

"Mechanisms" around the Information Society

Social Generative Mechanisms: From Competition to Opportunity

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1 Critical Social Systems Theory

science	criticism	systemism
aims	the sublation of antagonisms originating from heteronomy by providing knowledge of concrete utopias (revolution)	the social systems' transformation into higher-order states based upon scientific anticipations of sustainable future states
scope	dialectic of agency and structure (interplay of individual and society)	social systems as self-organisation of actors giving rise to emergent organisational relations
tools	putting phenomena in the context of overarching society (recognition of history and totality)	putting observations in the context of social systems' development/evolution

1.1 Dynamism ("mechanism")

cause 

caused

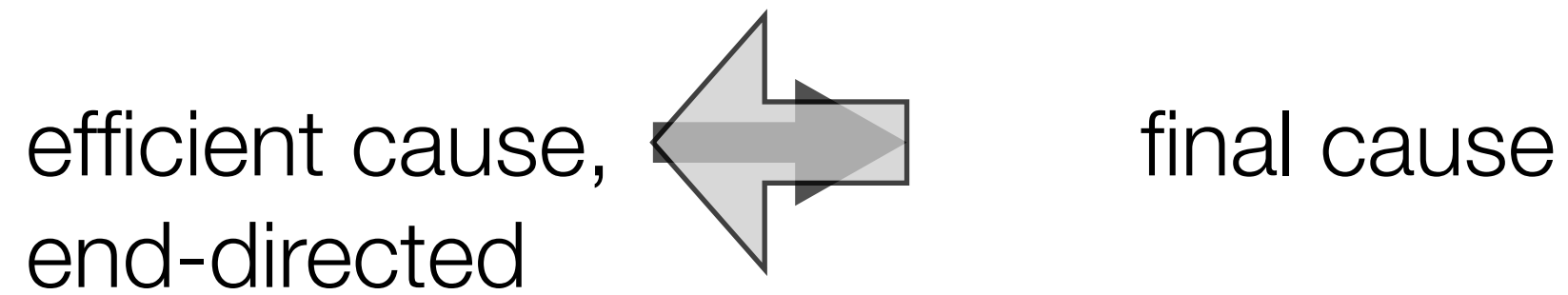
- **necessary** (bijective): strictly determined, mechanical
- **contingent** (not bijective): conditioned (by a necessary but not sufficient condition)

