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## **On the *Focus Imaginarius* of the Nascent Global Society and Contemporary Social Theory: What is the Status and Role of the Idea of Harmony?**

Piet Strydom

### **Abstract**

This article offers a theoretical assessment of the idea of harmony as a potential *focus imaginarius* for the construction and organisation of the emerging global society as well for the social scientific study of this process. The assessment is couched in cognitive social-theoretical terms. While the limits of the idea of harmony are highlighted by drawing on aesthetic theory, it is nevertheless retained as an essential formal presupposition possessing both ontological and epistemological significance. Social-scientifically, however, the idea is located on the meta-level, counterfactual, cognitive order of society as only one among a wide range of different cognitive suppositions which get selectively and variably combined and used as structuring elements when distinct actor-agents in concrete social life competitively engage in the pursuit of their own particular visions of a harmonious society. The task today is to study this process in order to identify learning processes and potentials pointing toward a harmonious society that could be social-scientifically enhanced and supported.

**Key words:** aesthetics, cognitive order, global society, learning processes, social theory, triple contingency

### **Introduction**

A small number of epoch-making events have shaped the late twentieth and early twenty-first century experience of the human form of life as being caught in the pincers of a multidimensional crisis implicating our sense of both earth and world (Strydom 2011a). They include the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan which stimulated the acknowledgement of the risks produced by the experimenting science-technology-capitalist-industrial society; second, the official registering of the ecological crisis and the need for a healthcare system for the earth; third, the process of globalisation with its disruptive and even destructive consequences; and, finally, the emergence of the so-called 'new world order' after 1989 with its contradictory imperialist, nationalist and cosmopolitan implications. Accordingly, a select few ideas have become elaborated as cultural models and acquired the status of the most potent leading imaginaries guiding and giving direction to concerted efforts to transform the current human form of life into a form of global cosmopolitan existence in a cared-for planetary biosocial ecosphere – namely, peace, ecologism, human rights and cosmopolitanism.

It comes as no surprise that in this context of a nascent global society exhibiting a gravely fraught and disjointed state such ideas as 'harmony' and 'transformative harmony' (Giri 2012) arise. The question is, however, whether the idea of harmony can effectively function as a leading light or lodestar directing, guiding and regulating the desired transformation of the construction, direction of development and organisation of the contemporary social formation and its relation to both its individual members and the organic foundations of life.

In social theory, there is a long tradition of conceiving society in some way or other, however obliquely, in terms of harmony. Thomas Hobbes (1973) was convinced that absolutism alone could bring order to the state of nature resulting from the early modern Wars of Religion; the contract theorists (e.g. Mandeville 1995) insisted on the collective benefit generated by the actions of egoists pursuing their own interests; Emile Durkheim (1976) identified the common cognitive categories with what is collective in order to stress social integration; and Talcott Parsons (1964) postulated a shared system of values as the solution to the problem of social integration. These proposals for the conceptualisation of the quality pertaining to the constitution and organisation of society, however, have all been subjected to devastating criticisms.<sup>i</sup> Hobbes' political one-sidedness was criticised from the perspective of constitutionalism; the blindness of the contract theorists to the social basis of contracts and the social costs of egoistic competition was exposed; it became apparent that Durkheim's position rests on a confusion of the cognitive with the collective; and Parsons was taken to task precisely for his indefensible, indeed ideological, harmonious theory of society. What these criticisms suggest is that in the past social theorists did not grasp the precise status of the idea or, at least, the assumption of harmony and the role it plays in the human social form of life and theorising about it. The upshot of these rather truncated historical references, therefore, is that the social theorist should studiously reflect on the idea of harmony in order to become aware of its status and role both in social life and in social-scientific practice.

## **The Idea of Harmony**

### *Harmony as an Element of the Cognitive Order*

Harmony is an aesthetic idea. It is the idea of a whole prior to its parts (Stadler 1968). As such, it gives the impression of a well-ordered, complete and perfect totality, the parts of which are measured against each other and against the whole. From one point of view, it is formal in the sense that it is an idea of the form of the object in question – in this case, the potential form of the emerging global society. From another point of view, it depends on the operation of the imagination in the sense that the formal whole is a projected one that does not correspond to anything actually existing. It is for this reason that it always has to be borne in mind that harmony is a vague aesthetic idea and not a precise analytical concept referring to a particular existent.

