

The Major Problematics of Interdisciplinary Social Theory

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Appendix: Global Social Theory Slides

The Great Divide in the social sciences . . .

Classical Political Economy (Smith & Ricardo)

Utility theory of value:

The 'Laissez-faire' School

- Say
- Senior
- Bastiat

The 'Reform' School

- Malthus, Bentham, Mill
- The neoclassical/Keynesian synthesis

Neoclassical "Orthodox"
Economics

"Consensus"
Social Theory

The Neoclassical
(or Neoliberal) Consensus

Labor theory of value: Marx

Instrumental value: Veblen & Dewey

"Heterodox" Economics:

- Marx
- Veblen
- Post-Keynesians

"Critical" Social Theory

- the 'revolutionary' model (Marx)
- the interpretive/postmodern model (from Weber to Foucault and Derrida)
- the 'evolutionary' model (Veblen)

The Great Divide . . .

“Consensus” Social Theory

The Neoliberal Consensus

- positivist philosophy of science
- classic liberal political philosophy
- neoclassical economics
- functionalist sociology
- pluralist & ‘rational choice’ political theory

a ‘solution’ to
the Problem of Distribution

the *modern* (or ‘economic’)
view of ‘human nature’

. . . in the social sciences

“Critical” Social Theory

- the ‘revolutionary’ model (Marx)
- the interpretive/postmodern model (from Weber to Foucault and Derrida)
- the ‘evolutionary’ model (Veblen)

rejection of
the neoliberal ‘solution’
to the Problem of
Distribution

a *post-modern* (or ‘sociological’)
view of ‘human nature’

Interdisciplinary Social Theory

Competing Paradigms

Interdisciplinary Social Theory Paradigms

Embedded Meta-theory

Pre-modern paradigms

1. Classical
2. Medieval/Feudal

Greco-Roman philosophy
Judeo-Christian theology

Modern paradigms

3. The Neoclassical (Neoliberal) Consensus
4. Marxian (or Revolutionary)
5. Interpretive
6. Evolutionary
7. Post-modern
8. Critical realist social theory

“critical”
paradigms

Positivism
Dialectic materialism
Hermeneutics
American pragmatism
Radical relativism
Critical realist meta-theory

Interdisciplinary Social Theory

Resolution of Competing Critical Paradigms

Interdisciplinary Social Theory Paradigms

Embedded Meta-theory

Pre-modern paradigms

1. Classical
2. Medieval/Feudal

Greco-Roman philosophy
Judeo-Christian theology

Modern paradigms

3. The Neoclassical (Neoliberal) Consensus
4. Marxian (or Revolutionary)
5. Interpretive/Post-modern
6. Evolutionary/Critical Realism

1st
resolution

Positivism
Dialectic materialism
Hermeneutics
American pragmatism/CR

Interdisciplinary Social Theory

Resolution of Competing Critical Paradigms

Interdisciplinary Social Theory Paradigms

Embedded Meta-theory

Pre-modern paradigms

1. Classical
2. Medieval/Feudal

Greco-Roman philosophy
Judeo-Christian theology

Modern paradigms

3. The Neoclassical (Neoliberal) Consensus
4. Interpretive/Post-modern
5. Marxian/Evolutionary



**2nd, or
“Post-
positivist”
resolution**

Positivist
Idealist/Relativist
Realist

**The Fundamental
Problematics
of Interdisciplinary Social Theory**

The Problem of Human Nature

The Problem of Relativism

The Problem of Distribution

The Problem of Consciousness

Interdisciplinary (Global) Social Theory

Comparative Criteria

1. **Meta-theory** – philosophical foundations, assumptions, commitments
 1. **Ontology**
 2. **Epistemology**
 3. **Axiology**
2. **Human Nature**
3. **Social Structure & Stratification**
4. **Agency**
5. **Material & Social Development**
 1. **Goals**
 2. **Processes**

The Principal Dimensions of Meta-theoretical Analysis

Ontology : what is Real? what Exists?

Theory of **Reality**, or **Being**, or **Existence**,
sometimes also equated with **Metaphysics**

Epistemology : what is True?

