Research Plan

"Adaptive phenomena that hinder the implementation of quality innovations in long-term care institutions in Hungary"

Written by Gergely Horváth
PhD student
Eötvös Lóránd University
Faculty of Social Sciences
Doctoral School of Sociology
Social Policy Doctoral Programme

Defining the Research Area, Formulating the Research Problem, Listing Specific Research Questions

Defining the Research Area:

- Quality assurance in the domestic, state-run long-term elderly care system, institution-centered approach
  - State-run institutions, such as the Fejér County branch of the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection and its maintained facilities, are suitable for conducting an in-depth analysis at the macro, meso, and micro levels. However, I see it as necessary to examine non-state-run institutions (e.g., foundation-or church-run elderly care homes, which have different resources and differing/different business policies) in order to gain a deeper understanding.
  - Change management strategies and mechanisms in institutions related to the implementation of an uniform quality assurance framework

Research period: at least 1,5 year (18 months)

- 2026 Spring:This phase involves the clarification and detailed analysis of academic sources and empirical data. → refining my research questions
- 2026 Fall: Selecting the methodology of my research → development of suitable research tools
- 2026 Fall: Building relationships with the participants in the research areas→ starting questionnaire-based research and interviews at the macro, meso, and micro levels
- 2027 Spring: Continue the questionnaires and the interviews → analysing the research findings
- *2027 Fall: Writing the dissertation → preparing the dissertation for submission.*

Research Problem:

- In state-run long-term care institutions (elderly care homes) in Hungary, based on relevant policy efforts, it is reasonable to develop an internal quality management system. However, previous and current unsuccessful development efforts, along with the experiences from implementation processes, provide limited information about change management mechanisms. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, it is necessary to explore the attitudes, explicit knowledge, and relational systems of the actors at the macro, meso, and micro levels that support or hinder the implementation of developments.

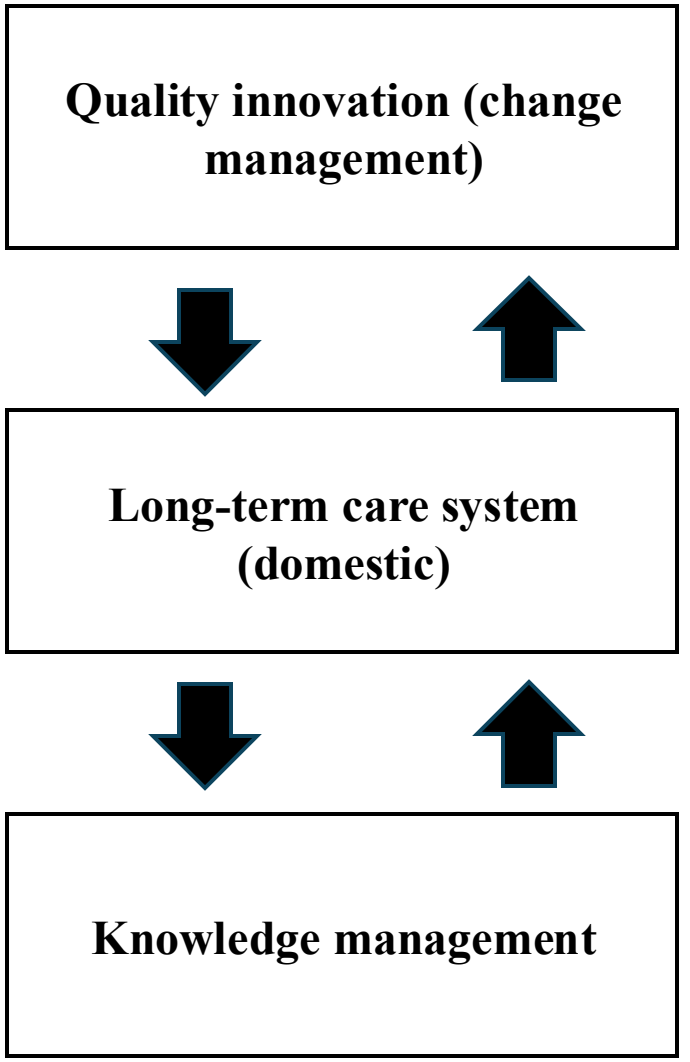
Research objectives (objective approach)

Overall aim: To identify the factors determining the adaptive responses related to quality improvement (implementation of an unified quality assurance framework) in the domestic long-term elderly care system.

