

The Generality of Adult Development Stages and Transformations

Comparing meaning-making and logical reasoning

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Background: a departure in Piaget's constructive-development reasoning

- ❑ Piaget conceived the development of logic reasoning as generated by successive constructions, driven by the process of equilibration and the dynamic between assimilation and accommodation**
- ❑ His hierarchical “hard stage” approach fulfill “strong” generality claims (e.g. fixed stage sequentially on increasing complexity level, higher stage structures integrating earlier ones)**
- ❑ He inspired adult development theories reaching beyond “pure” cognition (including e.g. emotional-, value- and moral aspects)**
- ❑ Although focusing the logical aspect in cognition he understood cognition and affection as inseparable and joined in a “functional parallelism” constituting a “psycho – logic”**
- ❑ He used “...too much logic for psychologists and too much psychology for logicians” (p. 156, Loureco & Machado, 1996) and wanted to develop an operational logic, a logic of action**

The aim

- ❑ Piaget's reasoning bring to the fore issues regarding the relatedness of logic and meaning in adult development
- ❑ The aim therefore is to discern general features in adult development stage structures and transitions in terms of logical reasoning and meaning making
- ❑ This is done by interrelating the reasoning of two theories in a "thought experiment": The Model of Hierarchical Complexity (MHC, Commons and colleagues) and the Subject-Object-Theory (S-O-T, Kegan and colleagues)
- ❑ MHC took one departure in Piaget's cognitive-logical approach but focuses on it's axiomatic-mathematically derived logical aspects
- ❑ S-O-T also took a main departure in Piaget's cognitive-logical approach but focuses on it's psycho-logically derived meaning making aspects
- ❑ But both theories are advocates of high generality claims

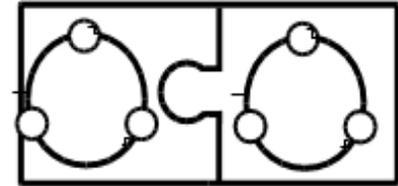
The two models: Characteristics

- ❑ **S-O-T conceive meaning making in terms of balances and dynamics between subject (the self's non reflected conception of what it "is") and object (the self's reflected conception of what it "has") on increasing complex stage/orders of consciousness**
- ❑ **The model define six such orders and transitions between them**
- ❑ **MHC conceive the development defined by logical tasks that have to be solved in each order**
- ❑ **The model defines 15 such orders and transitions between them**
- ❑ **The comparing "thought experiment" concern the 3rd, 4th and 5th S-O-T orders and transitions and the supposed corresponding 9th to 12th MHC orders and transitions**
- ❑ **Stage transitions in both theories seem to involve dialectical – transformative processes**

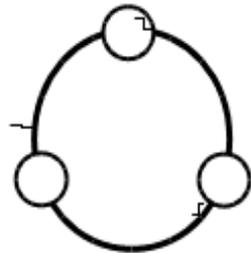
MHC: Hierarchical complexity stage/order 8-12

Complexity

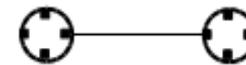
12. **Metasystematic: systems compared or coordinated**



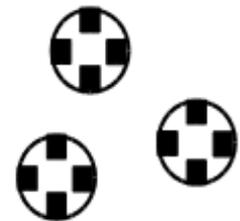
11. **Systematic: several abstract variables or formal chains create system/culture/context/ideology**



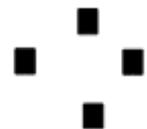
10. **Formal: Linear thinking according empirical or logical reasoning, cause-effect**



9. **Abstract: generalizations and stereotypes**



8. **Concret: single fact/events/places/simple logic**



S-O-T: Consciousness stage/order 3-5: (based on Kegan, 1994, 2003)

| Stage/order | Subject | Object | Underlying structure |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| 3. The Socialized mind | Interpersonal: Role consciousness Cognitive: Ideality; abstractions Intrapersonal: Self consciousness | Interpersonal: Role concept Cognitive: Actuality; concrete Intrapersonal: Self concept | Cross-categorical |
| 4. The Self-Authoring mind | Interpersonal: Multiple role consciousness Cognitive: Ideology; relations between abstractions Intrapersonal: Self regulation | Interpersonal: Role consciousness Cognitive: Ideality; abstractions Intrapersonal: Self consciousness | System |
| 5. The Self-Transforming mind | Interpersonal: Self-other interpretation Cognitive: Trans-ideological; relations between forms Intrapersonal: Interpenetration of selves | Interpersonal: Multiple role consciousness Cognitive: Ideology; relations between abstractions Intrapersonal: Self regulation | Trans-system |

A “thought experiment”: The Piagetian framework (Kegan, 1982)

