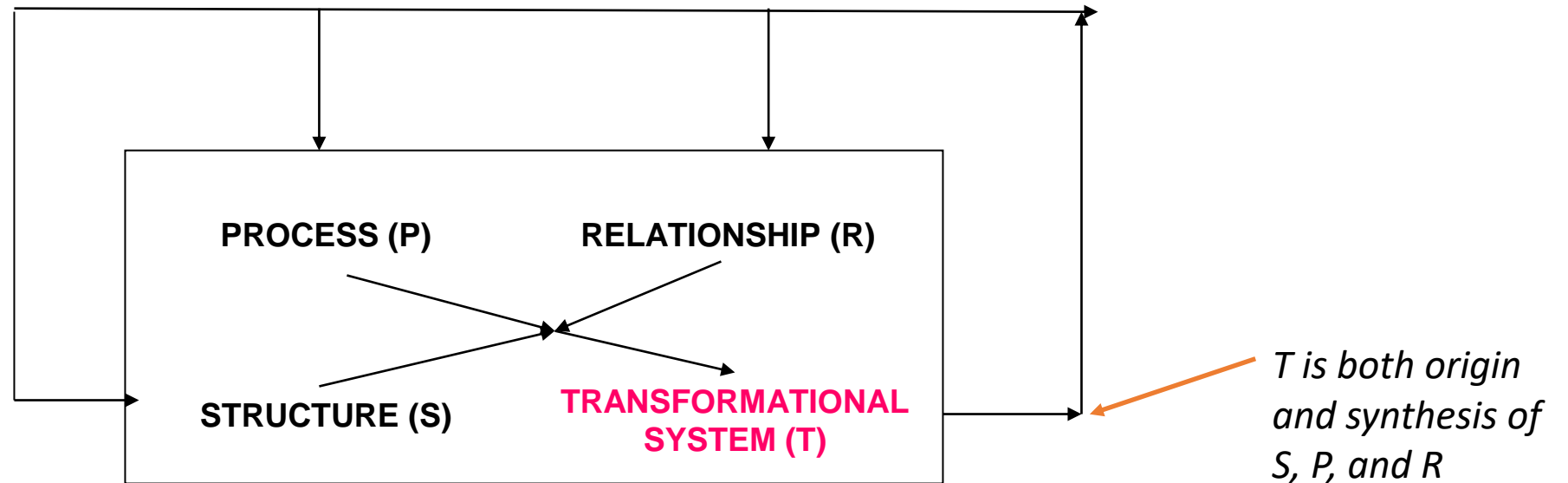
\* the *degree* of loss of ego-centricity (Piaget) that determines the depth of understanding that an individual can develop of the transindividual relation s(he) is part of.

# The Cognitive Turn Toward Meta-Cognition

# The Four Moments of Dialectic (Bhaskar)

## Describe Reality as In Unceasing Transformation

To approach reality more deeply, a thinker needs to consider three dimensions: organized wholeness (structure, S), unceasing motion (process, P), and common ground (relationship, R). By drawing on all three, the thinker can learn to master transformational thinking (T).