- „Questions that cannot be ignored”: What does quality mean in LTC? Who are the key actors in the quality assurance processes of LTC facilities?
- What is the specific field of knowledge in domestic contexts regarding the creation and implementation of quality improvement changes within the state-run long-term elderly care system?
- Within this specific field of knowledge, what are the identified and latent yet also decisive phenomena that can either hinder or facilitate the implementation of quality improvement changes (uniform quality assurrance framework) at the micro, meso, and macro levels?
- Who are the generally defined dominant actors within this special field of knowledge at the micro, meso, and macro levels?
- What concepts form the interpretive framework related to quality for these actors, and how do these influence the change management of professional structures that interpret quality, as well as the sustainable development of these structures?

My personal motivation

- Among my experiences in the field of social services, my work in an elderly care home was particularly significant.
  - Direct cooperation with caregiving and nursing professional teams
  - As a professional director.
- Commitment to quality assurance
  - Academic theses: leadership roles, employee satisfaction, latent quality assurance systems.
  - Specialization in quality management, quality management qualification (ISO, TQM), EFQM assessor.
  - Practicing assessor, internal quality assurance specialist.
- Organization and network development.
  - Self-discovery
  - Organization development knowledge – coaching.
  - Network development experiences – social innovation.



The sub-objectives of the research

Three-level approach

- **Macro-level analysis goal:** To explore the change management processes, characteristics, success factors, and barriers within the national care system and policy mechanisms related to long-term care and nursing.
- **Meso-level analysis goal:** To examine the change management processes, characteristics, success factors, and barriers at the county (or national) level within the care system and policy mechanisms. This includes understanding how concepts are constructed and how related knowledge is created at this level—one that has a closer grasp of macro-level ambitions and the practical issues of implementation at the micro level.
- **Micro-level analysis goal:** To map the interpretative and usage issues of change management and quality improvement concepts associated with service development at the micro level, which simultaneously involves the possibility of practically interpreting (reflecting on) macro- and meso-level constructs.

Selection of research approach and methodology

- **Research objective:** Exploratory research
  - Reason behind choosing this approach: there is limited information (and data) available on change management mechanisms in the domestic long-term care system, particularly those related to quality improvement.
- I intend to use the **Grounded Theory** methodology for the interviews.
- **In my research, I plan to conduct a secondary analysis: analysis of the results of Hungarian and international research on the effectiveness of quality improvement processes and the effectiveness of LTC change management.**
- **At the micro level,** I will send a **simple questionnaire** to all employees of the institutions (except for managers) in order to obtain a **preliminary picture** of their explicit **knowledge of change management at the organizational level** and their **attitudes towards change management processes (related to quality improvement).**
- **At the macro and meso levels,** in-depth interviews with the persons concerned (persons in managerial positions and/or experts) in order to understand **the policy approach to change management processes**.
- **At the micro level,** in-depth interviews with the head of the institution in order to understand the organizational approaches and processes of change management.
- **At the micro level,** I plan to conduct **focus group research** among the relevant employees of the institution (middle managers and/or subordinates) in order to understand **organizational-level approaches and processes for change management.**

Delphi Method?

