General Theory of Societal Domains (GTOSD)
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What is It?

- We live out our lives within a psychological structure of our own creation and manifestation.
- We have developed this structure over time to help ourselves cope, adapt, and transcend.
- *The Structure* is not restrictive, but conducive.
- We are not prisoners to it, but pilots of it.
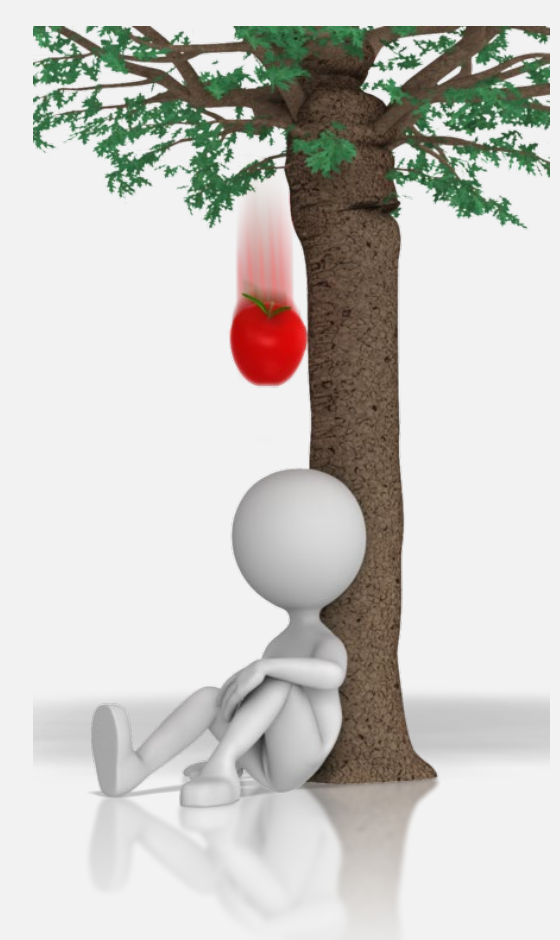- *The Structure's* foundational elements are Societal Domains.

How I Know This

- Through decades of work supporting government, military, and corporate organizations I have contributed to efforts to understand *The Structure* and use that knowledge to advance the goals of those groups.
- These groups know the value in modeling the foundational elements of societies in order to develop the strategies and plans needed to achieve their desired outcomes.
- Additionally, since we all live our daily lives within *The Structure*, our actions and material culture manifest the Societal Domains.
- **NOTE**: We must constantly be aware that belief, or lack of belief, does not equate to the factualness of something.

