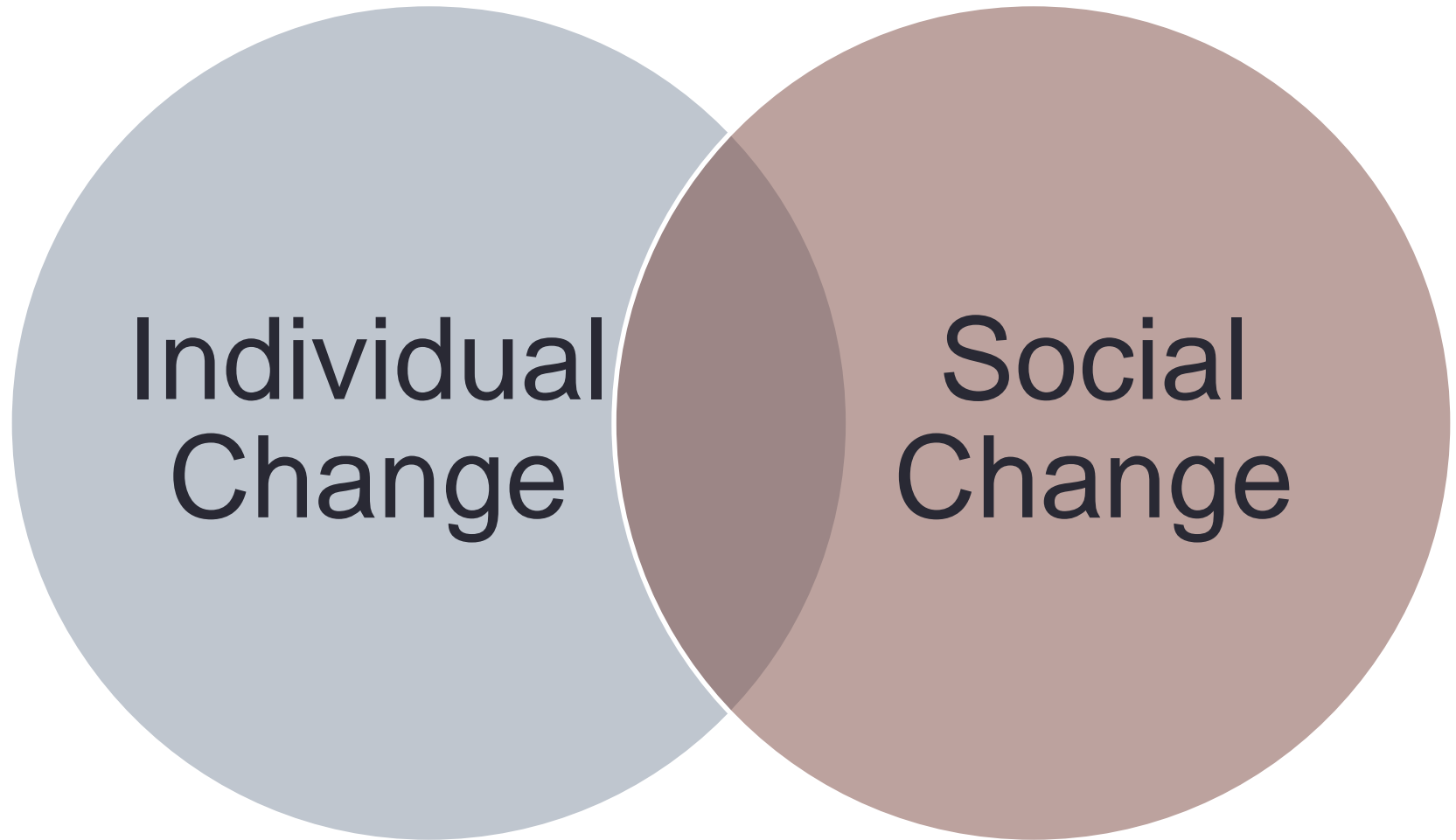


ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY AND PRACTICE

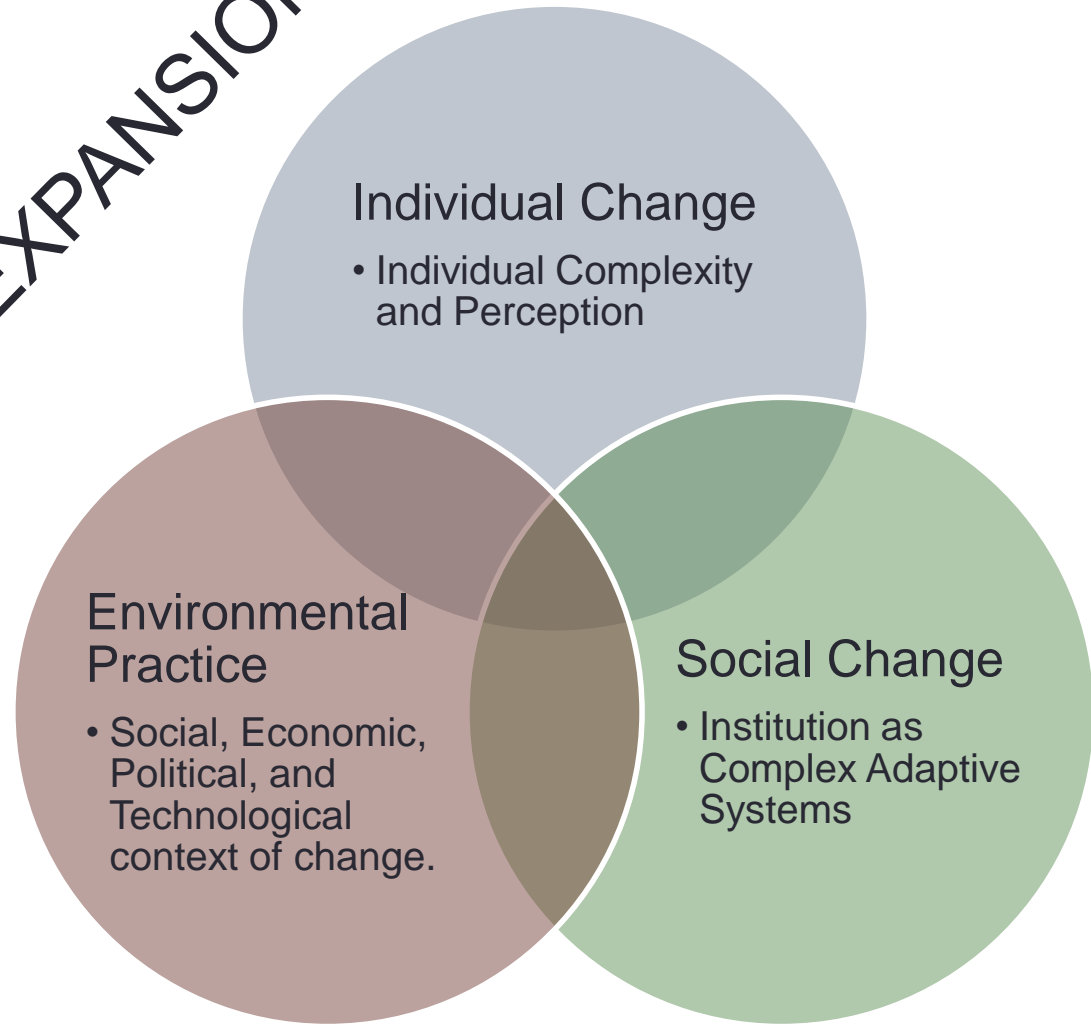
Systems, Complexity, and Assessment