1.1.1 Four Aristotelian causations

efficient cause →

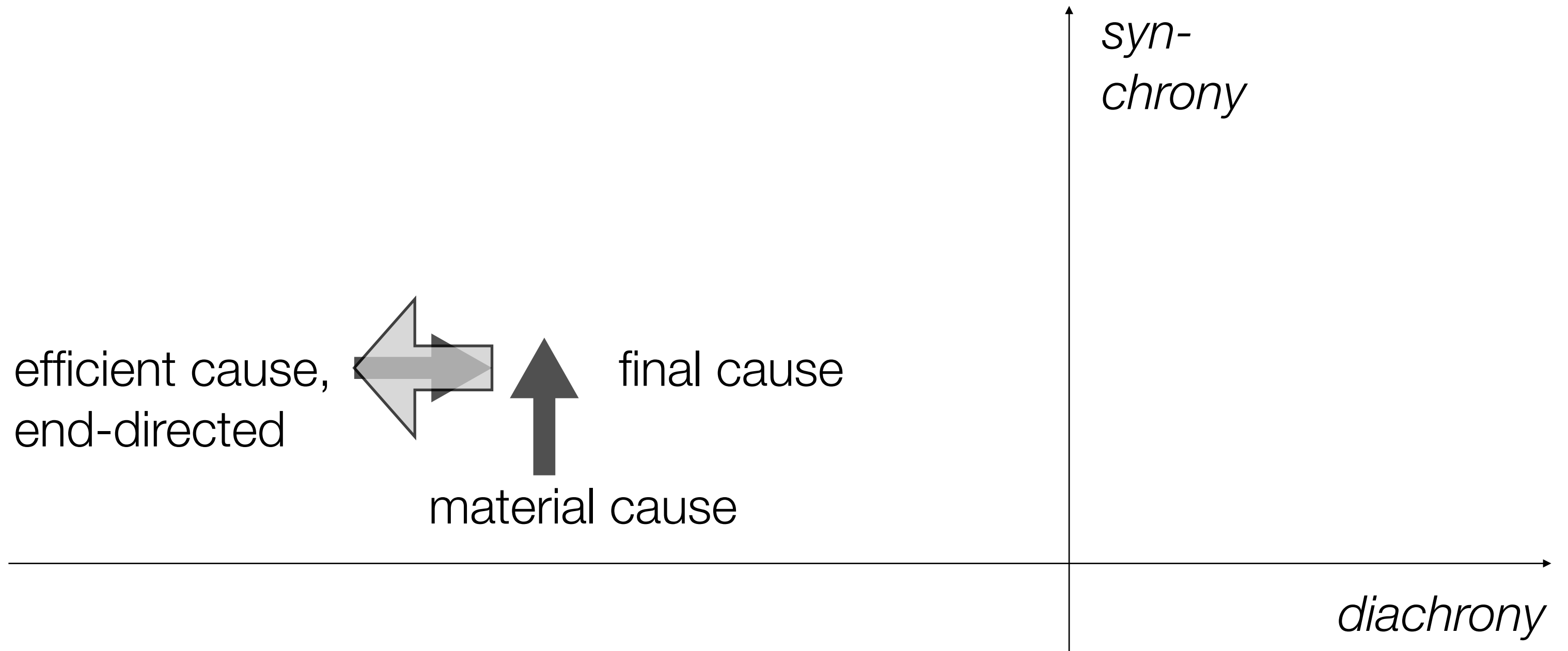
diachrony

1.1.1 Four Aristotelian causations

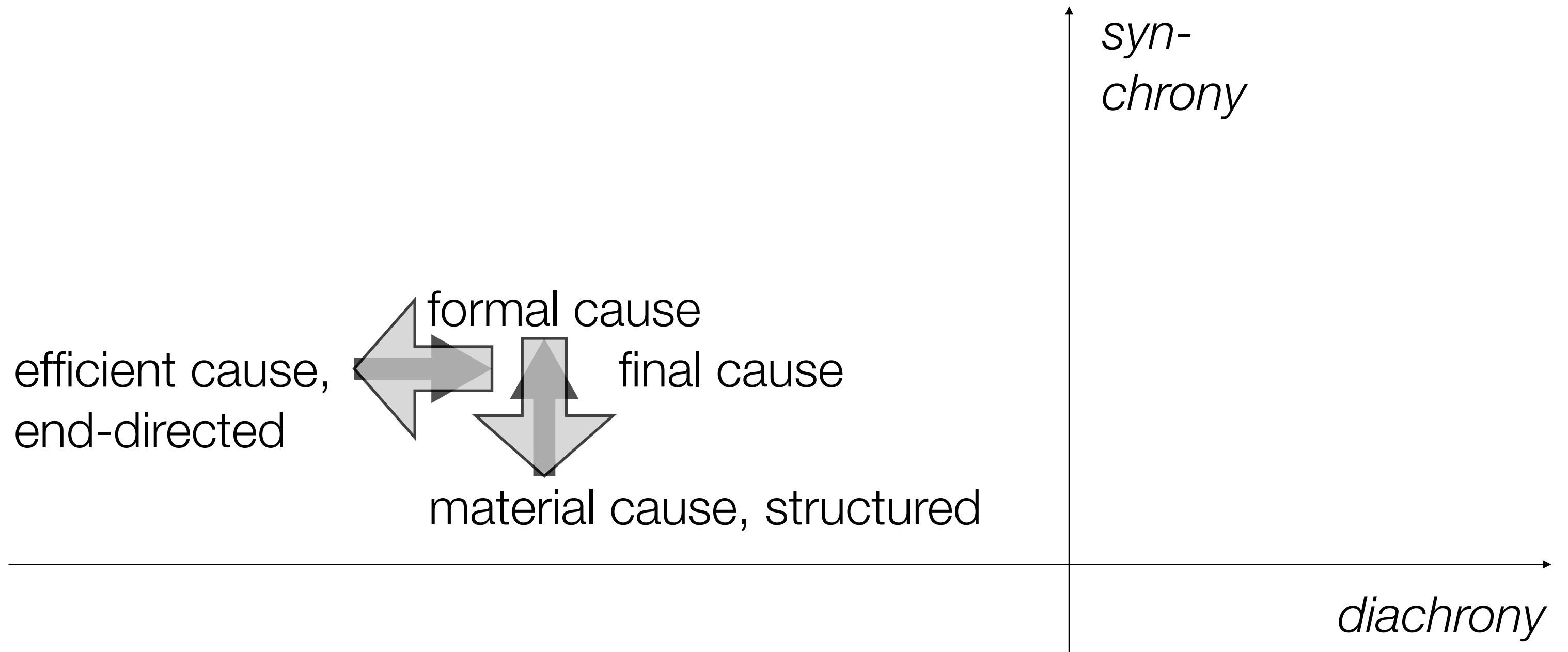


diachrony

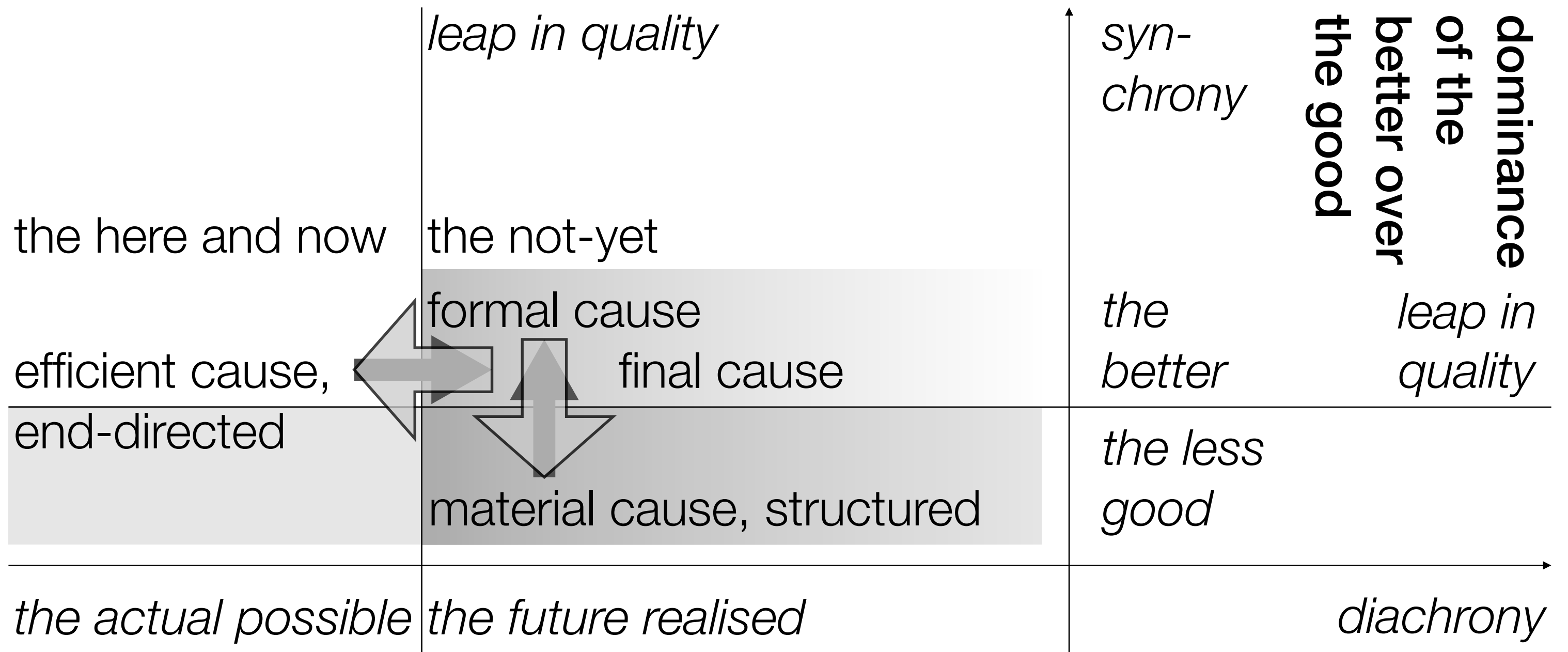
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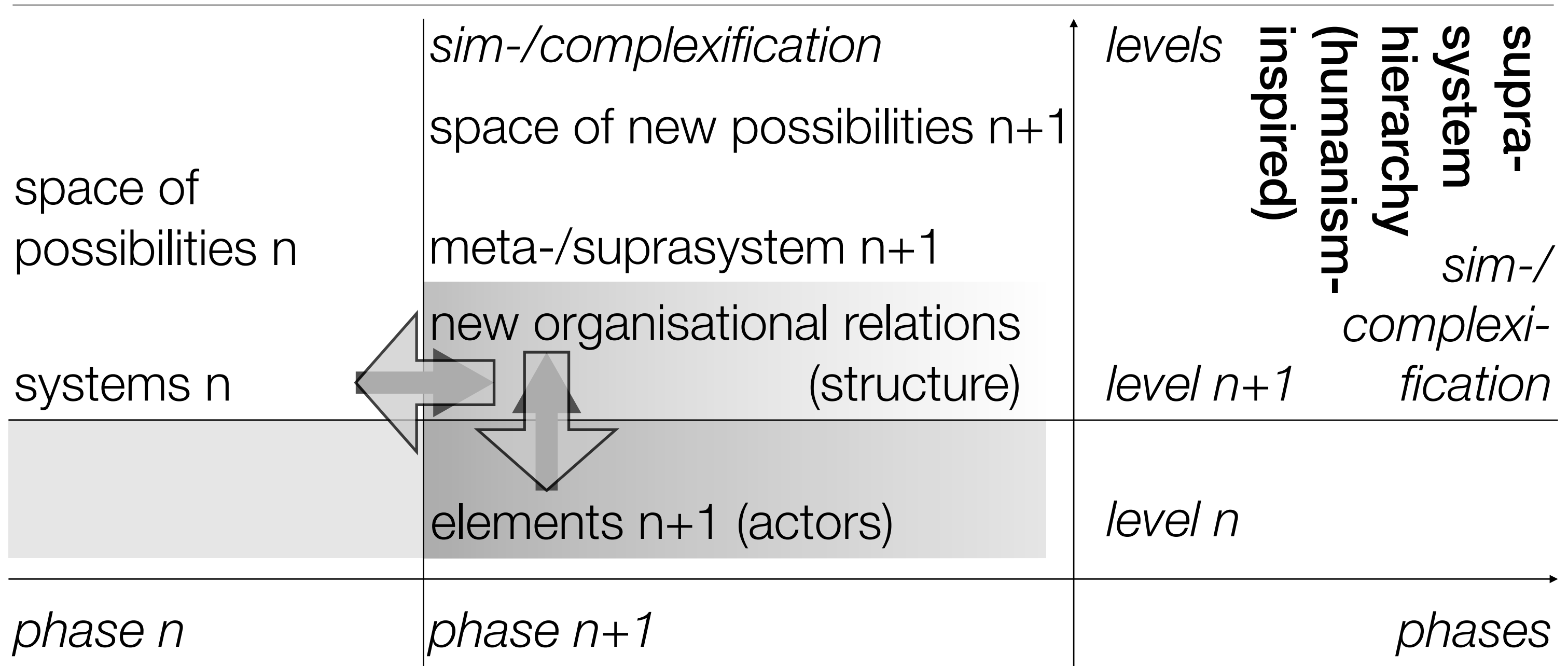


