The Dialectics of Hard Stage Development. Duality structures and spaces of action

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Background and aim

-Hard stage theories conceive the development process as proceeding in universal, qualitatively different, irreversible and hierarchically ordered sequences

-In this way they differ from 'softer' and 'functional' development theories but also between themselves in terms of generality claims

-The highest such claims seem to be associated with 'Piaget's theory of logical reasoning and two of its ramifications in neo-Piagetian adult development theories:

-The Model of Hierarchical Complexity *elaborating on logical reasoning in behavioural, mathematical- axiomatic terms*   (MHC, Commons and colleagues)

-The Subject-Object Theory *elaborating on logical reasoning as embedded in a meaning making context* (SOT, Kegan and colleagues)

-They all involve dialectical features, which have been further articulated by other adult development theorists (Basseches, Laske)

-However, further issues remain to be clarified regarding the interrelatedness of *basic hard stage* and basic *dialectical characteristics* involved in human actions-interactions

-The <u>aim</u> is thus to discern basic dialectical features involved in hard stage development from an 'agentic' "transform-actional" perspective

A departure in a Piagetian framework

-Kegan (1982) conceive a Piagetian framework in terms of a *meaning constitutive development process* involving three interlinked processes

-The relating of *organism to environment (biological, adaption)*

-The relating of *self to others (psychological, ego)*

-The relating of *subject to object (philosophical, truth)*

-The *logical reasoning aspect* in this process refer to the relating of *cause to effect conceived as* operational coordinations essential to actions (Inhelder & Piaget,1958)

-Piaget also considered logical reasoning as interwoven with affections, motivation, value formation and socialisation

-Logical reasoning thus concern the coordinations of actions in order to affect basic life circumstances ("cause") to obtain basic desirable goals ("effect") (e.g.. "if-so" action sequences)

Dualities

-Taken together the most general aspects of hard stage development seems to involve four basic coordinations, those between:

-*Self and Other: Constituting Meaning making*

-*Subject and Object: Constituting Meaning context*

-*Cause and Effect: Constituting Logical reasoning*

-*Man-environment: Constituting Space of action*

-They are conceived as *'dualities'*. A dualism concern "An instance of opposing or contrast between two concepts or two aspects of something" (Oxford dictionary) and a duality concern "Being twofold; a classification into two opposed parts or subclasses"(The Free Dictionary)

-Such and similar understanding of the concept is applied in mathematics and physics and, for example, cognitive theory (Sun, 2012), system theory (Cabrera, 2006) and organisational theory (Sánches-Runde & Pettigrew, (2003). But they are not much elaborated within adult development theory

-Taking our departure in hard stage development we conceive dualities *as two basic inseparable and opposing parts that are involved in a dynamic balance in the stage development process*

Approach to theoretical analyses

The four 'dualities' are assumed to be interrelated in a 'circular' structure guiding our theoretical approach as a 'tool' in three steps:

-<u>In a first step</u> the involvement of *logical reasoning in the meaning making process* will be addressed

-<u>In a second step</u> the *basic dialectical features of the dualities and their coordinations* will be elucidated

-<u>In a third step</u> the *involvement of 'agents'* in the process will be focused
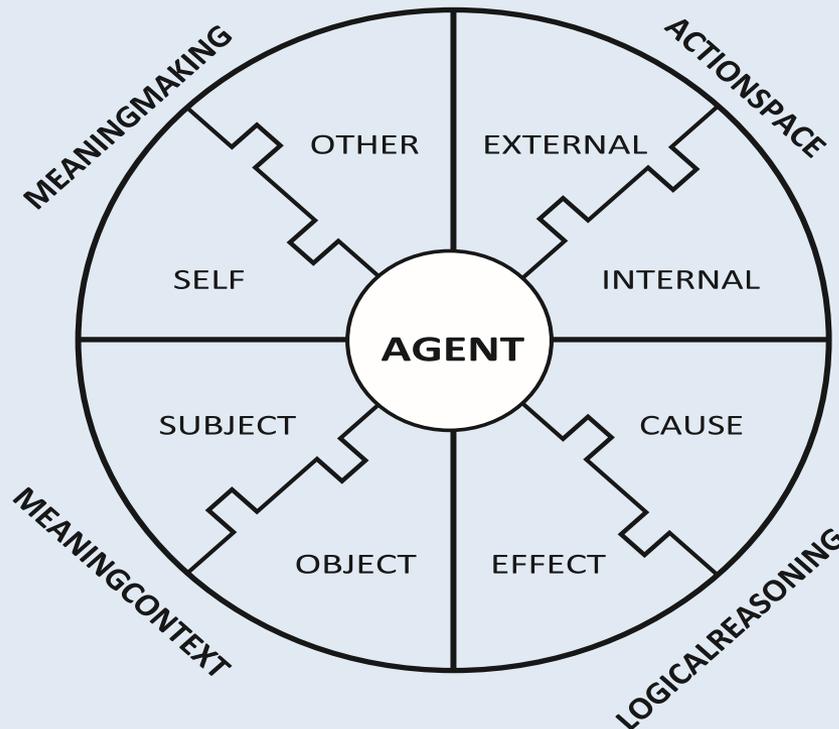
Comparing meaning making and logical reasoning
(Hagström & Stålne, 2015)