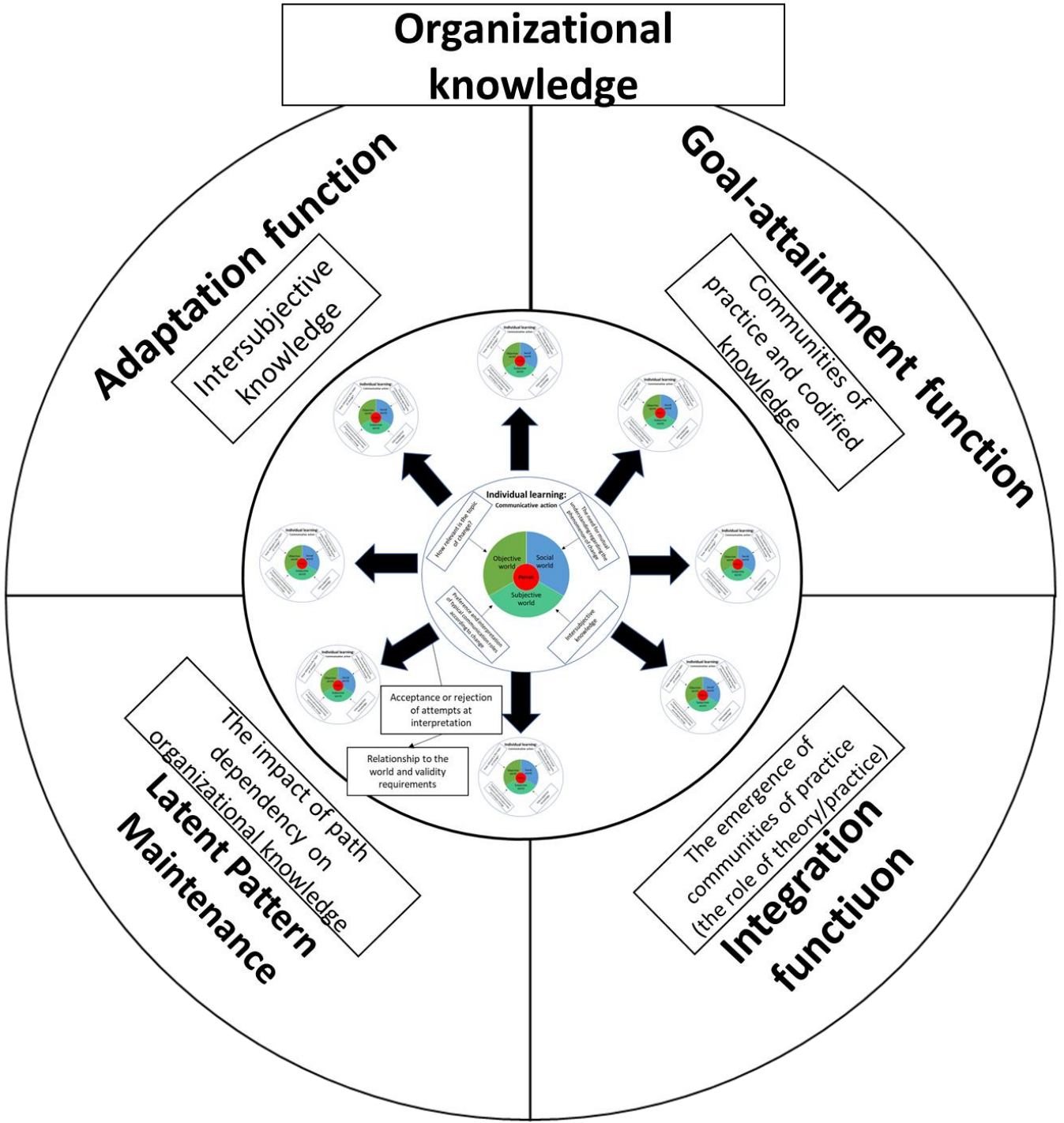
The initial point: According to my research problem, change mechanisms originate within a dynamically changing space (ecosystem), and thus knowledge is also generated there. I intend to examine these with theories and approaches that are related to the actions of individuals or groups of individuals (action-theoretical approach).