1.1.2 Ernst Bloch's concrete utopia



emergence of the realised from the possible

1.1.3 Dynamism in Critical Social Systems Theory



meta-system transition (open-ended)

1.1.3 Dynamism in Critical Social Systems Theory

- manifestation of **generic self-organisation** (morphostasis or transitional emergence – from one social formation to another – through bottom-up and top-down emergence – between agency and structure) on any scale
- tendency (Porpora): causal but not strict-deterministic (**propense**)
- 3 guises
 - **antagonism**: conflict of contradictory positions
 - **agonism** (Mouffe): co-existence of contrary positions
 - **synergism**: convergence of complementary (Archer) positions

2 Information Technology and Information Society

2.1 Approaches to society as to determinants

social theory (way of thinking)	sociology of technology approach	how to relate...	
		... technology...	... and society
positivism (reductionism)	technodeterminism (push approach)	independent variable	dependent variable
interpretivism (projectivism)	social constructivism (pull approach)	explanandum/ understanding	explanans/ narrative
postmodernism (disjunctivism)	techno/social dualism	incommensurable fields	
critical thinking (integrativism)	mutual-shaping approach (integrated TA and design)	circular influence: technology shapes society shapes technology	

2.2 Approaches to society as to determinants/values

approaching determinants	approaching values		
	eutopianism	dystopianism	pro-activism
technodeterminism	technological progress = social progress	technological regress = social regress	
social constructivism	social progress = technological progress	social regress = technological regress	
techno/social dualism	technological \neq social development		
mutual-shaping approach	-		techno-social design

2.3 Approaches to information society as to determinants/values

approaching determinants	approaching values		
	eutopianism	dystopianism	pro-activism
technodeterminism	informatisation	virtualisation	
social constructivism	community-building	Orwellisation	
techno/social dualism	decoupling		
mutual-shaping approach	-		designing a Global Sustainable Information Society