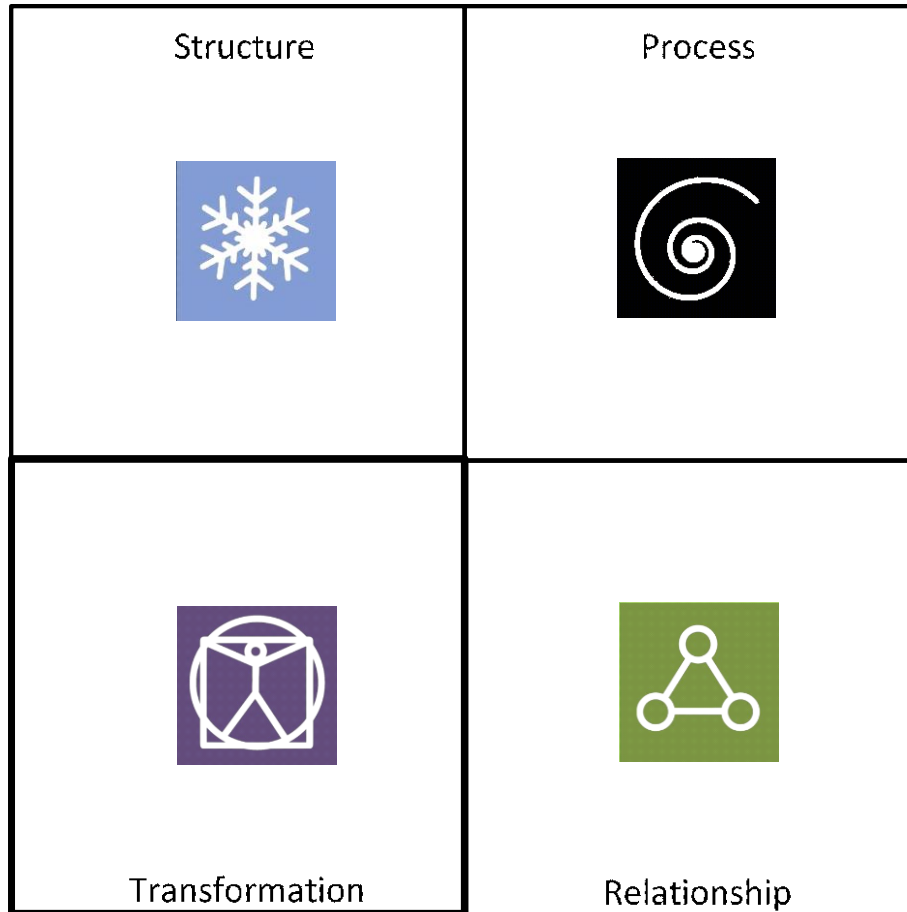


Legend:

Upper moments: critical.

Lower moments: constructive.

# Thought Form Dialectic: Taking Four Perspectives On Reality



Courtesy Shannon/Frischherz 2020

**In what way is what you describe a part of a system (total configuration) that is larger than the parts composing it?**

**How is this situation or event or System evolving given what led to it and what will follow?**

**How are the elements you speak of internally related, sharing common ground (co-defining each other)?**

**What does the evolution and transformation of this system of systems look like?**

# DTF: The Dialectical Thought Form Framework Identifies and Boosts 'Movements-in-Thought'

## **Process – reality is in unceasing motion**

- Preserving fluidity in thought (3, 5)
- Attention to actual or potential processes of change (1, 4, 6-7)
- Describing movement as occurring via opposites (2)

## **Structure– configurations remain (meta-) stable across change**

- Attention to organized and patterned wholes (8-9,14)
- Recognizing & describing systems as systems (10-13)

## **Relationship – things adhere in a shared common ground**

- Attention to relationships (15-18)
- Describing relationships as interactive and constitutive (19-21)

## **Transformational System — reality is an open, not a closed, system**

- Attention to the limits of stability of systems (change potential) (22)
- Describing transformation from one system to another (23, 27)
- Describing relationships among systems (25-26, 28)
- Describing the potential of systems to emerge (24)



# A Short Table of Thought Forms [Iva Vurdelja]

## Facilitates Learning DTF

PROCESS	STRUCTURE	RELATIONSHIP	TRANSFORMATION
1. Emergence and inclusion of opposites	4. Relationship between part(s) and a whole	7. Bringing elements into Relationship	10. Limits of system stability
2. Patterns of interaction	5. Structure and stability of a system	8. Structure of relationships	11. Developmental movement
3. Embeddedness in process	6. Multiple contexts and frames of reference	9. Patterns of interaction and influence	12. Comparison and Coordination of systems, emergence of new entities

The diagram illustrates the integration of the four thought forms. Four large, colored arrows point from the bottom row of the table towards a central black box labeled 'INTEGRATION'. The arrows are yellow (from 'Embeddedness in process'), green (from 'Multiple contexts and frames of reference'), red (from 'Patterns of interaction and influence'), and blue (from 'Comparison and Coordination of systems, emergence of new entities').