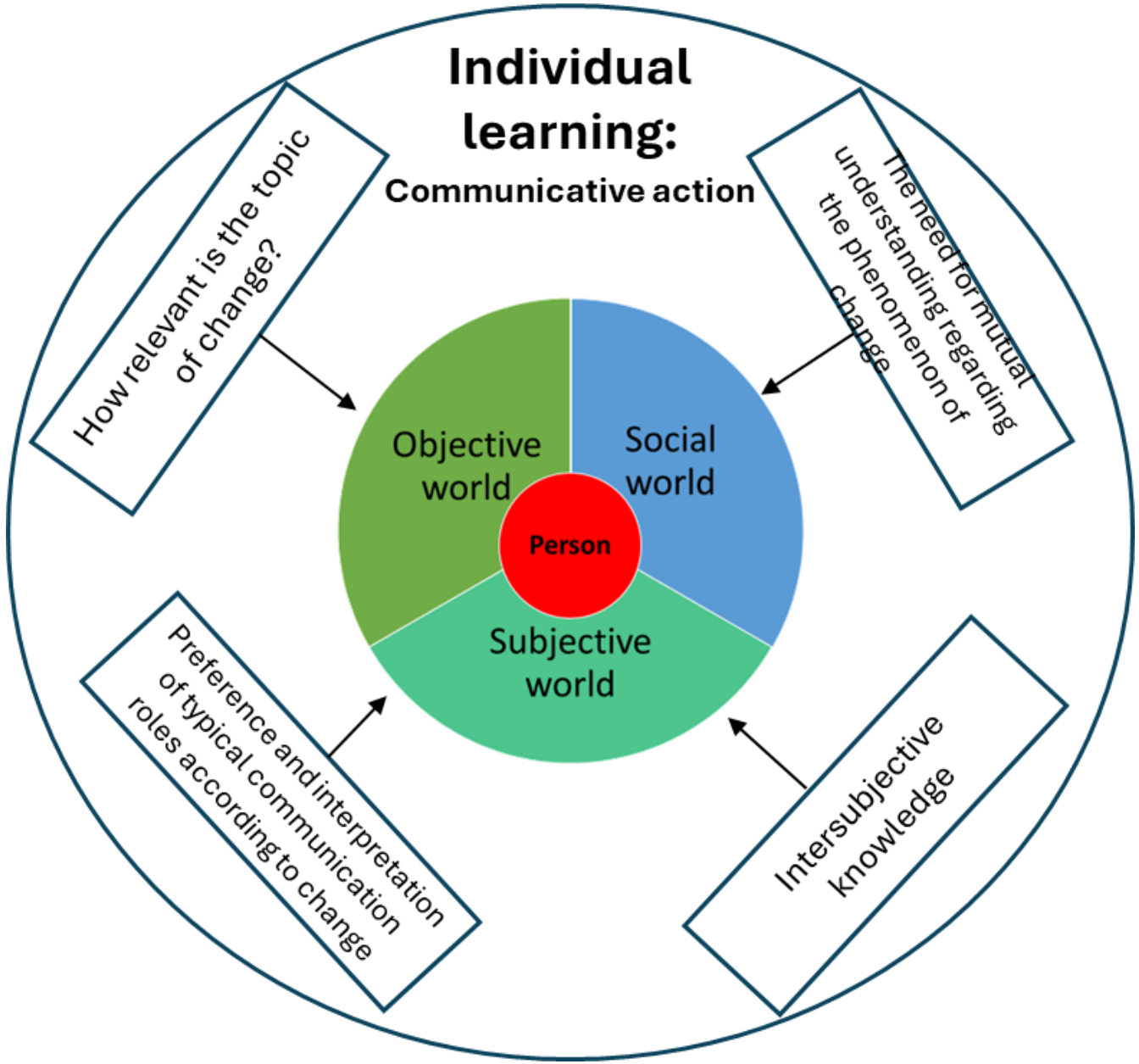
At the individual level:

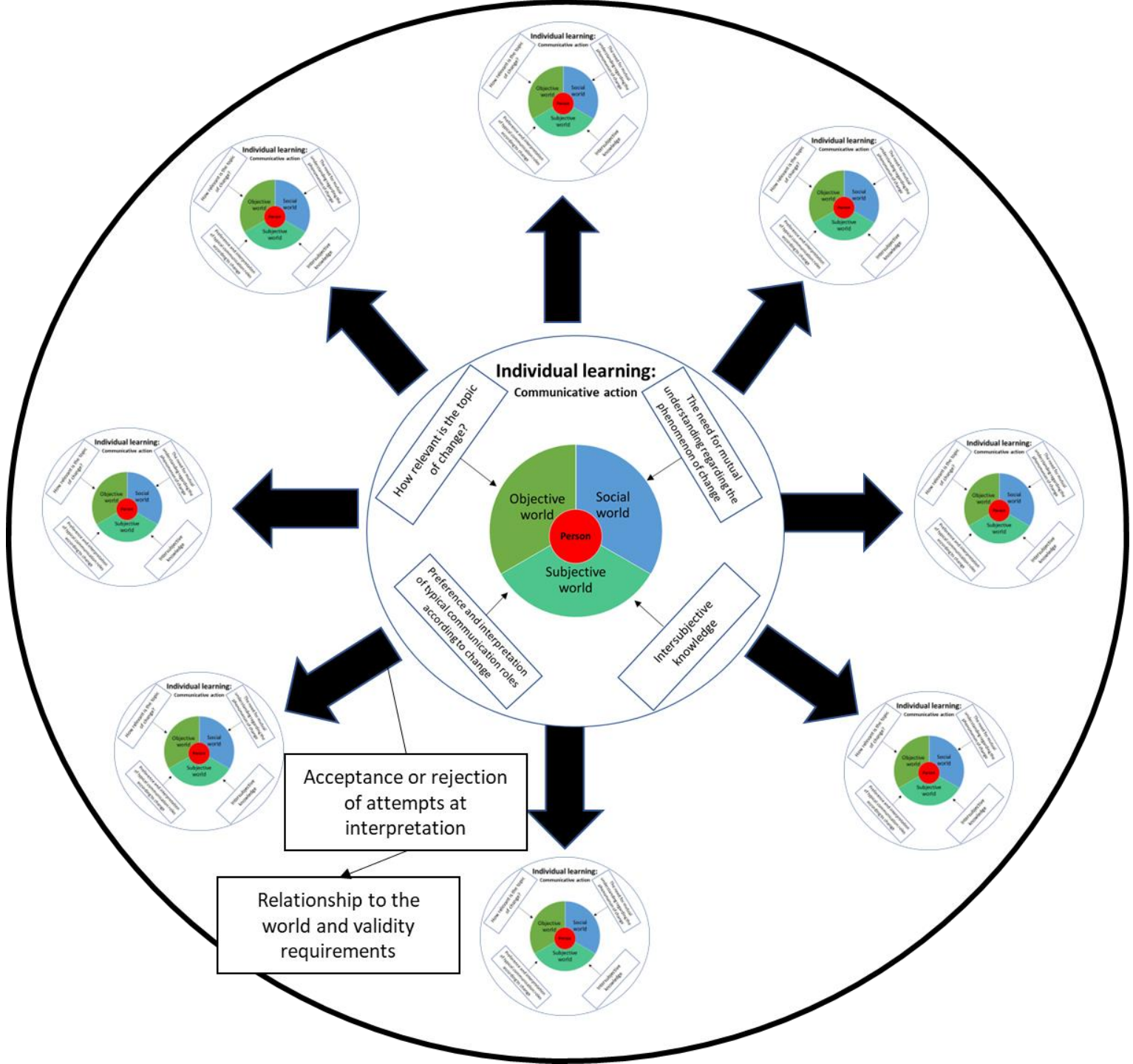
- Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann's structures of the lifeworld
- Erving Goffman's categorization theory
- Habermas's theory of communicative action, focusing on actions aimed at mutual understanding

At the organizational level:

- Parsons' AGIL schema




Individual learning:
Communicative action
How relevant is the topic of change?
The need for mutual understanding regarding the phenomenon of change
Objective world
Social world
Person
Subjective world
Preference and interpretation of typical communication roles according to change
Intersubjective knowledge


Individual learning:
Communicative action
How relevant is the topic of change?
The need for mutual understanding regarding the phenomenon of change
Objective world
Social world
Person
Subjective world
Preference and interpretation of typical communication roles according to change
Intersubjective knowledge
Acceptance or rejection of attempts at interpretation
Relationship to the world and validity requirements

Thank you for your attention!