A Descriptive Challenge

- Gravity is a good analogy when trying to describe *The Structure*.
- Imagine trying to describe something that's all around you but can't be seen, it can only be experienced by its effect not its cause.
- You don't need to be a physicist to accommodate gravity everyday of your life, and you don't need to be an anthropologist to navigate *The Structure*.
- Yet, if you want to go to the moon you need someone to define and indicate how gravity works and if you want to make accurate societal models you might want to understand how societies work.
- We all live within *The Structure* whether we pay attention to it or not.
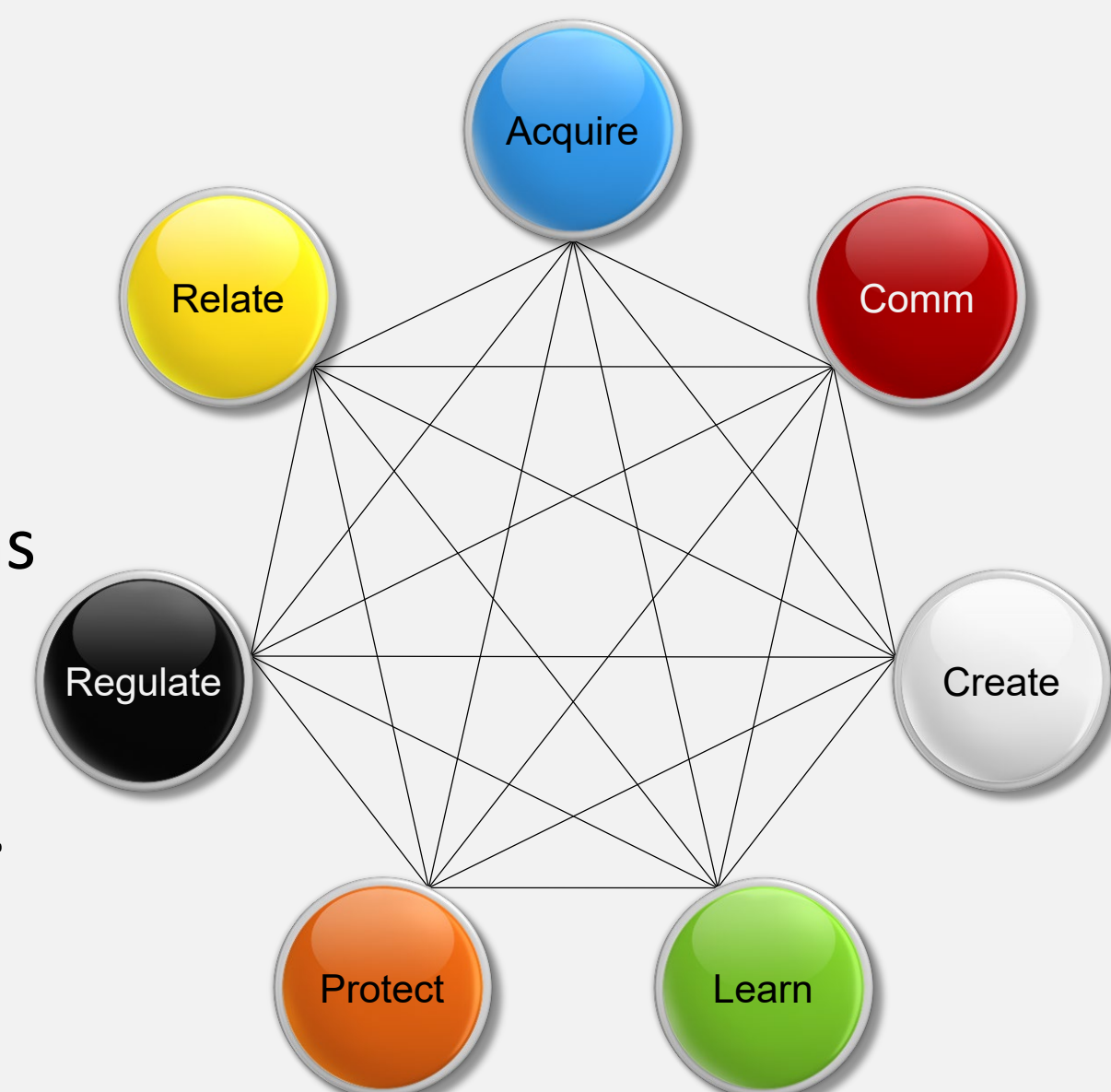
The Structure Ontology

The Structure's foundational elements are Societal Domains.

- **ACQUIRE** (Gather/Hunt/Grow/Mine/Trade/Take, etc.)
- **COMMUNICATE** (Gesture/Talk/Draw/Write, etc.)
- **CREATE** (Accommodate/Adapt/Art/Science, etc.)
- **LEARN** (Experience/Inform/Teach/Educate, etc.)
- **PROTECT** (Guard/Shelter/Barricade, etc.)
- **REGULATE** (Norms/Rules/Laws, etc.)
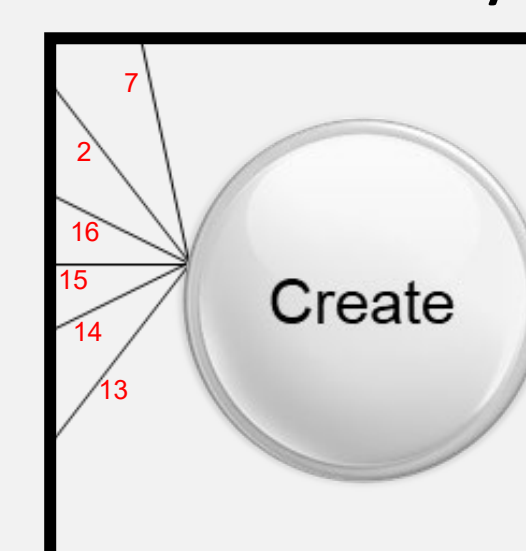- **RELATE** (Individuals/Groups/Gods/Environment, etc.)