By Michael A. Wright

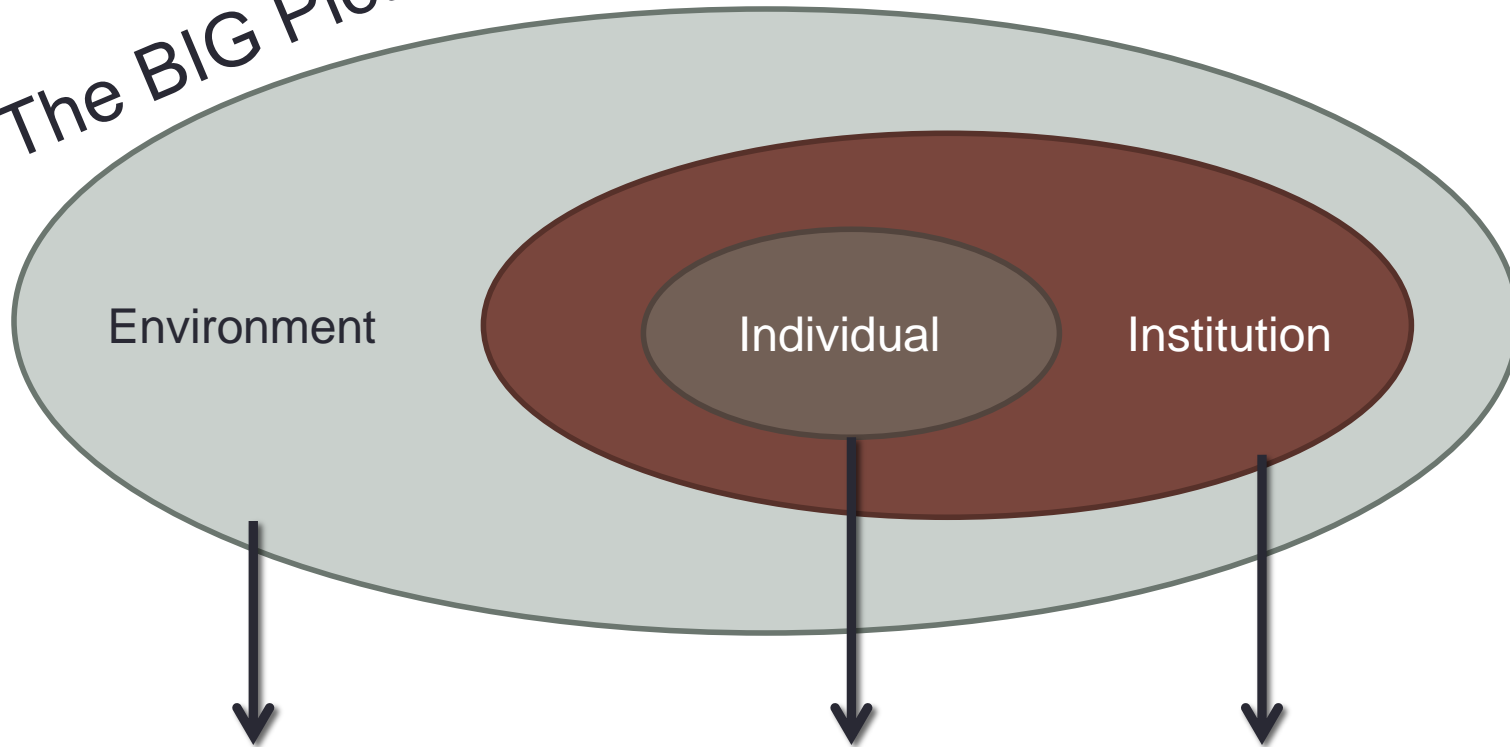
Social Work Mandate



SW MANDATE EXPANSION



The BIG Picture



Environmental

Social
Political
Technological
Economic

Individual