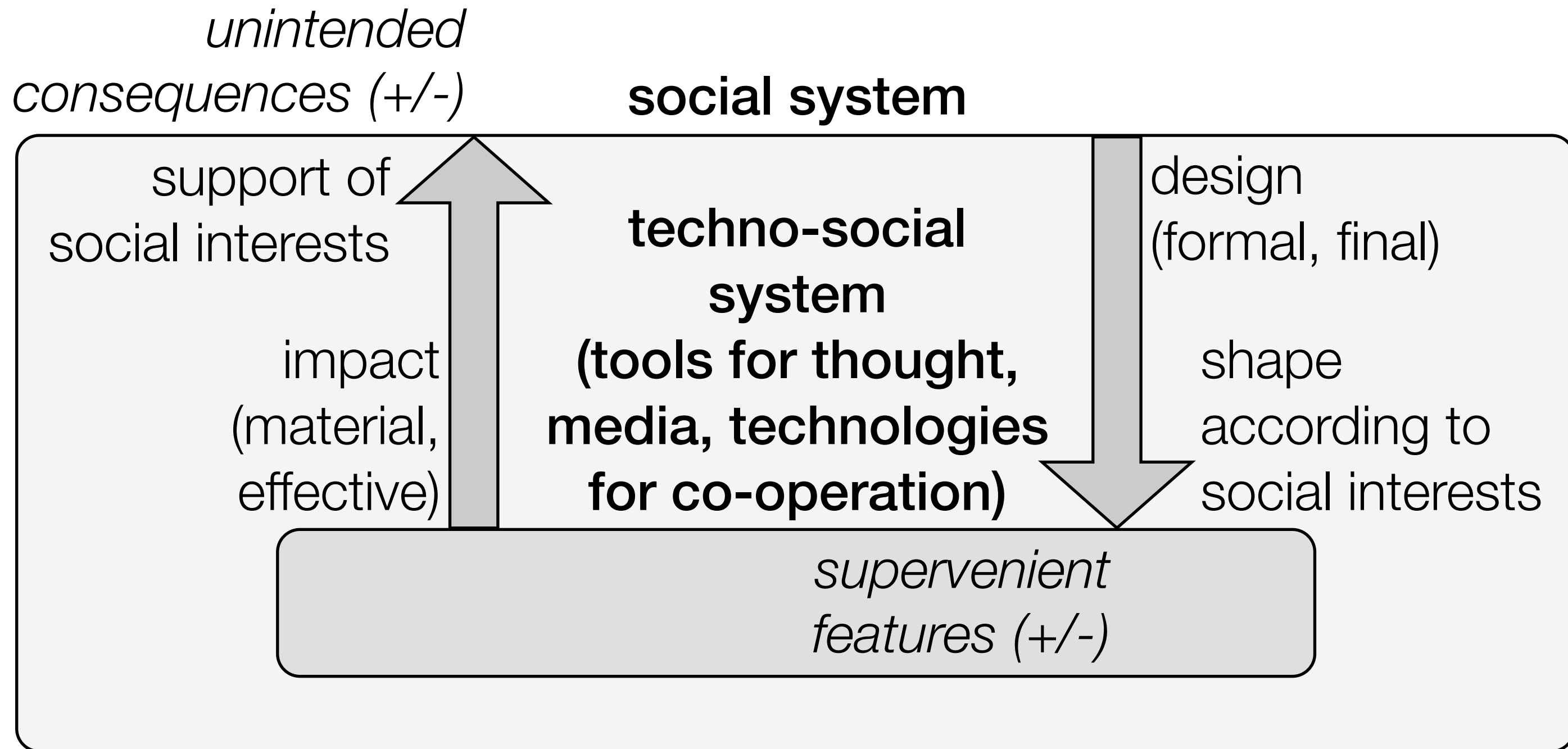
2.3 Approaches to information society as to determinants/values

approaching determinants		approaching values		
		eutopianism	dystopianism	pro-activism
technodeterminism		digitised world	risk and vulnerability	
social constructivism	ecological	spaceship earth	plundered planet	
	economic	cosmopedia	knowledge monopoly	
	political	empowerment	panspectrum/info wars	
	cultural	leisure, fun	disinfotainment	
techno/social dualism		baroque development		-
mutual-shaping approach		-		informed world netizenship

2.3 Approaches to information society as to determinants/values

approaching determinants		approaching values		
		eutopianism	dystopianism	pro-activism
technodeterminism		contradicting theories describing one side of antagonisms		
social constructivism	ecological			
	economic			
	political			
	cultural			
techno/social dualism		theories describing agonistic contraries	-	
mutual-shaping approach		-	unifying theory for synergism	

2.3.1 Mutual-shaping approach to information society



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- **informationalisation** is the process of raising the problem-solving capacity of the nascent world society to a level that allows for successfully tackling the problems that arise from society's own development

2.3.1 Mutual-shaping approach to information society

- informationalisation can, and needs to be, *based upon* **informatisation**, that is, the spread of information and communication technologies that makes society more and more responsive to information, but is *not entailed* by informatisation *per se*
- given antagonisms, informatisation is **ambivalent**: it
 - **reinforces existing social frictions**, quantitatively,
 - **spawns new social frictions**, qualitatively,
 - **provides new means for lowering social frictions**, qualitatively

2.3.1 Mutual-shaping approach to information society

- **thus informatisation has to be tamed so as to be harnessed for informationalisation**
- **informatisation/informationalisation is the generic dynamism in information society;**
it is a **manifestation of the dynamism**
"socialisation" ("Vergesellschaftung")/"individualisation";
however, **antagonisms** turn informatisation into a **perverted**
"socialisation"/"individualisation", hindering proper informationalisation

2.3.1 Mutual-shaping approach to information society

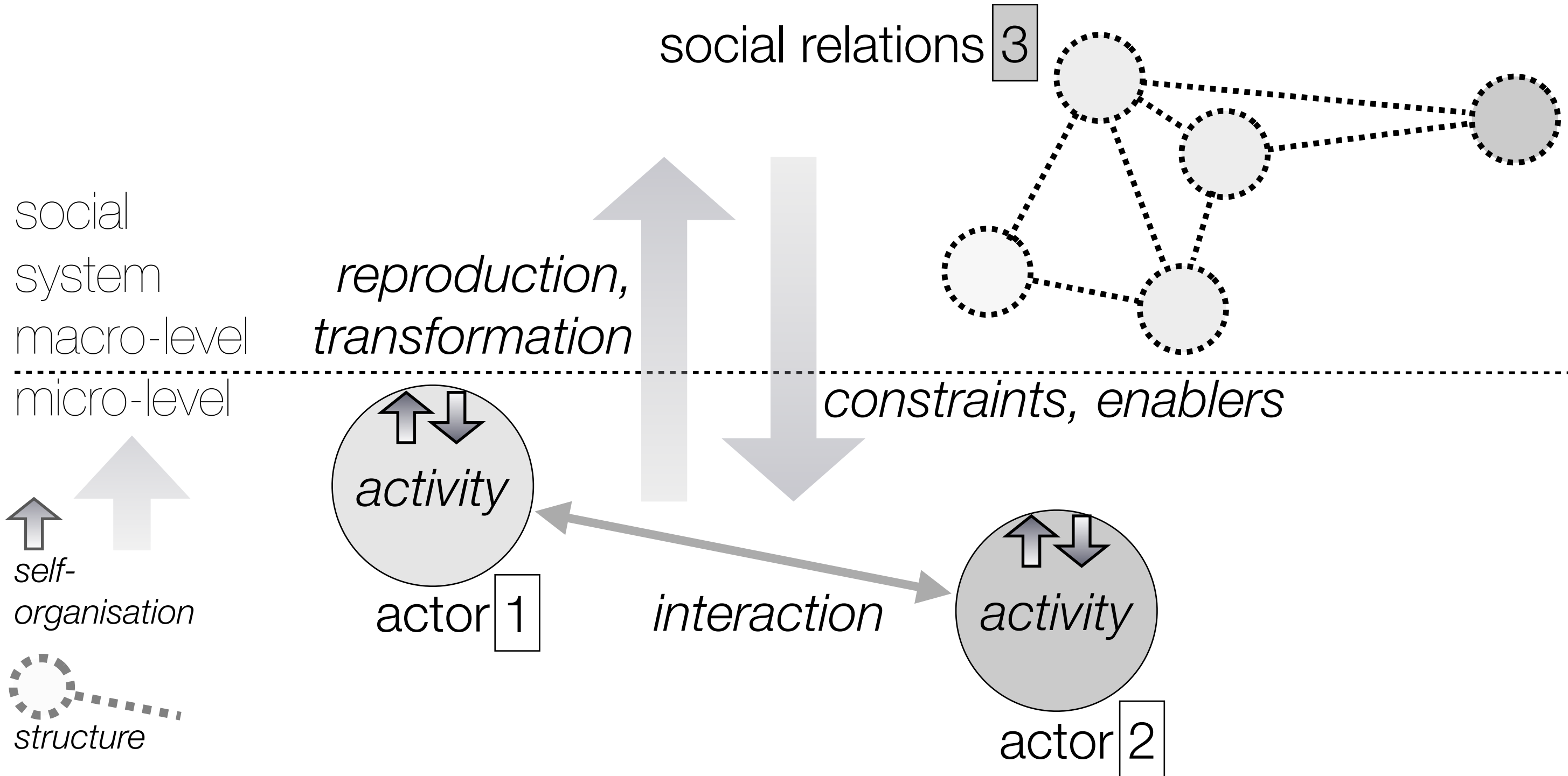
- example Web 2.0: bonding
 - sns allow superficial relations through opting out
- example Web 2.0: collective action
 - spontaneous formation of swarms, crowds etc. faces volatility
 - how institutionalisation of communities of interest etc. can be technologically augmented, still unclear
- example Web 2.0: political consciousness
 - blogosphere etc. does not counterbalance mass media manipulation