The Structure Framework

- In the framework we will…
  - Further define the Domains,
  - Provide content and examples,
  - Examine the connections that exist between Domains and their influence on each other.

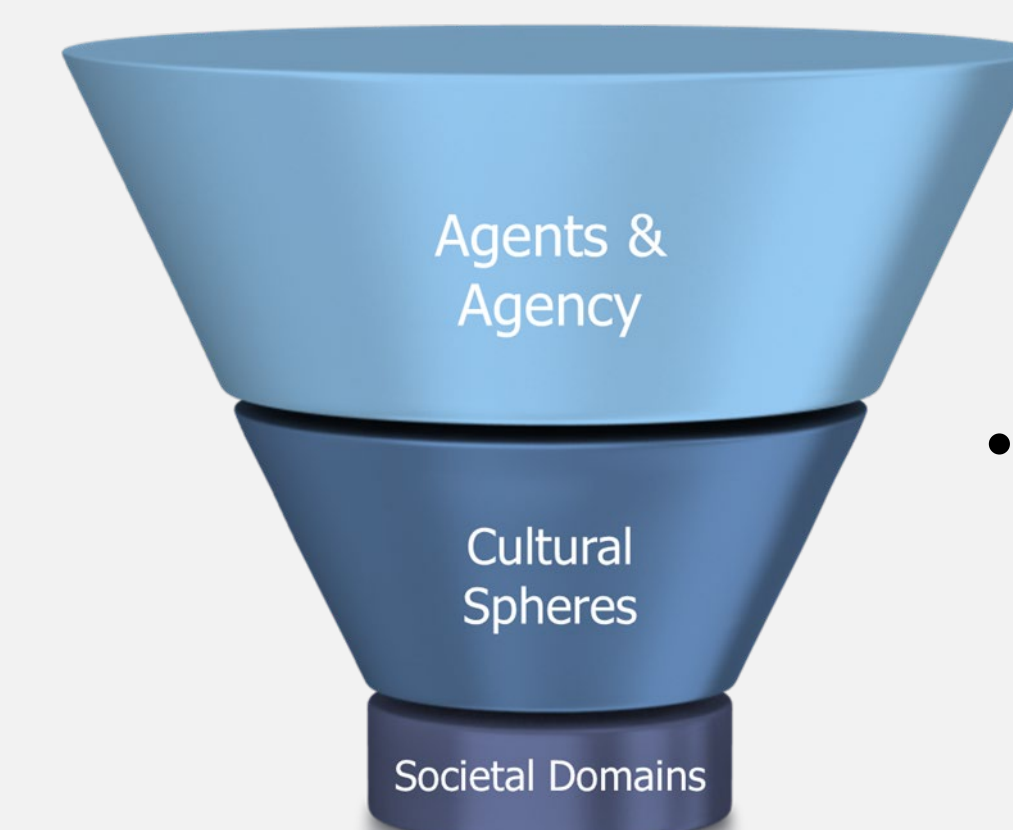The connections between Domains will need to be validated individually and cumulatively.

So What?

- So why does it matter that we bother to expose *The Structure*?
- It matters because there needs to be a level playing field to compete with businesses and governments that are already influencing the Domains in favor of their own goals.
- It matters because the people and organizations assisting the disenfranchised, the marginalized, and the under-served need the same chance to make righteous decisions to further their goals as well.