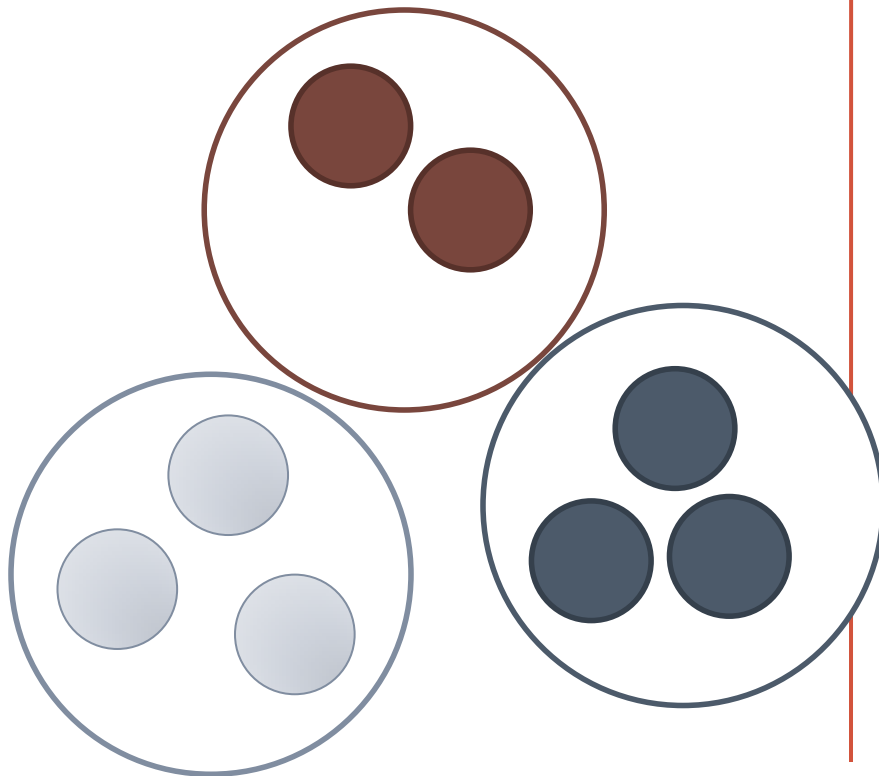
Biological
Psychological
Sociological
Spiritual

Institutional

Complex Adaptive Systems
Control Systems
[environment, individual, and interactive effects.]