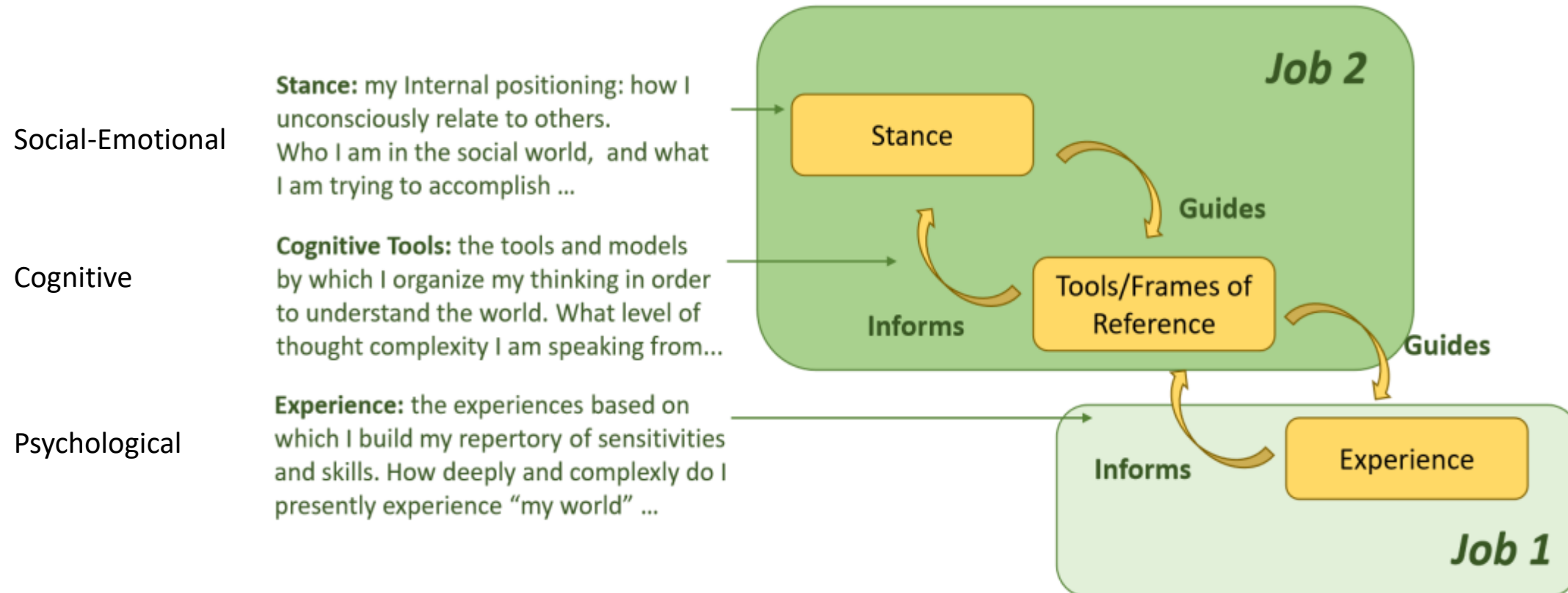
TFs in the table follow the *PEL sequence*, i.e., the 'pointing to', 'elaborate', and 'link' paradigm that consecutively opens thinking to deeper exploration.