3 The overcoming of antagonisms

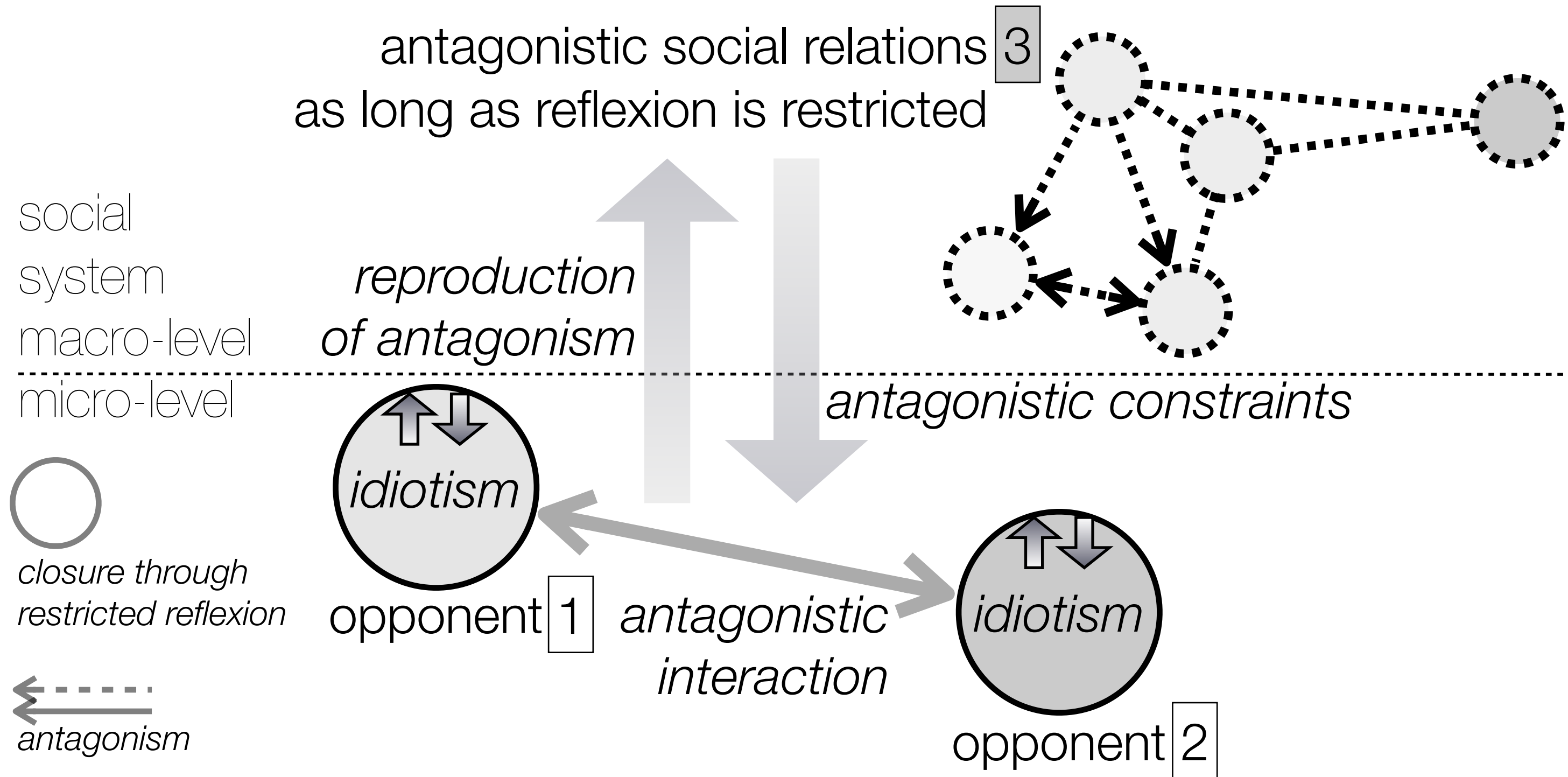
3.1 Three states/stages of reflexivity

	collectivism/ tribalism	individualism/ idiotism	common(al)ism/ new cosmopolitanism
actor–structure dialectic	personifications of a relational "We"	competitive relations of self- regarding "I"s	collectivity ("Us") and individuality ("Me" and "Thee") as holon
social consciousness	myths	ideology of the private	science-based reason for everyday practice
means and ends	not questionable	flexible means for given ends	both means and ends subject to deliberation