General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1934)

Humans

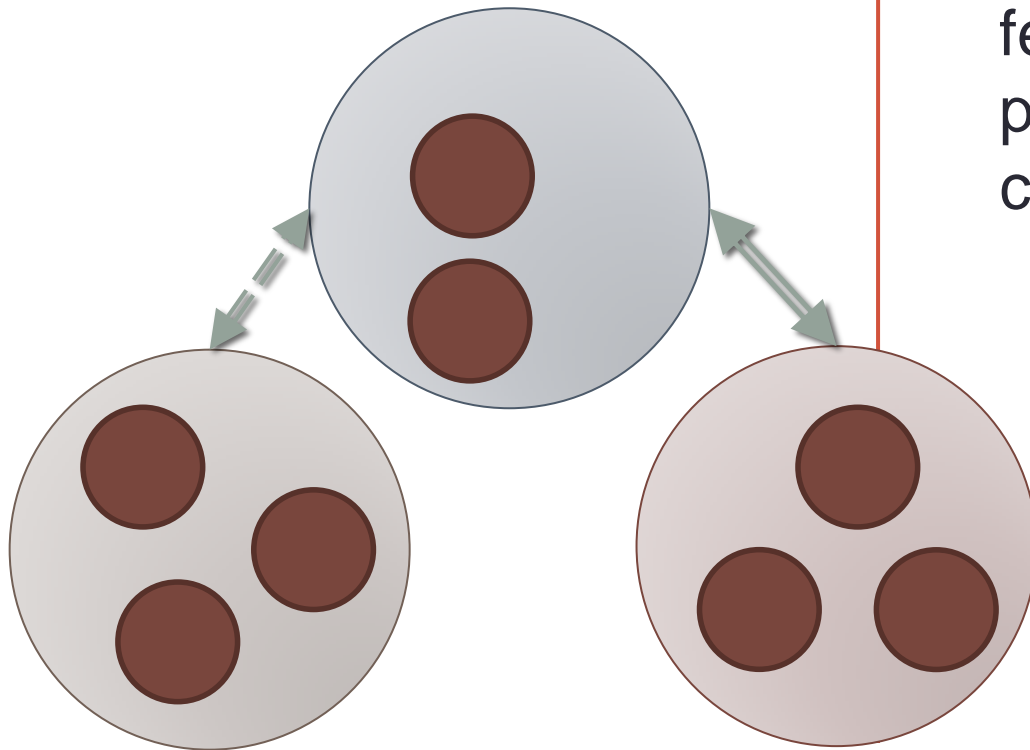


Are Organic Systems

- Humans evolve in the context of specifically identifiable environments. Human behavior is “real” and observable (Bertalanffy ,1969).

Cybernetics (Weiner, 1969)

