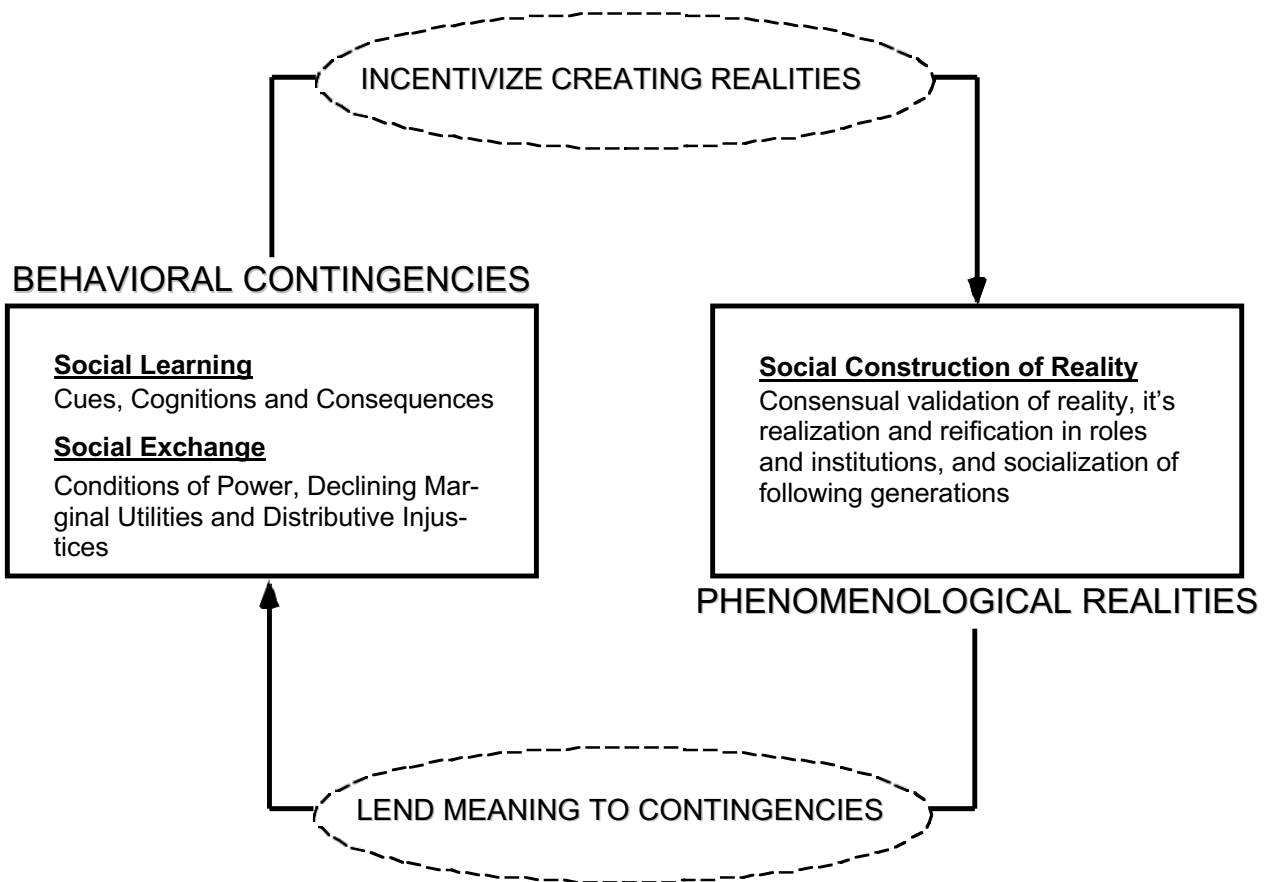


GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

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DIALECTIC OF SOCIAL ACTION



Social action is the outcome of inherent and complementary dialectical interaction of contingencies and ideologies. Contingencies of learning and exchange—people, events, objects, etc., on which action is contingent—are regarded as rewarding or punishing, profitable or costly, according to socially constructed ideologies. For the collective acts of ideology construction to continue, there must be explicit learning and exchange contingencies, such as cues, cognitions, consequences, conditions of power, distributive injustices, etc.

To fully understand social action, then, it must be understood that good and bad events are experienced as such because of ideologies that define their meanings. The source of the ideologies is not a mystery but human construction, either through shared history or shared language experience. The behavior necessary to construct ideologies does not occur without incentives, contingencies of learning and exchange, which in turn are valued by ideologies. It goes round and round: not only are both contingencies and ideologies operative, but they are inseparable, and explanations of social action are incomplete without reference to their dialectical relationship.