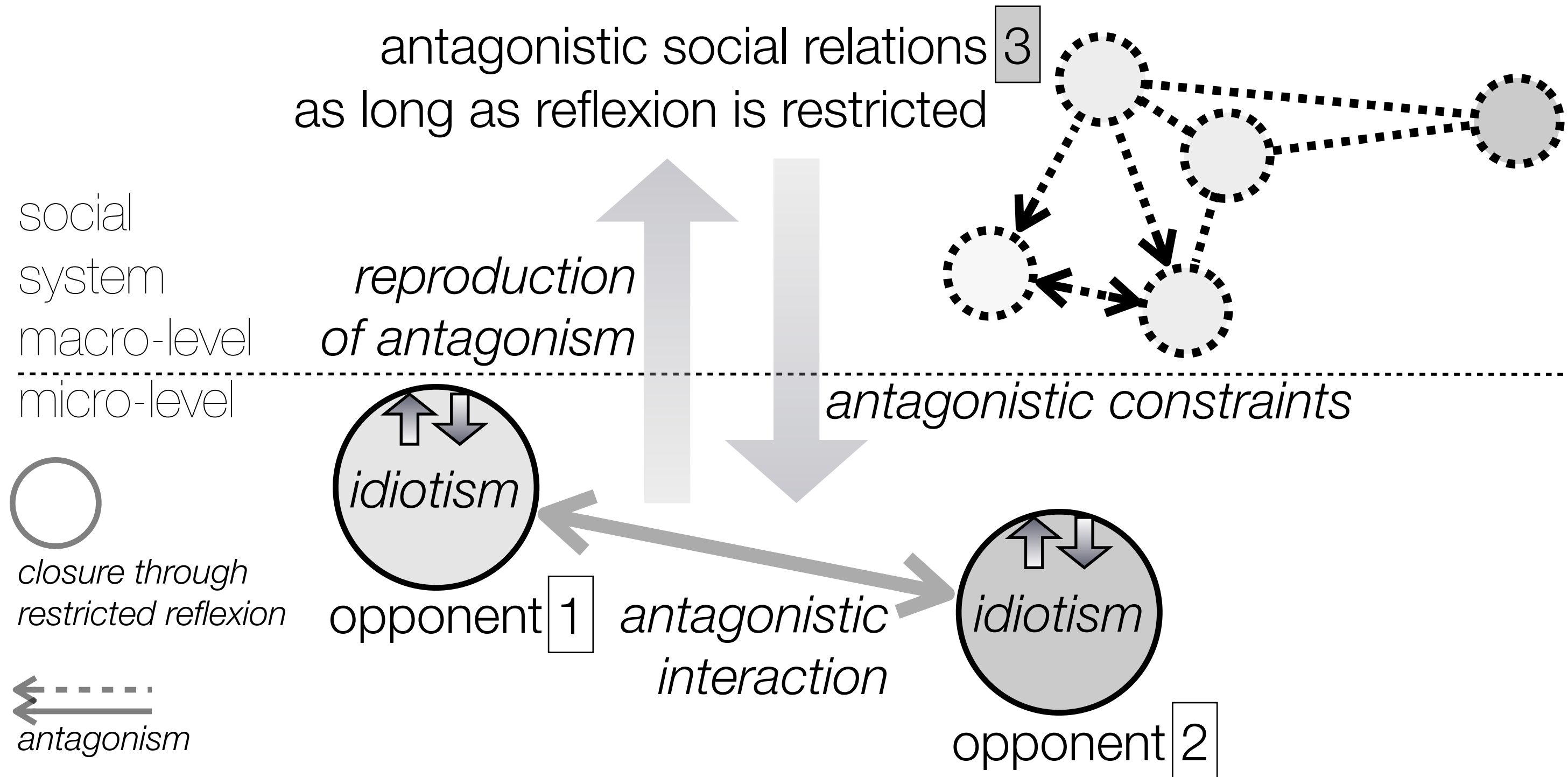
3.2 A dynamism for conflict transformation



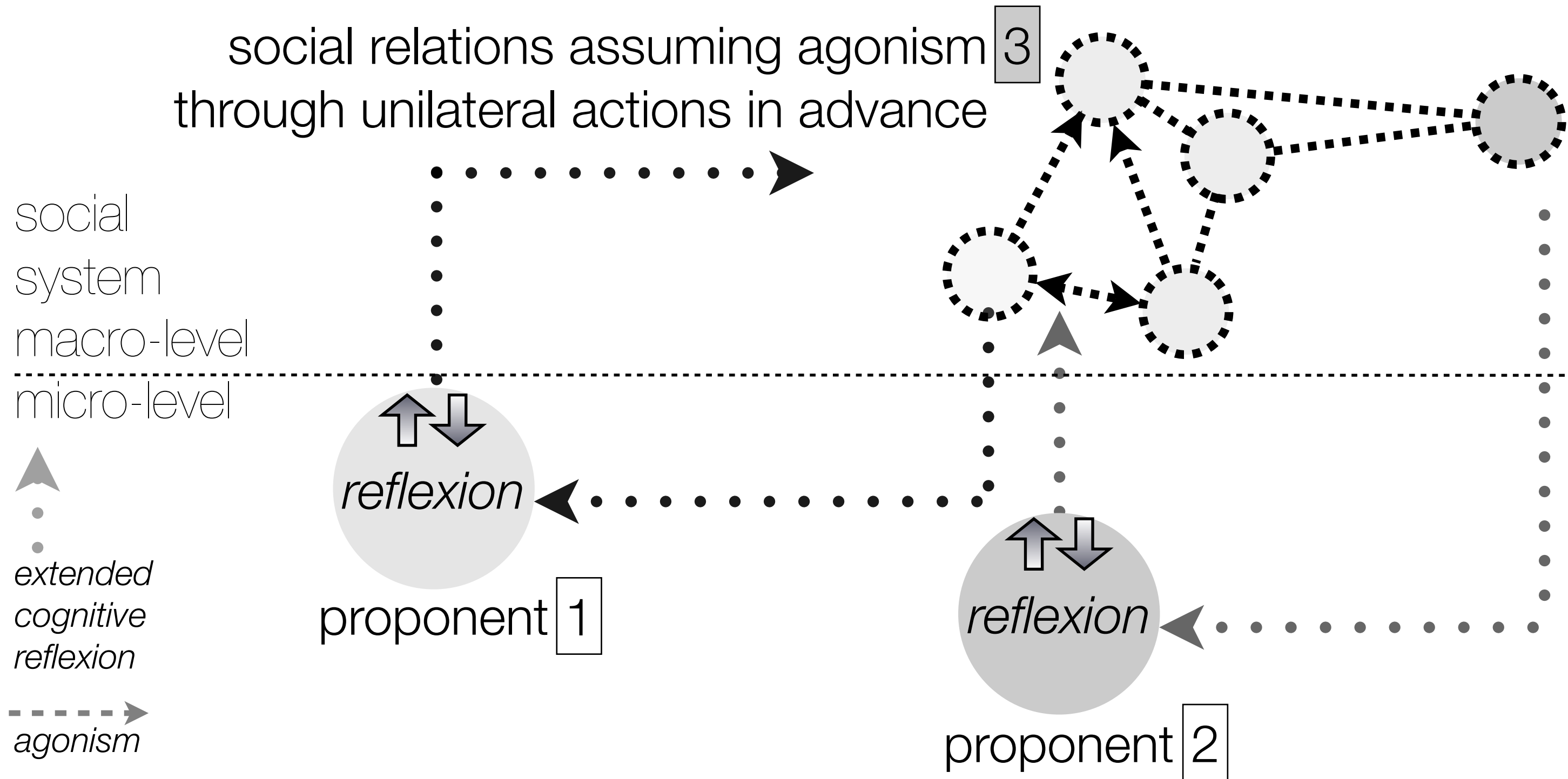
3.2.1 Antagonism: restricted reflexion seals conflicting positions