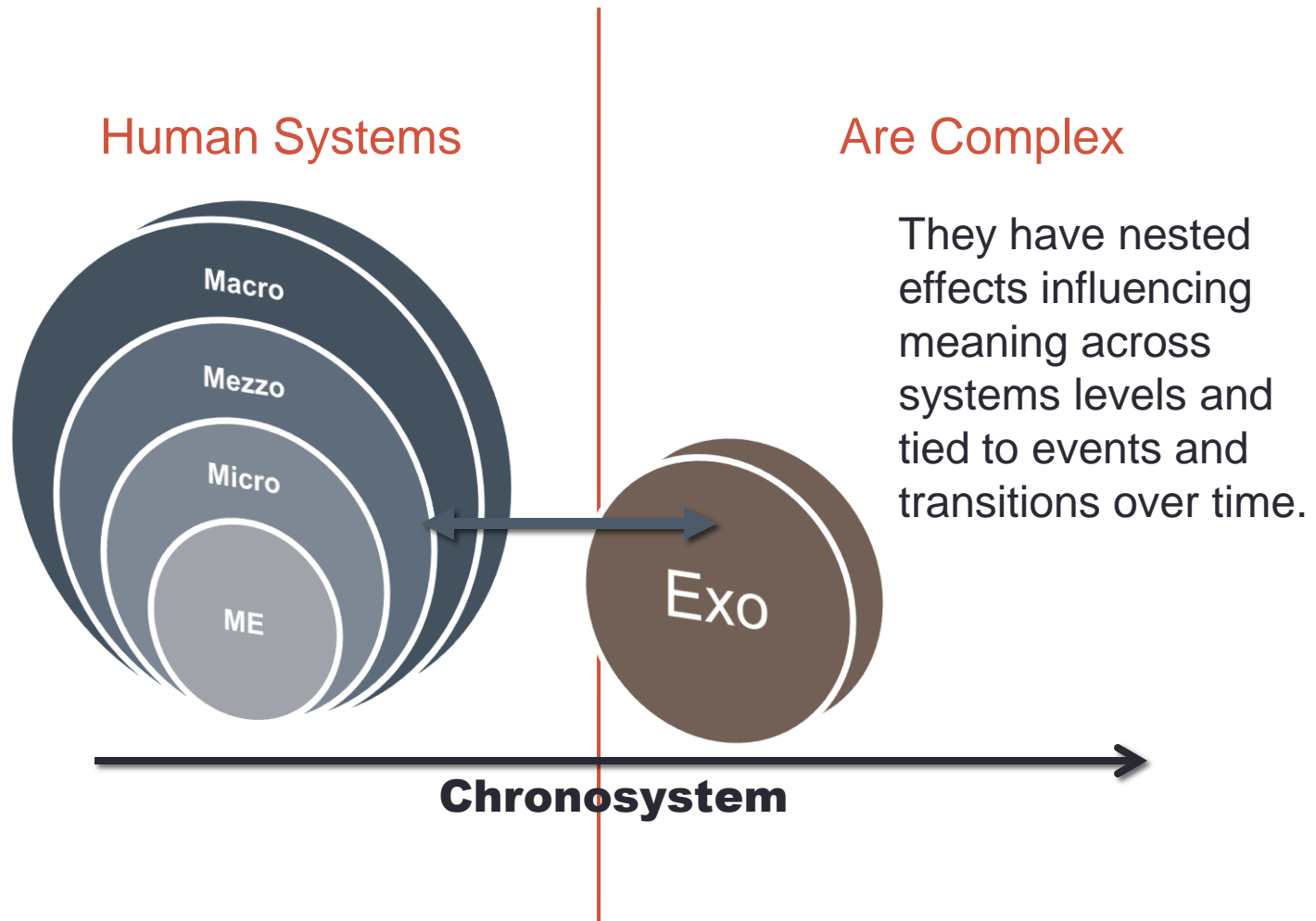
Human Systems



Are Dynamic

- They have interactive and feedback structures, process information, and construct meaning.

Ecological systems Perspective (BronfenBrenner, 1979)