- The ambition is to discern how meaning making (according to Kegan’s model) correspond with logic reasoning (according to MHC). The departure is taken in Kegan’s description of “the Piagetian framework” guiding his own thinking covering three interwoven aspects (p. 294, Kegan, 1982):
 - ❑ A biological aspect, the relating of organism to environment, reflecting the essence of adaption
 - ❑ A psychological aspect, *the relating of self to others*, reflecting the essence of Ego,
 - ❑ A philosophical aspect, the relating of subject to object, reflecting the essence of truth
- Taken together, these three aspects form the single process of meaning-constitutive development
- The Interpersonal and Intrapersonal aspects in S-O-T will be understood in terms of the “self-other coordination” involved in the psychological aspect

Assumptions and “Big assumptions”

We assume:

- ❑ That the self relating to others can be formulated in terms of theoretically derived “Big assumptions”, understood as a person’s taken for granted truths: “...something like the meaning-regulative-principles by which we shape the world in which we live” (p. 68, Kegan & Lacey 2001, our own underlining). Thus, what the subject unreflectedly “is” in each stage/order of self-other equilibration
- ❑ That such “self-other” Big assumptions can be conceived as “dualities”. This means that the “self-other poles” are regarded as necessary and mutual part of a process, rather than static contradiction of opposing positions. Such as differentiation-integration, centralization-decentralization
- ❑ That these “self-other” dualities trigger the thinking and acting to overcome imbalances between them generated by e.g. internal dilemmas and external challenges. These concern how to take into account the “interests” of both oneself and of others (“interests” here including motivational drives on different stages/orders such as needs, preferences, goals, values and visions)

The procedure

“Big assumptions” of the self relating to other(s) being deconstructed and reconstructed derived from S-O-T were judged in terms of MHC complexity orders No 9 (Abstract) to No 12 (Metasystematic) in three S-O-T orders of meaning making, *the Socialized mind* (3rd order), the *Self authorized mind* (4th order) and the *Self transforming mind* (5th order) and the transformations between them

The “thought experiment” was performed by

- 1) Formulations of the subject’s “Big assumption” in terms of the “self-other” coordination being initially none reflected upon in an equilibrated “self-other” duality phase**
- 2) Formulations of the “self-other” dualism in terms of “the self-part” being *differentiated* from the “self-other” embeddedness in a smaller context when being deconstructed by conflicting “self-other interests”**
- 3) Formulations of the “self-other” dualism in terms the “self-part” being *integrated* in a larger context when reconstructed by the self, by an *internalization* of the “other- interest” as subordinated the “self-interest”**
- 4) Judging the logical complexity involved in each step of this process in terms of the of MHC**

| <i>Meaning making order and transitions</i> | <i>MHC logical reasoning involved</i> | <i>Subject: Self-other "Big assumptions" de- and reconstructed</i> | <i>The internalization process</i> | <i>Object: Self-other regulation internalized in higher meaning making orders</i> |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 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 | <u>Self</u>: I am my needs etc. differentiated from my close group context <u>Other</u>: 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 | <u>Self</u>: I am my values and goals differentiated from my institutional context <u>Other</u>: 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 context | | I am my values and goals of my institutional-societal context |

Conflicts and challenges promoting stage transformations

3rd stage "Big assumption": 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 Formal logic reasoning (cause-effect, etc.) enabling the recognition of other possible social contexts being integrated in. E.g. going to college, temporary jobs providing "...opportunities for provisional identity which both leave the interpersonal context behind and preserve it, intact for return; a time limited participation in institutional life" (p. 165, Kegan, 1982)

4th stage "Big assumption": 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 as constituting the ideal or role as being a pillar of society. Insight of there being a gap between reality and ideology, between the self and an ideal, the 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 Systematic reasoning (functions feed back loops etc.). Enabling institutional norms, values etc. being critically reflected upon, by situating ideas and relations in larger contexts

Summarizing considerations

- ❑ The theories provide complementary knowledge although from “subjectivistic and objectivistic scientific positions”
- ❑ Their conception of stages and “elements” coordinated in the transitions differ
- ❑ Still, logical reasoning and meaning making appear to be structurally and functionally interrelated in the development process
- ❑ Both aspects appear to be basically rooted in human thinking, acting and interacting expressing general aspects of human predicament
- ❑ Thus generality claims of both aspects seem to be justified, which is supported also by their hierarchical -structural and dialectical -transformative characteristics
- ❑ Stage transformation is triggered both from “inside-out” (internal dilemmas) and from “outside-in” (external challenges)
- ❑ Therefore development-constructivistic theory should gain being more “contextualized“ by e.g. action theoretic reasoning, focusing the subjective and “objective” space of action among acting – interacting persons in and across contexts and domains

**“Each progress in logic is equivalent, in a non-dissociable way,
to a progress in the socialization of thought”**

(p. 85, Piaget, 1950/1995)

**“...logic is not isolated from life; it is no more than the
expression of operational co ordinations essential to action”**

(p.342, Inhelder & Piaget, 1958)

Thanks for your attention!