It should be insisted, nevertheless, that harmony is one of a number of necessary and unavoidable ideas that play an indispensable role in social life and in social theory. However indeterminate and vague the aesthetic idea of harmony may be, it serves as a necessary assumption helping to provide a unifying vision without which we would lack the concept of society. Our intellectual analytical and reasoning faculties would be unable to operate, and we would be deprived of our ability to conceptually grasp society as both our world and our social scientific object of study, were we to be deprived of the input by the imagination of the idea of a well-ordered whole embracing its parts and thus lending coherence to them.<sup>ii</sup> The requirement of such an aesthetic input derives from the fact that we humans are intellectual beings who are simultaneously embodied, have minds based on brains uniquely characterised by the addition of the prefrontal cortex, live and act in a temporalised meaningful world, and therefore have to courageously confront problems while coping with

ontological insecurity and anxiety. In the contemporary period, the form of our object – that is to say, the very idea of harmony – is assuming the pronounced proportions it does, even to the extent of metamorphosing from a background assumption into a *focus imaginarius*, precisely because of the painfully experienced lack of fit between our aesthetic sense of a well-ordered whole and the actual disjointed state of both social and ecological relations.

The idea of harmony forms a part of what I call 'the cognitive order of society' (Strydom 2000, 2012c, 2013a and in press) – more particularly, part of the aesthetic or subjective sector rather than the objective and social sectors of the triply coded cognitive order. The cognitive order consists of a series of cognitive structures – of which harmony is but one element among many – that is necessary for the constitution of the human social form of life in so far as it makes communication and the formation of social relations in a material environment possible. Against actuality, it represents potentiality, including the temporally available or realisable possibilities. Analogous to a phenomenology, it allows a wide range of combinations of its varied elements, including the idea of harmony, in the process of the generation of the texture of that form of life. This order of cognitive structures emerges from within society through practice-inspired reflexivity, backed up by phylogenetic and evolutionary consolidation, to occupy a meta-conventional level where it takes the form of abstract cognitive systems of principles which stimulate the generation, inductively structure and recursively regulate orientations, action, practices, interaction, discourse and institutionalisation. This is precisely the role of the idea of harmony, as one of the counterfactual components of the cognitive order, in social life – that is, ontologically – as well as in social theory – that is, epistemologically.

The cognitive order in general, including the idea of harmony, is the outcome of a movement of 'immanent transcendence' (Habermas 1991; Honneth 2007; Strydom 2011b) or transcendence from within and, consequently, has the meta-level status of something virtual, something harbouring the potential of an inductive reconfiguration of actuality. This does not mean that it is something purely transcendent,<sup>iii</sup> least of all something transcendent that can be said to really exist and allows being made into a grandiose meta-theory or realism of essential structures.<sup>iv</sup> To treat it as such would be tantamount to the ontological fallacy of reification or hypostatisation. This level of necessary self-organising suppositions, reflexive expectations, meta-conventional rules or counterfactual principles certainly does not admit of full realisation, since it is 'unconditional', 'complex' or, more fully, 'determinably indeterminate'.<sup>v</sup> As implied by this latter expression which resonates with the concept of immanent transcendence, the cognitive order remains rooted immanently in social life. The cognitive order principles and, hence, the idea of harmony must therefore at all times be appreciated as standing in an inextricable relation with concrete social life – in the sense both of being generated by the process of the construction and organisation of society and, in turn, of having an indexing, structuring and regulating effect on the continuation of that process.

This signals that the indeterminable transcendent idea of harmony, combined with a variable selection of other elements from the cognitive order (for instance, the ideas of freedom, equality, solidarity, rightness, autonomy, personal inviolability and so forth), acquires a palpably determinable form only immanently. In fact, it becomes refracted and embodied from different perspectives in the guise of a variety of distinct competing,

mutually contested and even conflicting, concretely pursued practices, each guided by a more or less specific culturally elaborated and articulated set of assumptions regarding the desired harmonious organisation of social life. Given the perspectival appropriation and activation in social life of the aesthetic idea of harmony embedded in the cognitive order, the social scientist has to follow the plurality of differences, the competing actor-agents, their conflicting practices and their mutually contradictory cultural frames or models of a harmonious society – in a nutshell, the varied local or context-immanent attempts to realise the context-transcendent idea of harmony in terms of corresponding actor- and group-level cognitive representations or models of a harmonious society. But rather than just following the actor-agents, it is vital that the structural level of the cognitive order as such is at all times kept in mind. The analytical specification beforehand of the presuppositions or reflexive expectations of the actor-agents in the form of the cognitive order counterfactuals structuring their orientations and actions is what enables the social analyst to discriminate variations and to determine which differences are significant.<sup>vi</sup>