COMPLEXITIES

Institutions and Agents in Systems Theory

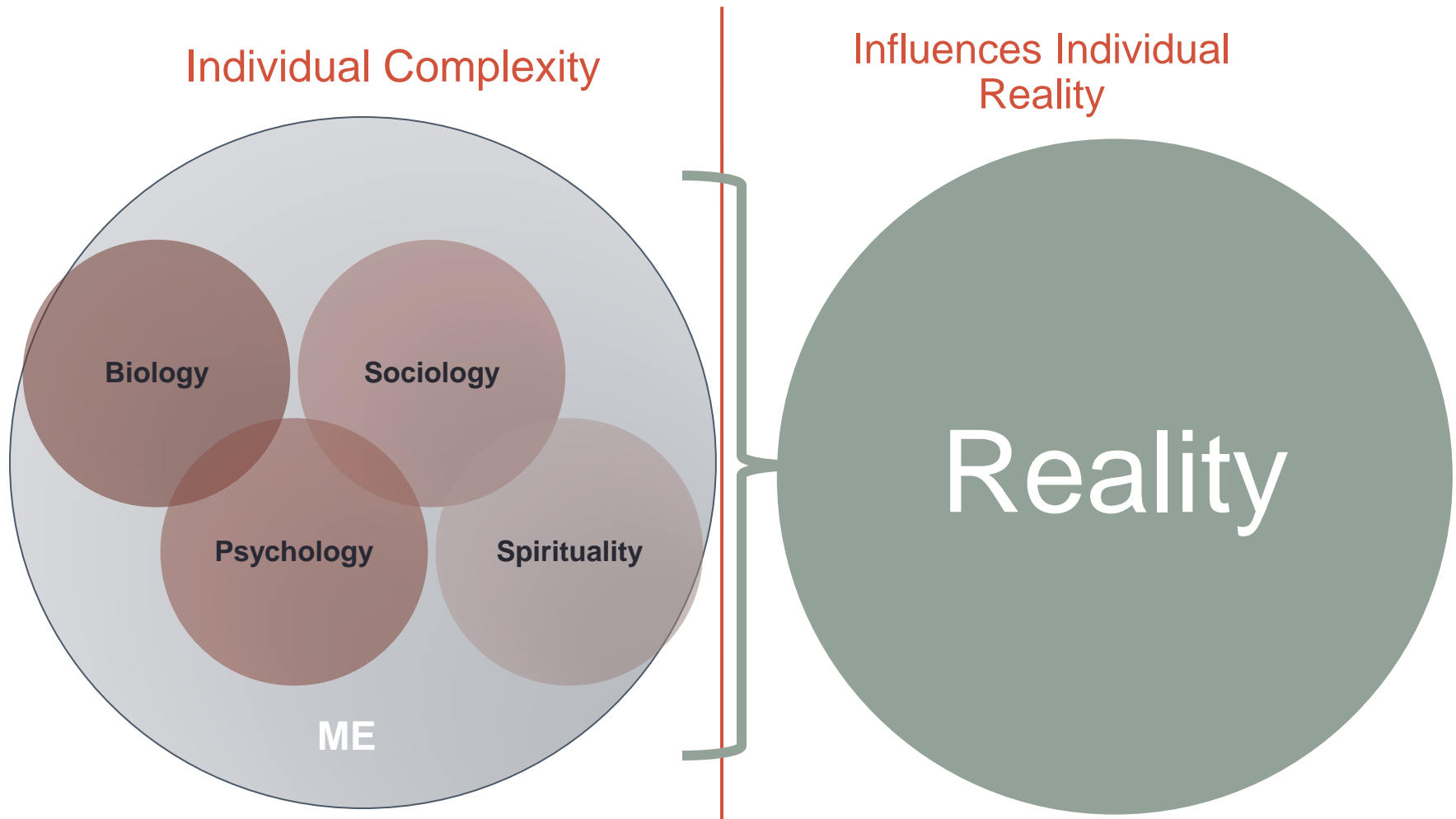
Institutions

- They have specific processes for transmittal of environmentally supported culture and enforcement of rules. The resultant culture and rules are expressed in values, beliefs, and expectations linked to environment and events over time.

Individuals

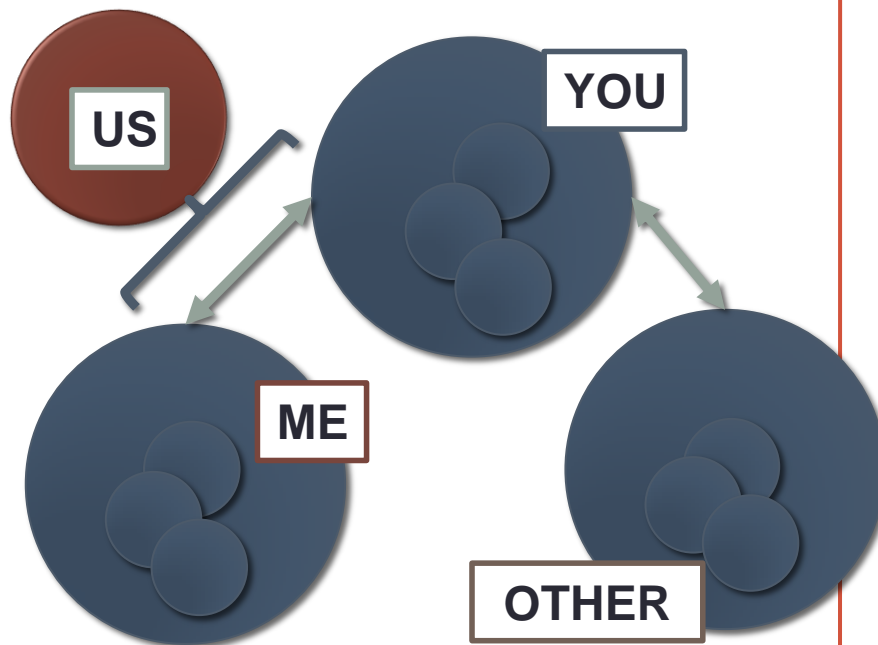
- Systems theory allows for a holistic approach to assessment that includes the environmental complexities that impact the choice behavior of individuals within the system, also called agents.