# Complete Table of DTF Thought Forms (Basseches; Laske)

PROCESS	CONTEXT	RELATIONSHIP	TRANSFORMATION
1. On-going change	8. Focus on part(s) within a whole	15. Limits of separation	22. Limits of system stability
2. Inclusion of absences and opposites	9. Balance of a whole	16. Value/bringing elements into relationship	23. Developmental value of conflict
3. Composition by integrating opposites	10. Structures, functions, layers of a system	17. Critique of reductionism and separation	24. Developmental movement
4. Patterns of movement	11. Hierarchical nature of a system	18. Relatedness of value systems	25. Comparison of systems
5. Practical and active nature of knowledge	12. Stability of a system	19. Structural aspects of relationship	26. Coordination of systems
6. Critique of denying change	13. Intellectual systems; frames of reference	20. Patterns of interaction and influence	27. Open, self-transforming systems
7. Embedded in process	14. Multiplicity of contexts	21. Describing constitutive relationships	28. Integrating multiple perspectives

# Adult Development in the Workplace is About ‘Job 2’

Work is delivered through two jobs, not one: Job 1 refers to the work a person is assigned or volunteers for, while Job 2 comprises the person’s developmental activities his or her job requires. Job 2 comprises three (if not four) dimensions of mental growth: social-emotional stance, cognitive tools, and psychological experience (of self), that guide and feed back into each other, as shown below.