### *The Aesthetic Nature of the Idea of Harmony*

It is at this juncture of the acknowledgement of the demanding implications of the immanent-transcendence framework that a serious reflective question arises. It is the question of the precise understanding of the aesthetic nature of the idea of harmony. Since Aristotle's (1963) isolation of the beginning-middle-end form, traditional aesthetics has consistently operated with the assumption of the aesthetic object as an organic or symbolic whole. This means that it was taken to represent a rounded, closed totality the parts of which cohere perfectly and are enveloped completely meaningfully by the whole. In the late eighteenth century, Kant (1972) canonically fixed this particular sense for modernity in his influential aesthetics. In the twentieth century, however, this idealistic symbolic conception of aesthetics had to make room for a very different non-organic allegorical conception articulated by authors like Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, but particularly by the second of the three.<sup>vii</sup> If the aesthetic object still forms a whole, it is a unity that includes independent parts, some even with extra-aesthetic – for instance, political – significance, which integrate smoothly neither with the remaining parts nor with the whole.

The point of this contrast is that to understand the idea of harmony in terms of traditional aesthetics would amount to taking it in an idealistic sense which is certain to vitiate any attempt at an adequate social scientific analysis. Following Benjamin's aesthetics, it should rather be conceived in terms of a process of allegoresis, as it were. Once it is recognised that the idea of harmony forms part of the cognitive order of society, the danger of symbolic over-determination is averted. And once the cognitive order is understood as a meta-conventional one which emerges through transcendence from within, the way is open for acknowledging that the counterfactual idea of harmony and its indexing, structuring and regulating effects can be appreciated only through its distinct concrete appropriations and uses in social life and their relations to one another. Only then, in other words, is the social scientist able to see the context-transcendent idea of harmony and the variety of context-immanent, concretely pursued cultural models of the desired harmonious organisation of social life in relation to one another. This 'continuously two-sided', 'stereoscopic' or, rather, 'holographic' approach<sup>viii</sup> drawing on the laser metaphor of a light wave being split into a reference beam and an accompanying beam carrying multidimensional information, is the

best option if the social scientist wishes to avoid the pitfalls of both idealism and empiricism – as he or she simply must. The reference to the form-giving cognitive order must be maintained at all times, while the plural range of lower level, cognitively framed positions and perspectives and their dynamics are simultaneously accommodated.<sup>ix</sup>

### **'Transformative Harmony'?**

#### *The Cosmomorphic Approach*

The multidimensional social scientific vision outlined above brings us to the notion of 'transformative harmony' (Giri 2012). The latter clearly implies a process directed and guided by the leading idea of harmony – an implication that points toward an expectation of the emergence of a harmonious global social order or social formation. Against this background, the question of the prospect of such an eventuality arises. Taking cues from contemporary social scientific thinking about globalisation, ecologism and cosmopolitanism, for instance, the typical predilection would seem to be to conceive of the emergence of a harmonious global order as an unfolding cosmomorphic process (Strydom 2011a) through which the realisation of the potential of the idea of harmony is achieved. The process is supposed to lead to and culminate in a single, all-encompassing harmonious society. Yet this understanding is in danger of reifying or hypostatizing a counterfactual principle which does not now and never will correspond to anything existing. Reification or hypostatisation here means an essentialising tendency which assumes that culture is of such a nature that it could unify or homogenise society, indeed, that it could do so not merely in the case of a single society, but even across a range of societies. Reification or hypostatisation of this kind represents an illusion – here, the illusion that a harmonious social order could be attained at the global level through a shared culture. It is just not the case, however, that there is one single way in which the counterfactual idea of harmony has to or could be realised immanently.

Considering assessments of the current global state of affairs, particularly the political-economic organization of the world population, such a seemingly negative evaluation of the prospects of a harmonious global society could easily lead one to be taken in by a pessimistic mood. The current global order, a hierarchical order of structural and class dependencies, exhibits signs of deep divisions marked by pronounced asymmetrical power relations. The coordinated centre of gravity is occupied by the OECD countries which together with the south-east Asian states represent 16 per cent of the world population; the remaining 84 per cent divides among two internally fractured macro-states, China and India, with 37 per cent, 140 countries under limited state structures representing another 37 percent, and finally a number of failing states housing 10 per cent of the world population. In development studies, the question prompted by this rather unpromising global situation, which is typically overlooked by the debates about global governance and cosmopolitanism, and probably also by those focusing on harmony, is: 'Does peace have a future?' (Senghaas 2012).