Meaning making order and transitions	MHC logical reasoning involved	Subject: Self-other "Big assumptions" de- and reconstructed	The internalization process	Object: Self-other regulation internalized in higher meaning making orders
3rd order, Socialized mind	9 Abstract order (X,Y); 10 Formal order latent	I am my needs and interests of my close group context		
3/4 -transition	10 Formal order involved: Abstract elements coordinated: if X then Y , cause-effect	Self: I am my needs etc. differentiated from my close group context Other: I am my needs, etc. integrated in a larger group context	Differentiation-Integration sequences: Lower order self X internalized in higher order self Y X (Y), X/Y – Y/X, Y(X)	
4th order, Self-authoring mind	10 Formal order; 11 Systematic order latent	I am my values and goals of my institutional-societal context		I am my needs and interests of my close group context
4/5 transition	11 Systematic order involved: Formal elements coordinated: functions, feed back loops	Self: I am my values and goals differentiated from my institutional context Other: I am my values and goals integrated in a larger ideology context	Differentiation-Integration sequences: Lower order self X internalized in higher order self Y X (Y), X/Y – Y/X, Y(X)	
5th order, Self transforming mind	11 Systematic order 12 Metasystematic order latent	I am my visions and strategies of my ideological -collective		I am my values and goals of my institutional-societal context

Dialectical basic features

-Basic dialectical features in neo-Piagetian adult development theory have been elaborated in terms of *Change, Wholeness* and *Internal relations* inspired by dialectical philosophy (Basseches, 1984, Laske, 2008)

-Dialectic in these terms can be defined as "…*developmental transformations (i.e. developmental movements of thought forms) which occur via constitutive and interactive relationships*" (p. 22, Basseches, 1984)

-The dialectical involvement in hard stage development appears to concern:

      a) The general dynamic involved in stage transitions and transformations

      b) The character of the thinking of a certain stage

-The three basic dialectical features are, in turn, conceived as interlinked in a *Meta or Transformational system*

The dialectics of dualities

Change

Dialectical change concerns, for example, reality as ongoing processes of change where old forms are given ways for new forms

-*Duality change* also concern ongoing change. But here specified as the duality parts involved in a dynamic balance and forms constituting hard stages (e.g. as involved in stage transformations, lower stages given ways for higher stages)

Wholeness

-*Dialectical wholeness* concern, for example, reality conceived as temporary forms of coherence that organises its parts and making them to what they are

-*Duality wholeness* also concern forms of coherence. But here as organising its duality parts and making them to what they are taken together (e.g. meaning making and logical reasoning)

Internal relations

-*Dialectical internal relations* concern for example the relation of the parts within a whole as constituting each other as well as forming the structure of the whole

-*Duality internal relation* also concern such basic kinds of interrelatedness. But here as the wholeness forms and parts changing their interrelations in the development process (e.g. a lower order meaning making constituting objects to reflect upon from the perspective of a higher ordered meaning making)

The dialectics of duality transitions and transformations

-The making of a *thesis* can be understood as *bringing an idea into consciousness* by differentiating what "it is" from a larger whole. This makes what it 'is not' (potentially) discernible as an *antithesis*

-This reflects their *constitutive or correlative relation* "…that the nature of y is in some sense dependent on its relation to x and vice versa" (p. 89, Basseches, 1984)

-The two duality parts can be conceived as such opposing parts in

    a) hard stage transition *as 'either-or' positions (thesis-antithesis)* when the duality balance is challenged by conflicting experiences

    b) in hard stage transformations integrating these parts to *'both-and' positions (synthesis)*

-The synthesis constitute a *new subject* which represent a *new thesis* on the *next higher stage*. This dialectical process repeats itself, generating stage wise more abstract duality coordinations and duality wholnesses

The involvement of agents

-The *agent* involved in the development process can be traced in the "Piagetian framework" in terms of the *man-environment interaction* which can be conceived as a *fourth duality*

-But instead of the SOT conception of the self-other wholeness as an Ego we prefer the concept of agent in order to:

a) Underline the action-interaction aspects in the development process

b) Reaching beyond the individual development level including aggregated group levels (e.g. organisations, institutions)

-Thus, the *Self-Other, Subject-Object, Cause-Effect* and *Man-Environment* coordinations are conceived as interlinked in a '*duality structure*' that basically guide *agent's thinking and acting* in the dialectical process described

Some conclusions

-The dialectical and 'hard stage' character of the duality structure development might be understood as increasingly abstract, hierarchically ordered 'wholes in wholes'