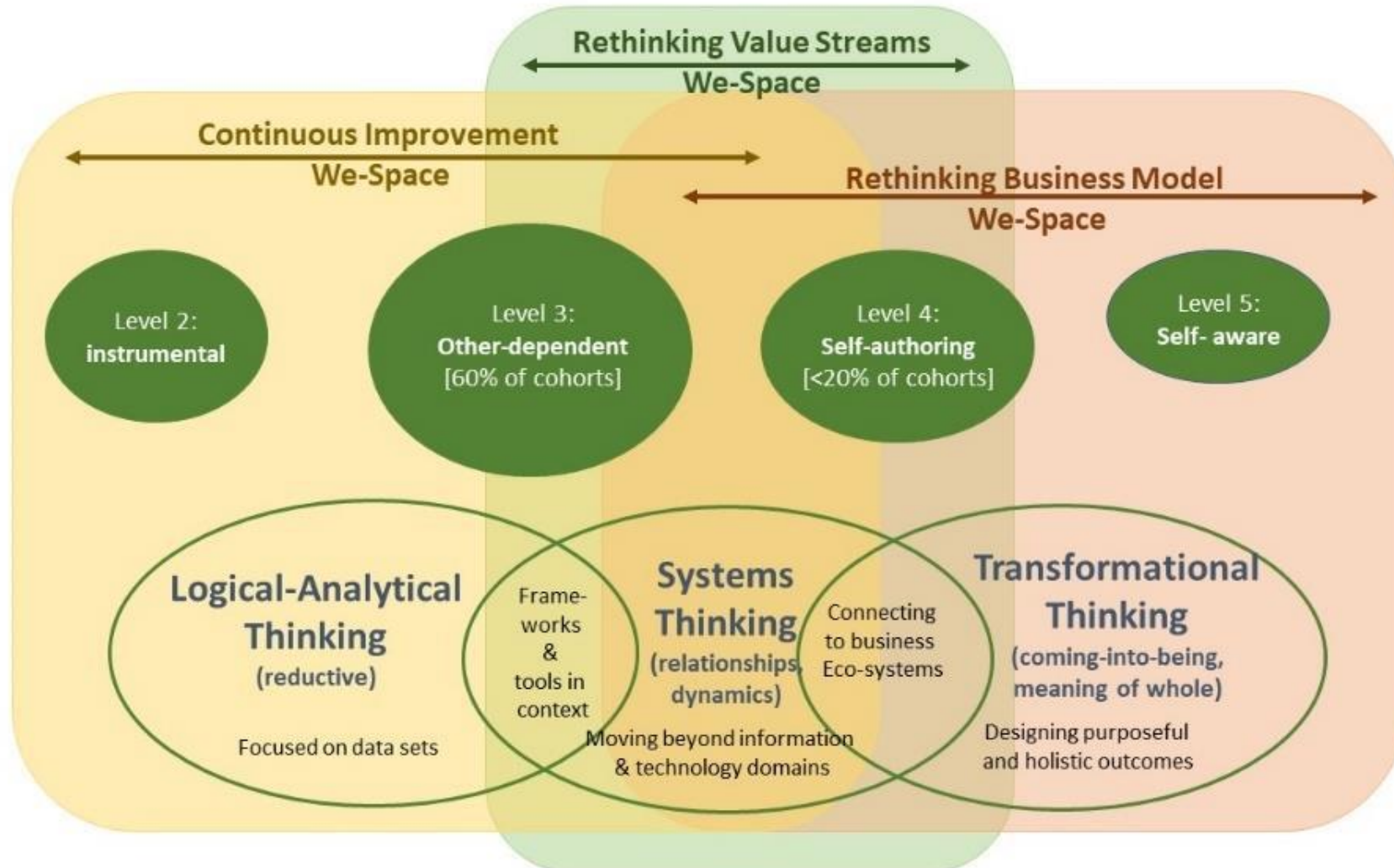


# Social-Emotional and Cognitive Maturity in their Relation to Three Levels of Work Complexity

Three levels of complexity of organizational work

Four levels of social-emotional maturity

Three phases of adult thinking

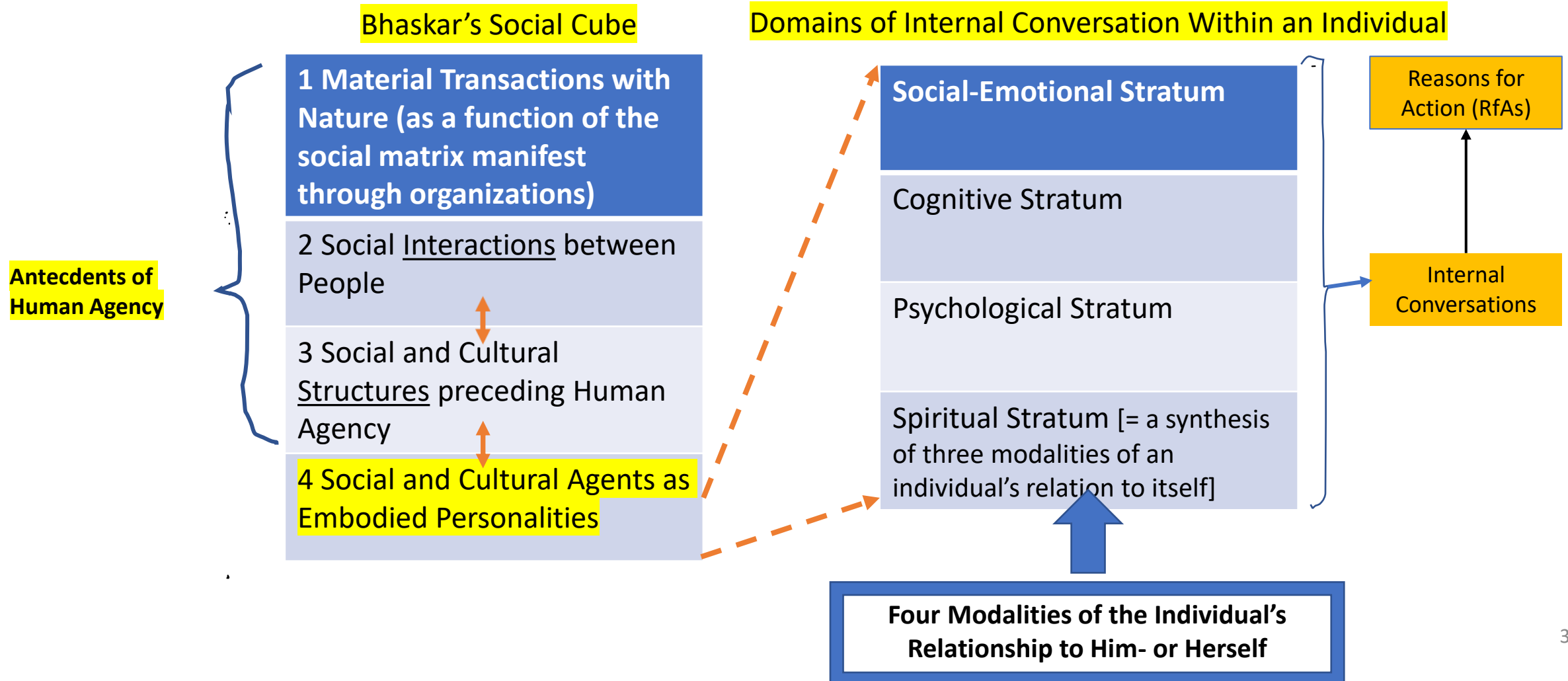


Just as individuals act from different levels of maturity so do **teams**. These levels also define different types of teams characterized by different levels of complexity of work they do.

Session 3  
*Adult Development and Mental Growth*  
Seen Anthropologically,  
as Components of Social Transformation

# CDF Explicates Domains of Internal Conversation of Homo Sapiens

The four strata of human consciousness (in CDF) are developmental outcomes of the *prehistory* of today's individuals; they are four different modalities in terms of which homo sapiens relates to him- or herself



# Internal Conversations Are Specific to Homo Sapiens

Adult development and the internal conversations which engender mental growth are incorrectly taken to be purely psychological notions.

- New anthropological studies (Leroi-Gourhan, Simondon, Stiegler) teach us that it took millions of years of interaction with nature (especially physical materials like stones) for humans to shape their consciousness into a form now ascribed to *homo sapiens*.
- In terms of anthropology, the question arises: how did proto-humans on their way to homo sapiens develop the four interrelated trajectories described through CDF, by taking what steps?
- **Considering the notion of ‘mental growth’ anthropologically**, research has made it evident that **anthropogenesis** – the way the human body and its consciousness were shaped throughout pre-history– **is inseparable from technogenesis**, -- the way technologies were developed, leading to the question: **in what way did the use of pre-historic technologies gradually shape the brain now attributed to homo sapiens?**
- Thinking about ‘adult development’ anthropologically, we need to see *mental growth (and thus adult development)* as linked to technogenesis (the development of technology). Doing so, we ask:
  - *How, over millions of years, did homo sapiens develop four irreducible trajectories of consciousness as described in CDF?*