What this question suggests indeed seems like a more specific and thus a conceptually clearer and practically more directly relevant articulation of the very problematic intended by the concepts of harmony and transformative harmony. In any case, it is obvious that it

would be necessary for anyone intending to pursue analyses in terms of these latter concepts to take also research on peace, particularly the causes of peace, into account.

### *The Cognitive Alternative*

Yet if one adopts a more appropriate and justifiable approach than the above-mentioned essentialising cosmomorphic one, for example a two-sided, stereoscopic or holographic cognitive approach, then one does not have to settle for a pessimistic stance. The advocacy and pursuit of a harmonious or, at least, a more harmonious society is by no means doomed from the outset. It is imperative, however, that one then recognises the precise level at which alone development in that direction is possible. But this has the effect, to be sure, of intensifying the question of whether the idea of harmony would be the most appropriate *focus imaginarius* for contemporary society and social theory.

At the very centre of the attainment of a harmonious society is a learning process or, rather, a set of related learning processes. Considered from the inside rather than simply observing from the outside, the process of the constitution and organisation of society is equivalent to a multidimensional learning process.<sup>x</sup> Any learning process, and certainly this multidimensional one, is given form and shape by a range of cognitive structures of different levels and scales. At the micro end, the process is structured by actor-agents'<sup>xi</sup> assumptions, expectations, orientations and schemata which are based on the human cognitive capacities and competences. At the opposite macro end, the process is incursively structured and recursively regulated by reflexive presuppositions or expectations *qua* counterfactual principles forming part of the cognitive order of society. In between, the physical and social structures of the immanent context condition the learning processes of the multiplicity of individuals so that they consolidate into a range of more or less sharply differing collective actor-agents, each of whom through learning in turn constructs its own particular cognitive schema, frame or model of a harmonious society. It is through the interrelation, competition, mutual contestation and even conflict of these collective frames, especially in the public sphere but not only there, that societally significant learning processes are generated. At the outset of the interrelation, a temporary short-term window emerges for selection from the generated variety and decision-making that creates the basis for institutionalisation and organisation by giving rise to a more enduring epi-level cultural model.<sup>xii</sup> The consequent result of the expansion, alignment and fusion of collective frames is thus typically an adumbrated or newly emergent cultural model consisting of a cognitive core and a semantic or symbolic outer layer, implying a more or less significant spurt of societal learning which could be accompanied by an evolutionary drift or even a shift in one or more components of the cognitive order.

It is apparent that the constitution and organisation of a harmonious society requires a series of interconnected multilevel learning processes of the kind described above – processes in and through which not just individuals and groups or collectives, but also society or societies undergo and experience re-framings or reconfigurations of their respective frames or sets of cognitive structures (Eder 1999; Strydom 1999b, 2000, 2002, 2009). Considering the nature of the process of the constitution and organisation of society, however, what obviously raises doubts about the viability of the idea of harmony as a potential leading *focus imaginarius* for our time is the fact that no learning can occur without the dynamising effect of the variety generated by competition, contestation and

even conflict. How could harmony be reconciled with such a dynamic force? Is harmony not a processual outcome, an effect of such a dynamic process? It seems, therefore, as though the attainment of a harmonious society would be better served by the selection of a set of leading ideas, ones compatible with the competing practices of the generation of variety, instead of adopting the single idea of harmony and attempting its direct realisation. Rather than a one-dimensional cosmomorphic approach, a multileveled dynamic one is clearly required for the analysis and understanding of the process of the constitution and organisation of the nascent global society.