BioPsychoSocial-Spiritual Assessment (Engel, 1977)



Complex Adaptive Systems

Sociological Complexity

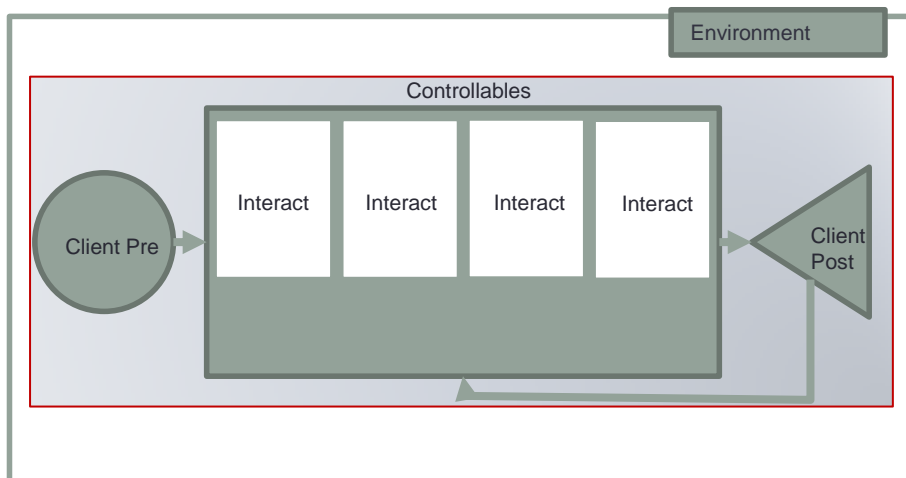


Exhibits interactive effects

- This means that humans, when in groups, exhibit behaviors that are not necessarily expected from any one of the individuals in the group TOWARD stability, purpose and order. They are driven by heterogeneity: the more different the individuals, the more complex the system.

Control Systems

Complex Adaptive Systems



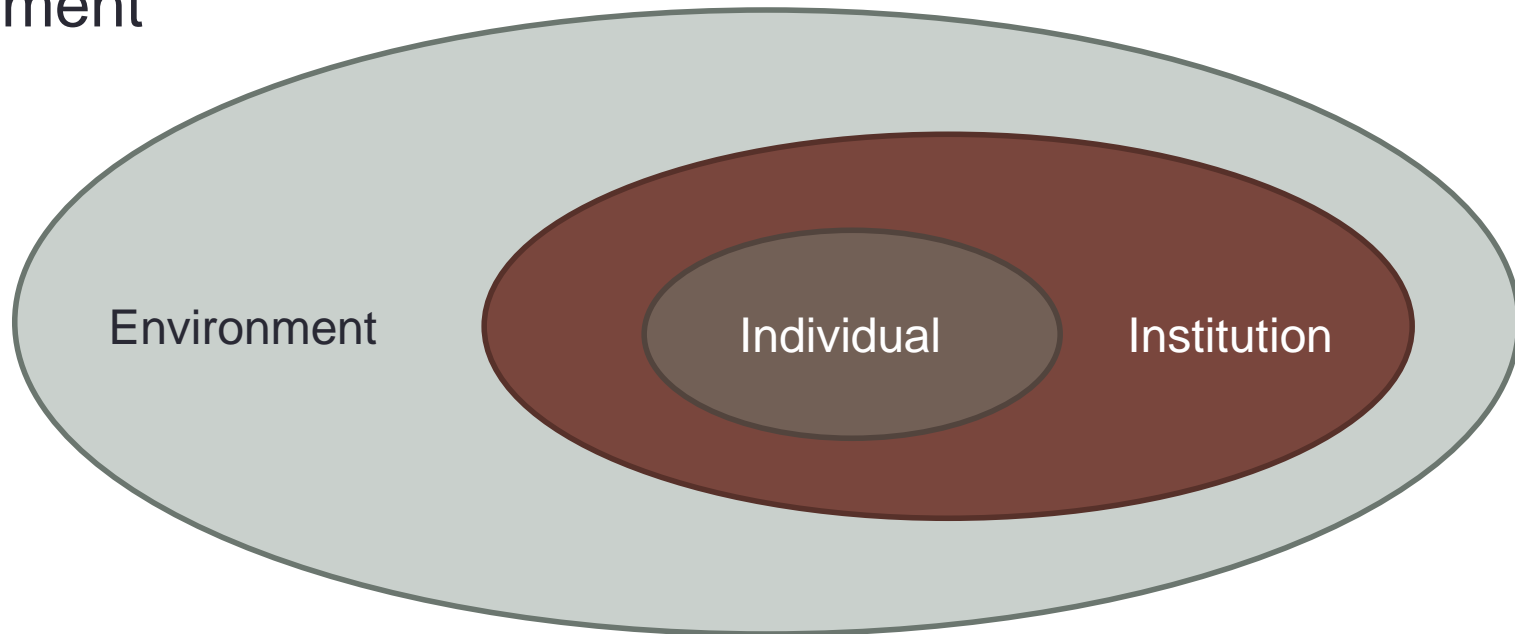
Are predictable.