- This reflects the mutual influence of agents' meaning making and logical reasoning in stage transitions as well as their expanding meaning context and action space provided by stage transformations
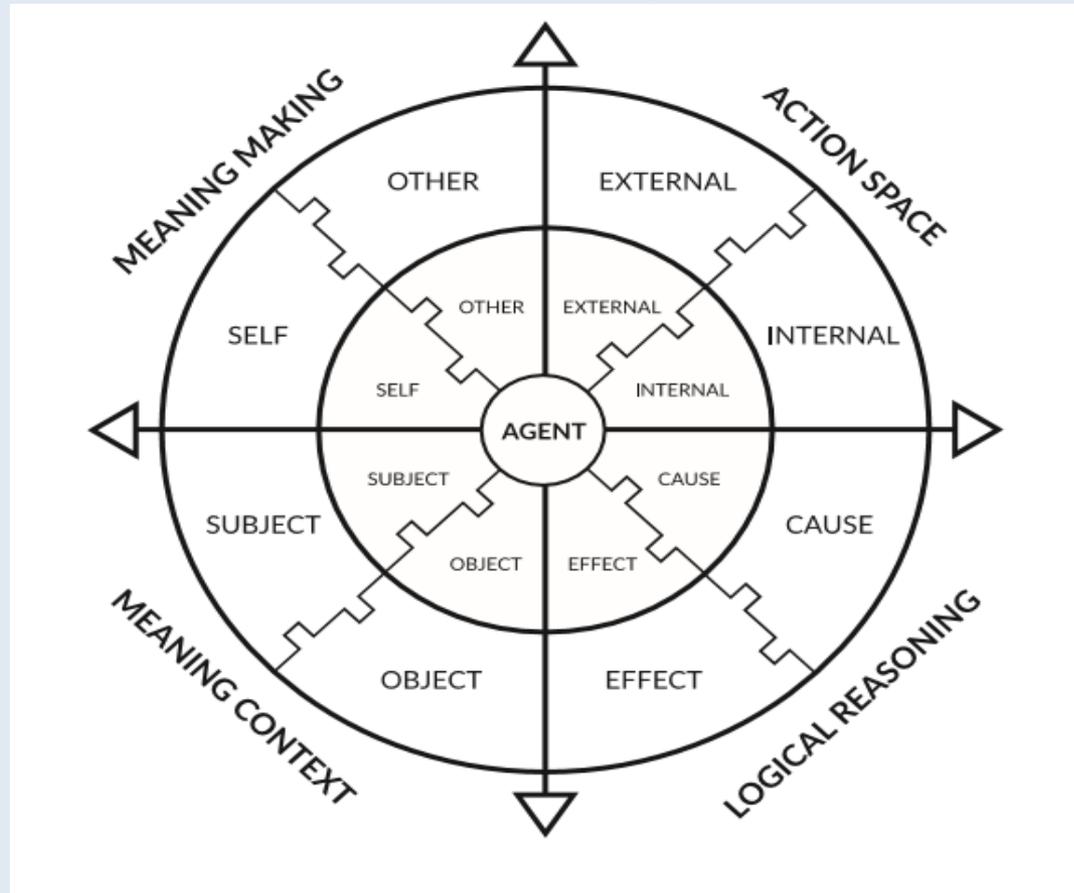
Further conclusions and implications

-Taken together, the four interlinked dualities reflect basic *structure* characteristics (e.g. being interrelated parts), basic *process* features (e.g. being dialectically opposed) and *function* properties (e.g. reflecting agents' man-environment interaction)

-Taken together this seem to constitute open system features with fractal characteristics (the same conceptual structure occurring across conceptual scale)

-The hard stage development of such an 'agentic' ("dual-lectic") system reflect the man- environment interaction as a feed back 'inside-out' (and 'outside-in' process, triggered by internal dilemmas and external challenges

-This bring to the fore connections with, for instance, organisation theory, open system theory, 'complexity theory ' and 'Holon theory' to be further elucidated

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

The basic duality structure

Conflicts and challenges promoting stage transformations

3rd SOT order *self-other coordination*: I am my needs and interests of my close group context

Differentiation: **Feelings of being selfish or none caring when e.g. putting one's own "interests" before those of other persons**

Integration **in other groups contexts reflect the linear process of achieving a goal related to adult roles, life projects etc. in a societal context**

Logical reasoning: **Abstract categories being coordinated in *single cause effect and if-so action coordinations*. Enabling the recognition of the small group embeddedness being critically reflected upon and recognising other possible social contexts being integrated in (going to college, temporary jobs etc.)**

4th SOT order *self-other coordination*: I am my values and goals of my institutional-societal context

Differentiation: **Doubts about the self's identification with the common institutional societal norms and values. Insight of a gap between reality and ideology, self and ideal, self and society etc.**

Integration **in a broader social context, system or ideology involving the logical capacity of situate ideas in and considering effects of larger contexts**

Logical reasoning: **Formal categories being coordinated in *multiple interlinked cause-effect spirals and action coordinations* (generating feed back loops). Enabling institutional norms, values etc. being critically reflected upon, by situating ideas and relations in larger contexts and recognising other possible societal contexts being integrated in**