It should be stressed, however, that there can be no doubt about the fact that the idea of harmony forms an inextricable part of the cognitive order of contemporary society. And given the basic human orientation towards meaning and coherence, the cognitive frames of all individuals and collective actor-agents must necessarily contain some assumption or other about harmony. The idea of harmony and both individual and collective assumptions about harmony thus undoubtedly enter in varied ways into the learning processes at the core of the constitution and organisation of the emerging global society. However, considering the series of culturally borne cognitive developments characteristic of the late twentieth century that have been and still are being spearheaded by individual and collective actor-agents who are not afraid of competition, contestation and even conflict, it seems as though such guiding lights as ecologism, cosmopolitanism and the related constructions of peace and human rights would be better suited to the pursuit of a harmonious global society. In any case, a single cognitive idea together with a corresponding normative cultural model is not necessary, if viable at all, for the cultivation of harmony and the eventual attainment of a harmonious society. A global cosmopolitan existence embedded in a cared-for planetary biosocial ecosphere in which human rights are observed and a stable peace prevails would be equivalent to a harmonious society – but, to be sure, a harmonious society that would require constant reconstitution and elaboration in accordance with changing conditions in which competition, contestation and conflict, preferably discursive conflict, guided by a variety of creatively combined leading ideas would be a necessary element of its driving force and dynamics.

Ecologism, cosmopolitanism, peace and human rights, while drawing on a variety of components of the context-transcendent cognitive order, have the advantage that they have already been elaborated into relatively enduring, context-immanent, epi-level cultural models. It is quite possible to reconstruct the historical construction of each of these cultural models with reference to the contributing actor-agents and publics, the medium of communication embracing both interaction and discourse in and through which it was achieved, the contextual conditions under which this occurred, and the structuring elements from the cognitive order which entered into its make-up. Rather than simply vague meta-level or even metaphysical ideas beyond the context, therefore, they have been immanently incorporated to form part of a penumbra of cultural models around (epi) the situation on which actor-agents can and do in fact directly draw. Their cognitive cores deriving from the cognitive order are encapsulated by a semantic or symbolic layer that infuses them with evaluative and normative significance which renders them communicable and thus immanently or situationally relevant. These epi-level cultural models are all concrete, situation-specific embodiments of selective combinations of meta-level cognitive ideas emitting significance effects which do not simply correspond to, but actually take up into



themselves and incursively and recursively structure the expectations entertained by individuals and groups (Strydom 2012b).

The attainment of a harmonious society depends on the diffusion of these potent cultural models in all local or immanent contexts through communicatively mediated learning processes that reconfigure individual, group or collective and societal cognitive structures. This is where the social sciences can make a unique contribution – if only they prove capable of taking the cognitive revolution seriously in their own terms.<sup>xiii</sup> The learning processes involved need to be theoretically clarified and for this purpose the many available concrete examples call for substantive investigation and close analysis. Theoretical and substantive advances could and indeed do link up with existing practical efforts, such as for example those carried by cultural and social movements, and could become the basis for furthering the practical advocacy and pursuit of the project of a harmonious society over a wide front, including in the most unlikely local nooks and crannies. Such a varied and multipronged cognitive approach is precisely what is needed to bring the cognitive idea and normative vision of harmony into sharper focus and to strengthen the concern with its realisation in the here and now – with potential spin-off effects of helping to generate a harmonious global society. What has to be appreciated, to highlight a crucial point, is that a harmonious global society cannot be the direct outcome of learning processes, whether relative to ecologism, cosmopolitanism, peace, human rights or even harmony, since it falls in the domain of phylogenetic and evolutionary structure formation. In turn, of course, such structure formation is nevertheless vitally dependent on the emergent properties generated by the whole array of constructive activities and learning processes. This latter rider indicates unequivocally where the responsibility of the social scientist lies today.

## Conclusion

However critical the reflections on the idea of harmony may be perceived to be, nothing that was written in the above detracts from the project of a harmonious global society. On the contrary, the argument is intentionally aimed at theoretical clarification aspiring to make matters precise enough for constructive engagement in the theoretical and practical pursuit of that goal.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Criticisms of Hobbes and the contract theorists were developed by a host of authors during the early modern period who responded to their publications. Hobbes' absolutism was attacked in particular by the so-called 'Monarchomachi', that is to say, those against the absolutist monarchy – on which see Strydom (2000). Mandeville who provocatively restated the central tenet of contract theory was opposed by the contract theorists' most innovative and influential critic, Giambattista Vico (1970). Piaget (1983) already perceived Durkheim's confusion, but it has become clearly apparent only recently in the wake of the cognitive revolution of the late 1950s and the associated cognitive turn in sociology – for instance, Thévenot (1998) and Strydom (2013a). Mainstream sociology is yet to appreciate this.