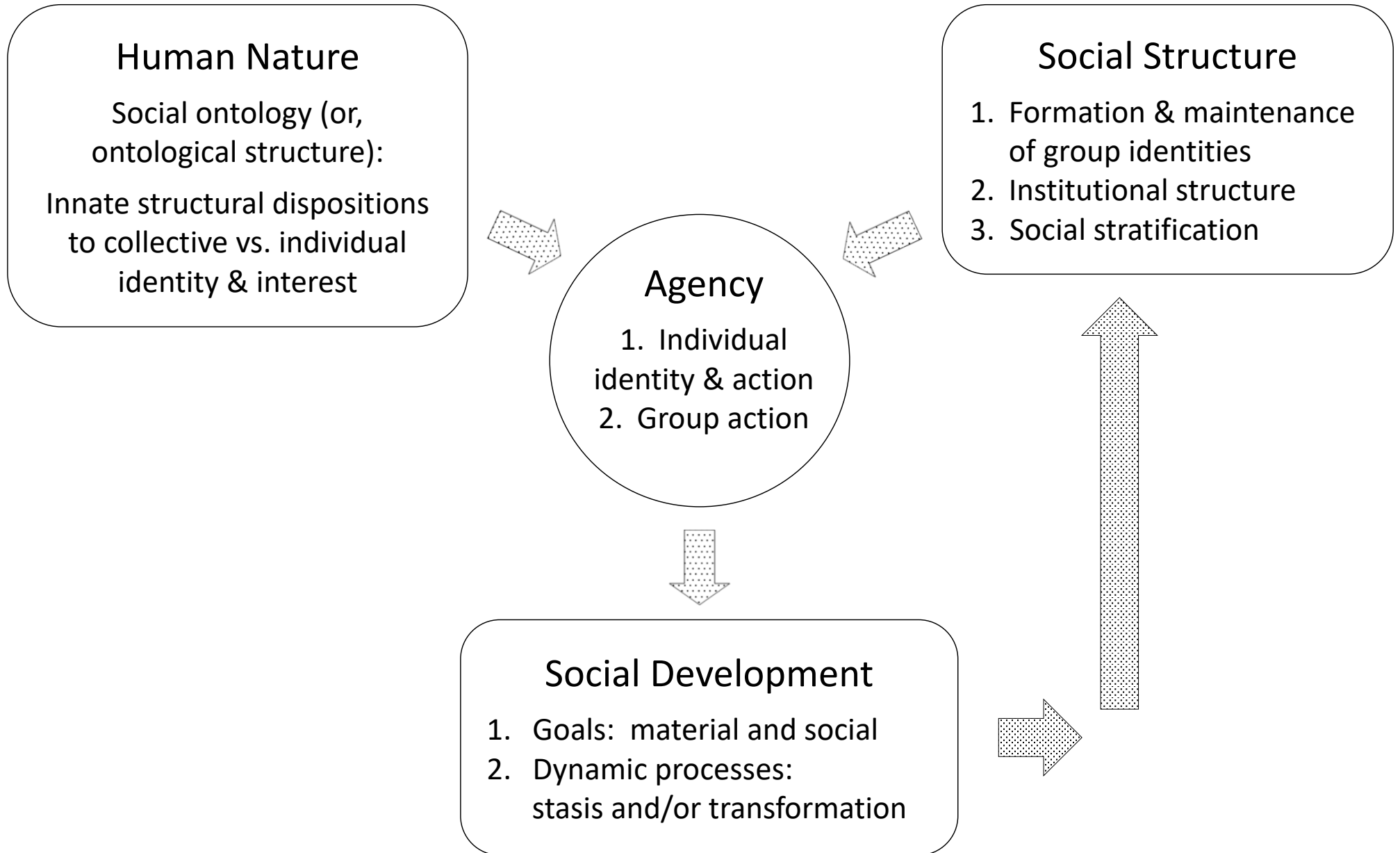
Theory of **Knowledge**, or **Truth**

Axiology : what is Good? Theory of **Value**

Methodology : capital **M** vs small **m**

Methodology vs. method

Global Social Theory Dynamics



Interdisciplinary (Global) Social Theory

The “Structural Grid”

Social Stratification	Institutional Social Structure				
	Economic	Political	Educational	Religious	Family
Propertied Class					
Middle Class					
Working Class					
Underclass					