

Building Process Theories

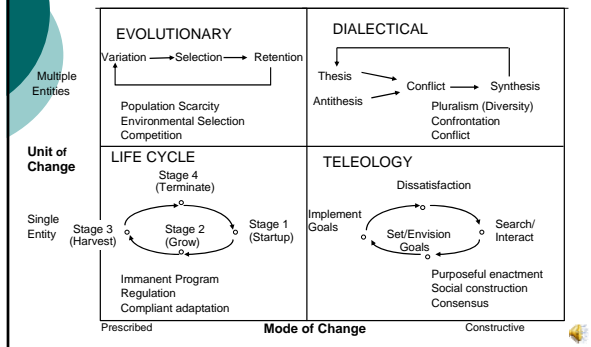
Part III

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Modes of Explanation for Process Theories

- Four basic generative mechanisms (motors) with variants
- Characterized by:
 - Typical narrative pattern
 - Whether path is unitary or multiple
 - Whether end state is predetermined
 - Time perspective: Linear or cyclical

Typology of Generative Mechanisms (Motors) of Change



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Theory (Motor)				
	<i>Life-Cycle</i>	<i>Teleological</i>	<i>Dialectical</i>	<i>VSR</i>
Generative Mechanism	Regulation	Plan	Conflict-Tension	Competition
Process of Change	Set sequence of stages	Unit perceives problem, sets goal, plans, acts	Change due to conflict or coping with tension	Change via random variation and selection
End State Predefined?	Yes	Yes, by goal	No	No
Path of Development Preset?	Yes	No	No	No
Variants	Logical, natural, institutional	Intentional: Sensemaking	Hegelian: Paradoxical	Darwinian: Lamarkian

Cues to Identify Motors

- For a Life Cycle Motor:
 - A singular discrete entity exists which undergoes change, yet maintains identity throughout
 - The entity passes through stages distinguishable in form and function
 - A program, routine, rule or code exists in logic, nature, social institutions or logic which determines the stages of development and governs progression through them
- For a Teleological Motor:
 - An individual or group exists that acts as a singular discrete entity which engages in reflexively monitored action a common goal and plan to attain it
 - A set of requirements exists to attain the goal and the plan orients to these
 - There is no fixed order in which actions are undertaken and the developmental path may change depending on circumstances and events.

Cues to Identify Motors

- For a Dialectical Motor:
 - At least two entities exist that stand in opposition or contradiction with each other or in tension.
 - The conflict or tension should give rise to coping attempts that characterize the development of the process
 - The outcome must consist of an emergent entity or a temporary easing of tension
- For a VSR (Evolutionary) Motor:
 - A population of entities exist in a commensalistic relationship (i.e. in a common environment with limited resources)
 - Variation is random or planned, but results in competing entities.
 - Identifiable mechanisms exist for selection and retention of entities.

Modes of Explanation for Process Theories

- Multiple Motors:
More than one "motor" may generate a process
 - Motors may be situated at different levels
 - Nested motors
 - Entangled motors
 - Aggregated motors

Modes of Explanation for Process Theories

- Multiple motors
 - Motors may have different types of impacts on each other
 - Reinforcing
 - Dampening
 - Complex (nonlinear)

Modes of Explanation for Process Theories

- Multiple Motors
 - Motors may have temporal relationships
 - Succession: One motor displaces another over time
 - Entrainment: External pacing factor causes coordination among motors
 - They may cycle: Alternating impacts of different motors

Ways to Think “Processually”

- Think in Deltas
 - Rate of change
 - Rate of change in change
- Think Narratively
 - Sequence in time
 - Focal actor or actors
 - Identifiable narrative voice
 - “Canonical” or evaluative frame of reference
 - Context

Ways to Think “Processually”

- Think Patterns
- Think Multiple Motors

A Critical Realist Call for Intellectual Pluralism

- There is a real world out there, but our understanding of it is limited
- All facts, observations & data are theory laden
- Social science has no absolute, universal, error-free truths or laws
- No form of inquiry can be value free & impartial; each is value full
- Knowing a complex reality demands use of multiple perspectives
- Robust knowledge is invariant (in common) across multiple models
- Models that better fit the problems they are intended to solve are selected, producing an evolutionary growth of knowledge