Purposeful Design and Societal Domains

- You can only take the gravity analogy so far since it is part of the physical world and Societal Domains are clearly part of our psychological makeup, but because of that there is hope that we can alter these Domains.
- The difficulty is that they were constructed over hundreds of thousands of years as a species and not as individuals, so staying focused and addressing the foundational framework will be key in providing purposeful design in the GTOSD and related work.
- To be honest our species, and the world that we inhabit, can't wait to get things perfect, so I posit that we will have to work within *The Structure* as it is today to effect change now.
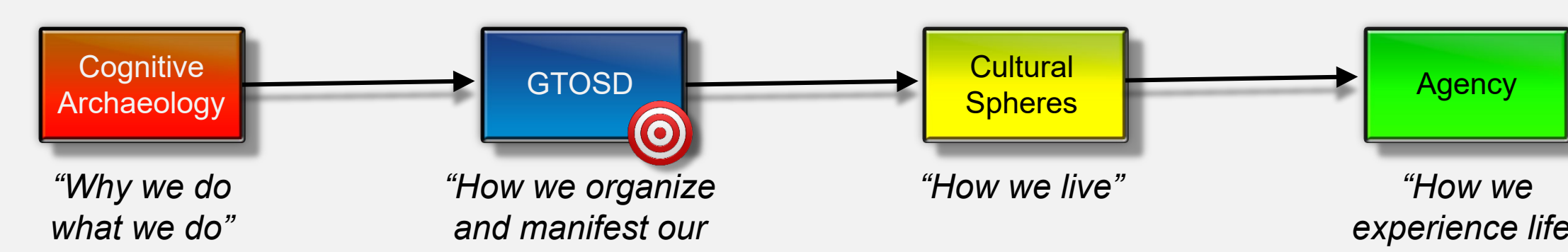
Getting Oriented

- Agents can be individuals, groups, and possibly organizations. There is much debate about agency and structure within the anthropological community.
- Culture can be defined as the collective ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society. Cultural Spheres can be described individually or as subsets to a larger sphere. It is the grouping and interactions of spheres that provides the "clockwork" in which a society operates.
- Leveraging "Field Theory" (for Anthropology/Sociology) as a jumping off point, we will expose the Societal Domains as the basic framework that comprises *The Structure*.

Staying Focused

Cognitive Archaeology	GTOSD	Cultural Spheres	Agency
"Why we do what we do"	*"How we organize and manifest our thoughts"*	*"How we live"*	*"How we experience life"*

- It is tempting to move directly to working on Cultural Spheres and Agency, but we must establish a sound foundation for that work first.
- There is a lot of important work being done in Cognitive Archaeology that we may have to rely on, but it is beyond the current scope.
- Sound cultural descriptions will be imperative to the work and ethnographers and society members are best suited for that, besides good cultural models will need the GTOSD as well.

Verifying *The Structure*

- To withstand scrutiny the Societal Domains must follow some rules
  - Must be **autonomous**
  - Must be **atemporal**
  - Must be **non-geospecific**
  - Must be **ahistoric**
- In other words, a Societal Domain must conform to its own laws and principles which are not simply deducible from, or reducible to, those of a more fundamental domain; existing independently of other domains and occurring regardless of any one historical event, any one specific location, or any one moment in time.

What is Next?

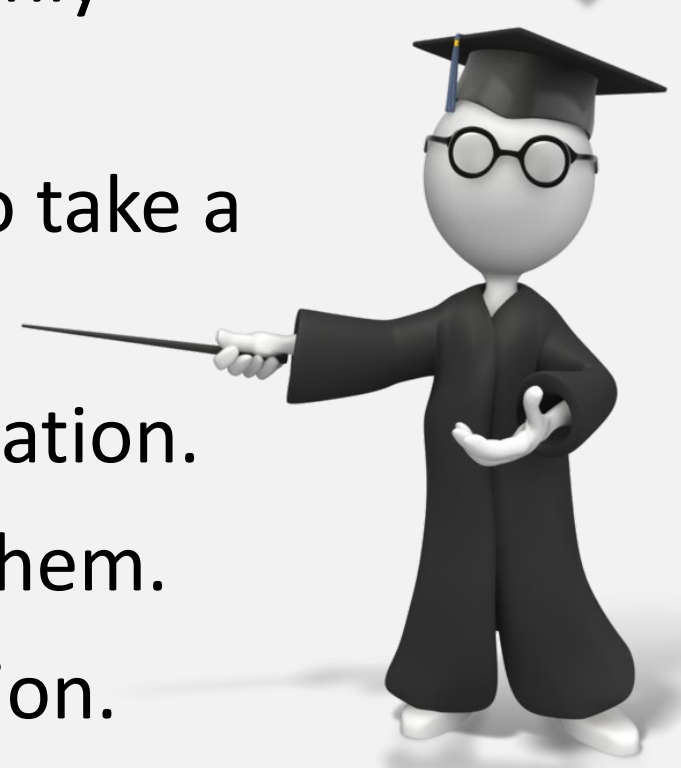We have two basic paths to follow, and each has its costs and benefits.

One is more progressive and seeks to be more activist in engaging communities in creating solutions.