  - *In what way do contemporary individuals retrace the pre-history of consciousness of homo sapiens?*
  - *How are we to understand the way in which these trajectories together define human agency which unceasingly develops new technologies?*



# Maturation Feeds Individuation But Is Insufficient for Describing a 'Person'

- CDF spiritual interviews, inspired by G. Simondon's writing on phases of individuation emerging from a 'pre-individual' reality, are qualitative interviews structured in terms of 10 'spiritual' interview *prompts*.
- Their *content* focus is an interviewee's *ultimate concerns* and *view of transcendence* relative to social reality and practice, as they have emerged in consonance with the interviewee's dominant cultural environment. Their *structural* focus is the degree of integration of the four CDF trajectories, NP, ED, CD, SD within a person's spiritual profile.
- So far, the analysis of a small set of interviews seems to show that they are best understood as concerning *individuation* which subsumes maturation (developmental levels and phases), as follows:
  - While maturation regards *separate* developmental trajectories (such as ED and CD), individuation is about their *synthesis*.  
**Separate developmental trajectories have little realistic value.**
  - Following Simondon, individuation can be described as the process of growing out of a 'pre-individual' (not yet individualized) mind into a mind that increasingly integrates different developmental trajectories, so as to shape them into components of a holistic consciousness.
  - Processes of individuation are *synthetic* in the sense of Thought Form 28 (of DTF), in that they establish a 'system of systems', namely of irreducible but related strata, each of which gradually sheds its own peculiarity for the sake of establishing a new, steadily self-differentiating, holistic system in which all isolated subsystems [strata] are merged.
  - This kind of process is **a purely mental, not a psychological, one**; it transcends an individual's behavioral as well as developmental profiles.
  - Maturation ('development') and individuation are different research issues: maturation only delivers the *material* that individuation processes are drawing from.