- Group behaviors are unexpected but **predictable** if characteristics are known: Environment, Individual profile, Interactive effects. The outcomes of systems can be modeled: Agent-Based Modeling

ANALYTIC HIERARCHY

Basic Hierarchy

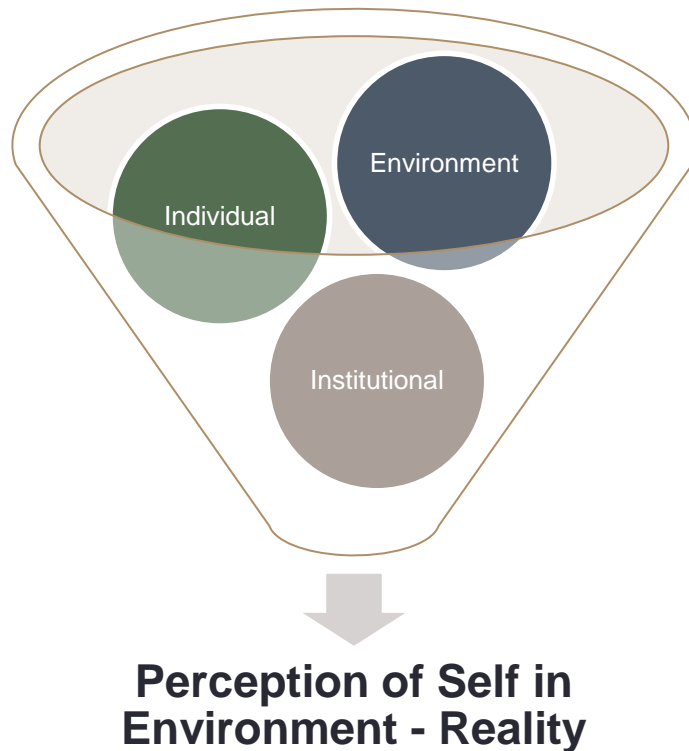
- Individual
- Institution
- Environment



When an event occurs...

WE ARE CONCERNED WITH...

Individualized Assessment



Ecological Assessment

- What is the economic, political, technological, and social **environment**?
- What are the interactive effects of the intersection of person, environment, and **institutional** exposure.
- What is the assessed profile of the **individual**?

A Matter of Context

Contextual Factors

- Social
- Economic
- Technological
- Political

Central Questions

- What were the exposure (infamy or fame) circumstances and expectations prior to the choice?
- What were the financial circumstances and expectations central to the choice?
- What technologies were enhanced or hindered capabilities?
- What policies are pertinent to the execution of the choice?

A Matter of Control

Major Institutions

- Marriage & Family
- School
- Business
- Faith & Volunteerism
- Health Care

Central Questions

CS = Control System

- What are the individual needs and expected behaviors as the client enters the CS?
- What routines and values are communicated through the CS?
- What are the controls implemented during execution of the CS?
- What is the expected outcome of the CS?
- How is feedback used after exit from the CS?

A Matter of Choice

Major Assessment Areas

- Biology
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Spirituality

Central Questions

- Is the choice age appropriate and not the result of disease?
- Is the choice informed from multiple and competing sources?
- Is the choice free from undue influence except that it maintains the culture of the in-group?
- Is the choice based on factors that are not readily observed or are unique only to the client?