Parsons' theory received critical treatment by a number of authors like David Lockwood, C. Wright Mills, Ralf Dahrendorf and Alain Touraine in the context of the functionalist debate of the 1950s and 1960s, but it was Habermas (1988) who explicitly attacked his harmonious theory.

<sup>ii</sup> Kant (1968) demonstrated the need for general concepts; it was a central assumption of the left-Hegelian tradition represented by Marx (1967) and Peirce (1998). Against this background, this insight still has a subterranean presence in both European and American social theory to this very day; for instance, the importance of general concepts is assumed by neo-institutionalists such as Powell and DiMaggio (1991), while Boltanski (2011) notes their importance both for social actors and for social scientists. The recognition of their role is central to critical theory's basic concept of 'immanent transcendence', on which see Strydom (2011b). It is crucial to appreciate, however, that it is not simply semantic generality that is at issue here, but especially cognitive universality – on which see for instance Strydom (2015) with reference to Habermas (1996).

<sup>iii</sup> Objecting to the later Parsons' appeal to what he called the 'telic system', Habermas (1987: 256) writes as follows: 'there are no indicators accessible to social-theoretical analysis for a transcendence that is independent...from the communicative practice of human beings...'

<sup>iv</sup> Archer, who serves on a Vatican committee, represents this kind of realism in respect of what she calls 'the Cultural System', which is written in capital letters for that very reason. For a recent statement, see Archer and Dave Elder-Vass (2012).

<sup>v</sup> According to Habermas (2003: 99), this potentiating penumbra of reflexive suppositions is in principle 'unconditional' and, according to Luhmann (1995: 24), it is 'complex' in so far as 'the concept is applicable to what is not system...[which means – PS]...(environment, world)...'; but Husserl (1950: 101) is still more precise when he characterizes this 'horizon' as a matter of 'determinable indeterminacy', implying that for practical purposes or in the course of concrete social life particular selections can, and indeed must, be made from the available potentialities, but that no selection can ever exhaust the potentiality it is drawing upon.

<sup>vi</sup> The specification of the relevant cognitive order principles is achieved through the methodological procedure of 'reconstruction', on which see Strydom (2011b).

<sup>vii</sup> Brecht originally introduced the distinction between the organic and non-organic work of art in his *Arbeitsjournal* (Bürger 1981: 127) which served as the basis of the alienation effect he sought to transmit by way of his 'epic theatre' – on which see Brecht (1979). His close associate, Benjamin (1963), influentially elaborated and applied the idea in the form of the distinction between symbol and allegory – with the emphasis on the latter. Adorno (1970) similarly regarded the non-organic or allegorical concept of aesthetics as being most appropriate to the authentic modern art of the twentieth century.

<sup>viii</sup> Husserl (1969: 263) speaks of a type of 'continuously two-sided research'; Habermas (1996: 19, 21, 69 and 79) describes what he regards as a 'stereoscopic' sociological procedure; and, basing herself on David Bohm, Adam (1994: 158-60) offers an account of holography.

<sup>ix</sup> This methodological perspective is characteristic of the cognitive approach properly conceived. It is rooted in what may be called the cognitive problematic: that something belonging to the world is nevertheless able to distinguish itself from the world, to develop a

perspective on the world, and to establish a relation with the world – on which see Strydom (2011b, 2011c and 2012a).

\* On learning, see: Eder (1982, 1996, 1999); Miller (1986, 2002); Strydom (1987, 2008 and 2009); and Trenz and Eder (2004).

<sup>xi</sup> I employ the concept of 'actor-agent' in order to account for both consciousness and the unconscious which are given with the possession of both cognitive competences and dormant or merely operative capacities. Typically, social theorists cut the human member of society in half by opting either for action theory or for system or structural theory.

<sup>xii</sup> The process of construction in which the cognitive and the symbolic are fused so as to give rise to a cultural model is captured under the title of 'triple contingency' in Strydom (1999a, 2009, 2012a and 2013b). Leydesdorff (2009) has added some clarity to this process in the course of his formalisation of the concept; see also Leydesdorff (2008). Russill (2004) has employed the concept to interpret Dewey's theory of public communication, and on the basis of his contribution the doyen of American communication theory, Robert Craig (2006), has incorporated it into his disciplinary field.

<sup>xiii</sup> Strydom (2007) offers a cartographic overview of the parameters within which the cognitive turn currently seems to be possible for the social sciences.

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