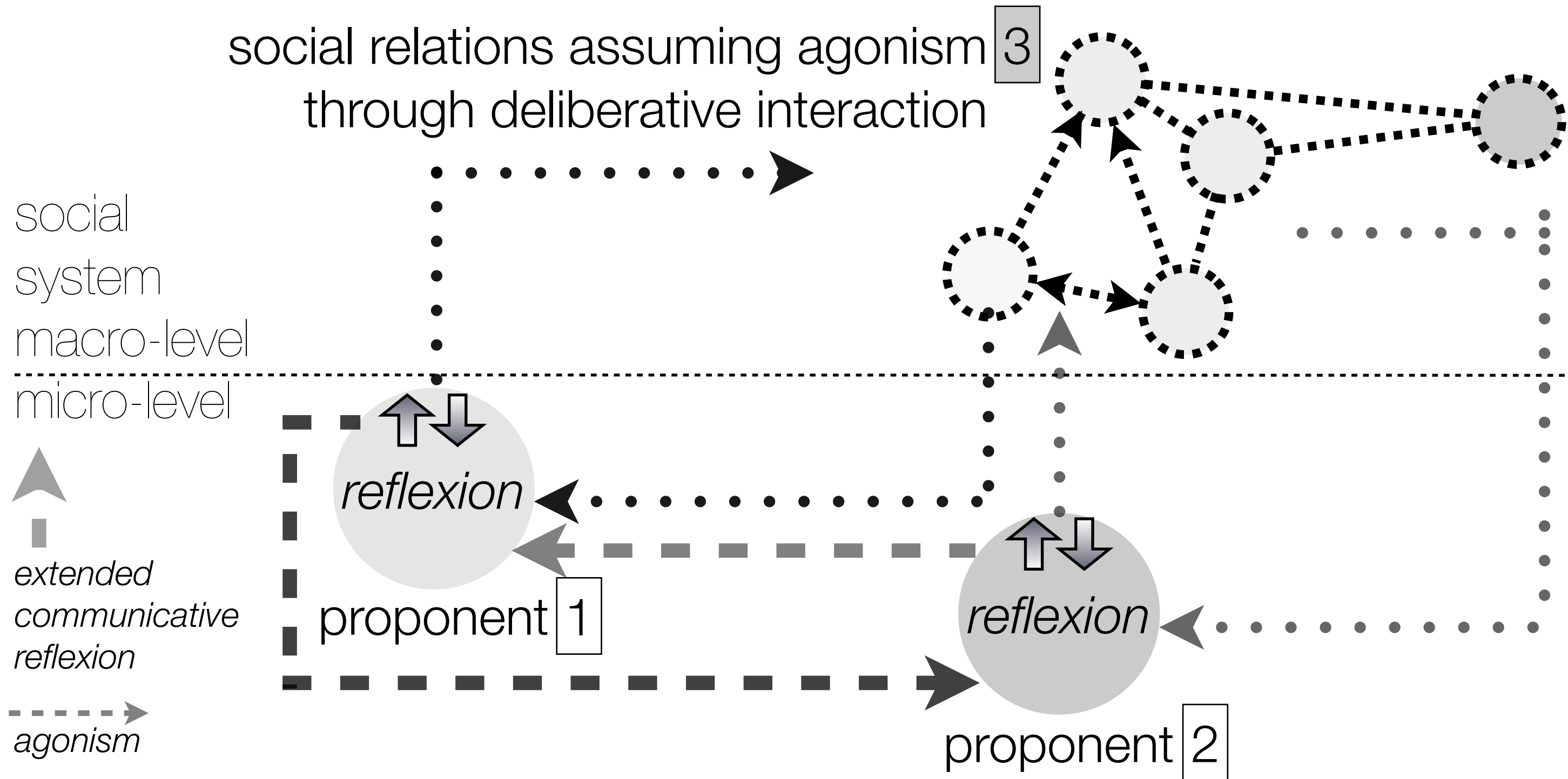
3.2.2 Agonism: extending reflexion allows for co-existing positions