# Approaching Contemporary Culture from CDF

- Culture never supports more than Kegan-stage 3; moving to Kegan-stage 4 is the individual's (lonely) task; learning dialectical thinking boosts undertaking that task.
- Sadly, developmental theory has become a narrow version of what it was meant to become during its Kohlberg School ascendance in the 1980s.
- Developmental theory today is purely social-emotional; is not a social science; as a result, it has no answers to the question of social ontology: how society unceasingly reshapes and transforms itself through human agency; nor does it have a clue as to what is dialectical sense making.
- **At IDM, we have transcended 'developmental theory' by merging the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School with developmental theories of the Kohlberg School, as well as with Bhaskarian and Simondonian ontology, -- a synthesis we experience as an effective approach to contemporary culture and social reality.**

Our main questions at this point are these:

- Logistically: How to teach a sufficient number of individuals developmental and dialectical sense making?
- In regard to culture: How to bring CDF thinking into the cultural (especially educational) mainstream?
- In regard to science: How to integrate CDF thinking into social science (not only sociology)?
- In terms of social practice: How to best assist organizations and institutions in becoming 'deliberately' developmental and waking up to the impact of cognitive development on work delivery?

# Conclusion: How CDF is Taught at IDM

# Summary of IDM 2022-23 Teaching

Services	Mentorship and Practice of Dialectical Thinking	Mentorship and Practice of Developmental Coaching	Mentorship and Practice Cognitive Team Facilitation	Social-Emotional and Cognitive Case Study Guidance
Capability Level	Introductory <b>Practica</b> followed by <b>Advanced Labs</b>			
Activities	<i>Identifying, using, and reflecting on, dialectical thought forms; awareness of internal dialogue; critical concept analysis; critical project analysis; understanding social-emotional oscillations; critical cognitive and developmental listening; interviewing practice; interview transcript analysis; team dialogue analysis and feedback; dialectical text and image analysis; interview scoring; expert feedback to interviewees of case studies.</i>			
Certification Levels	Step 1: Self Study (Gateway) 2: Practitioner Step 3: Master	Step 1: Self Study (Gateway) Step 2: Practitioner Step 3: Master	Step 1: Self Study (Gateway) Step 2: Practitioner Step 4: Master	Step 1: Self Study (Gateway) Step 2: Practitioner Step 3: Master
Financial Contribution	Self Study: US\$50.00 Instruction: less then US\$5,000; depending on number of participants			
Complimentary 1-hr Zoom Information Session available				

# CDF Developmental Coaching Practice (Personal and Executive)

Two Kinds of Developmental Coaching	Procedure	Offers
<i>Project-focused</i> coaching without prior assessment	Coaching contracts for either ten 30-minute or ten 50-minute sessions	Ten 30-minute sessions Ten 50-minute sessions
<i>Personal coaching</i> based on evidence from a social-emotional, psychological, and cognitive assessment; spiritual assessment optional	Developmental assessment and coaching are contracted separately	Personal Assessment [consisting of 2 interviews and a questionnaire], followed by ten 50-minute coaching sessions

# Interdevelopmental Institute (IDM)

The Evidence Based Approach to Developmental  
Theory, Coaching, and Consulting

Otto Laske Dr. phil., Psy.D.

Iva Vurdelja, Ph.D.

50 Woodbury St.

Gloucester, MA 01930, USA

978.879.4882

[www.interdevelopmentals.org](http://www.interdevelopmentals.org)

[otto@interdevelopmentals.org](mailto:otto@interdevelopmentals.org)