The other is well-trodden and follows a traditional path of academic inquiry.

A Method of Inquiry

- One line of inquiry can look to expose the Societal Domains by mainly examining their manifestation in social and material culture.
- Remembering the "rules" for the Societal Domains, we will need to take a multidisciplinary approach to satisfy certain scrutiny.
  - Archaeology – What has been left behind that exposes manifestation.
  - Historical Anthropology – What has been written that exposes them.
  - Ethnographies – What can currently be seen of their manifestation.
  - Cognitive Archaeology, with a dash of Philosophy – What actions and thoughts of past cultures impacted Societal Domains.
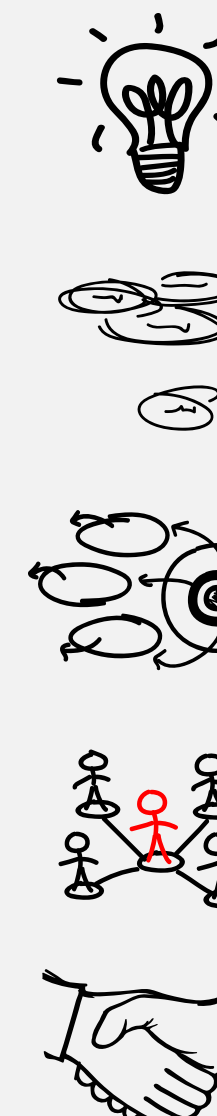
Proceed Without Delay

- With *The Structure* exposed and the Societal Domains defined, we have the elementary features of a framework necessary to start building the basic societal and cultural models needed for more informed decision making.
- Combining commercial best practices and sound anthropological methods, we can begin to develop solutions now.
- The disenfranchised, the marginalized, the under-served, and the people and organizations that endeavor to assist them cannot wait for every idea and solution to be debated and peer reviewed.
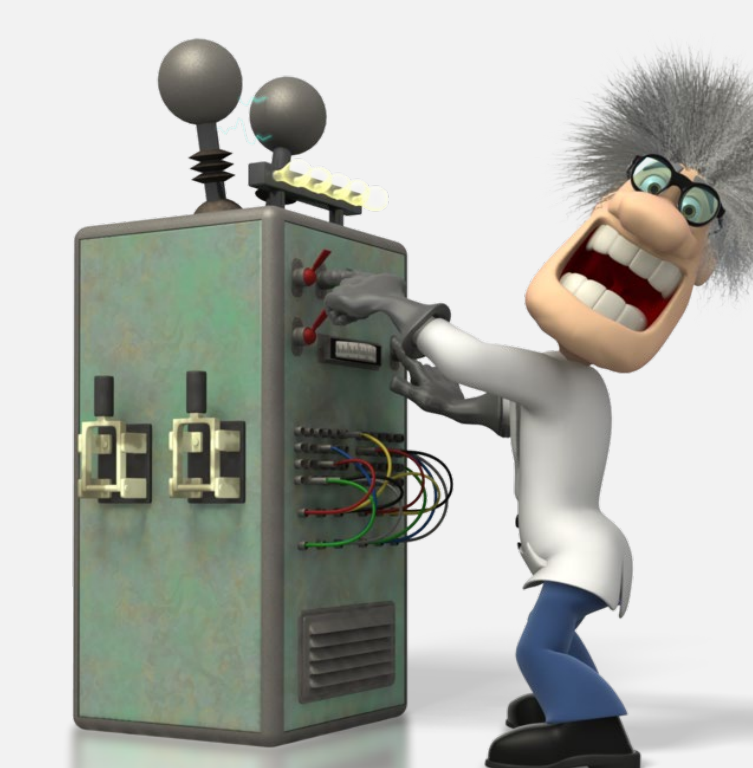
Following a Plan

Step 1: We figure out what our ontology is for our Societal Domains.

Step 2: We examine the domains in any given society and validate their connections.

Step 3: We work with subject matter experts to define the Cultural Spheres and influences.

Step 4: We define the Agents and their historical "agency".

Step 5: We conduct verification and validation.

A Word of Caution

- Not saying a more traditional approach cannot operate along side a more progressive approach, but people need action and results now.
- So, if you could create a "machine" that would help you to better understand a given society, and help you make informed decisions, would you build it?

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