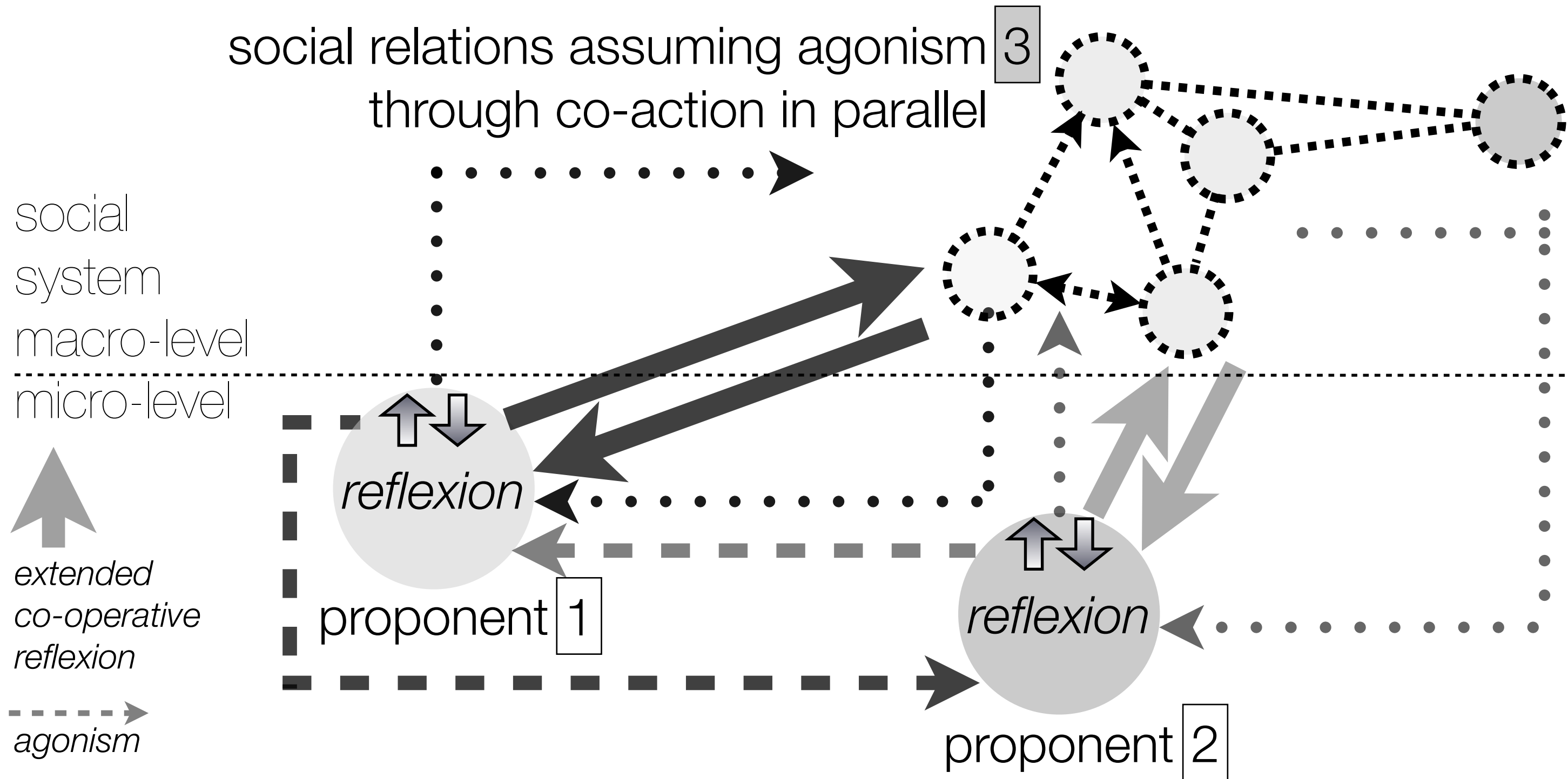
3.2.2.1 Extending cognition



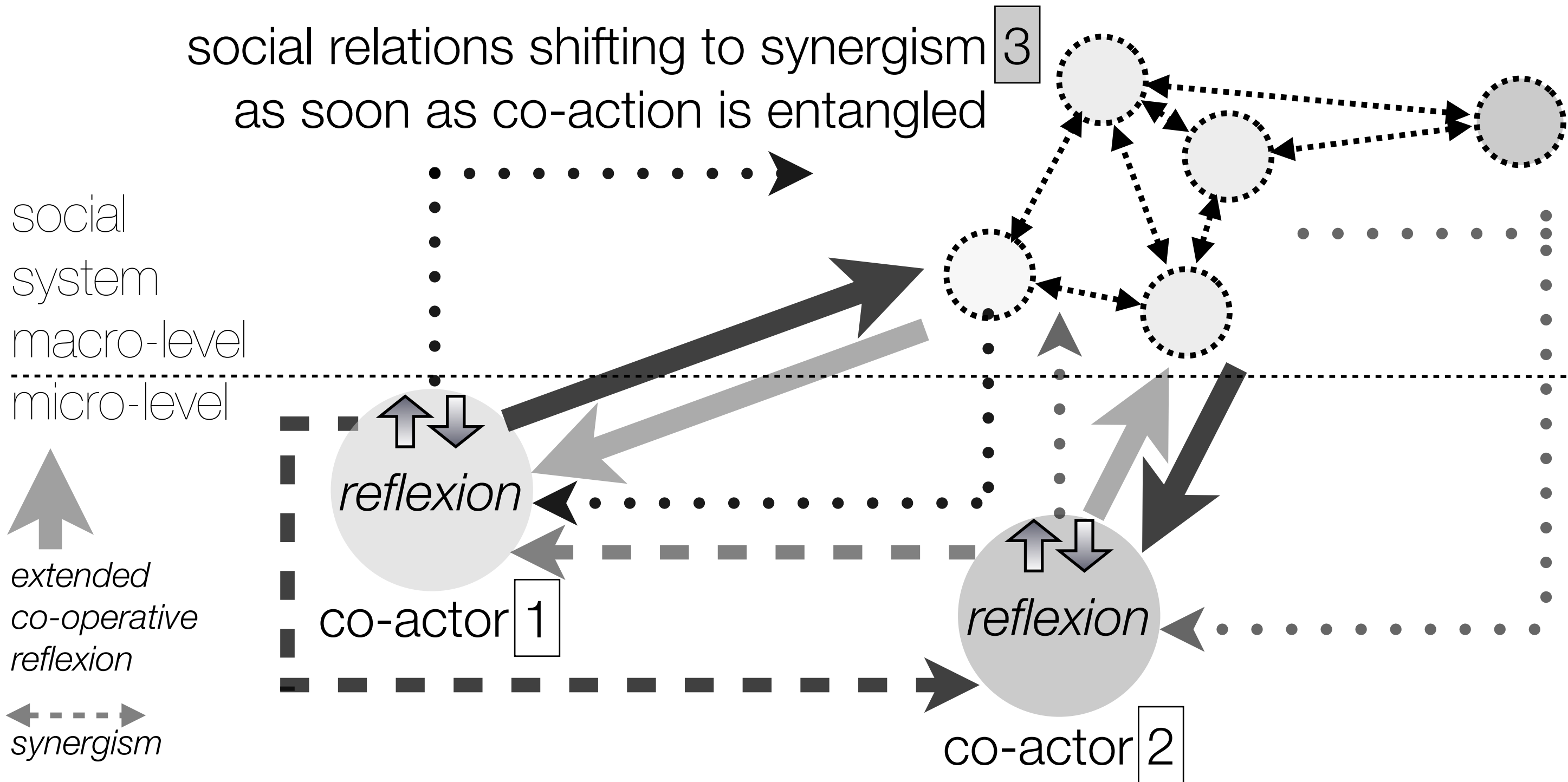
3.2.2.2 Extending communication



3.2.2.3 Extending co-operation



3.2.3 Synergism: extended reflexions foster converging positions



3.2.3 Synergism: extended reflexions foster converging positions

