

Anthony giddens and his structuration theory

Society



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Anthony Giddens was born on January 8, 1938. He is a British sociologist who is known for his theory of structuration and his holistic view of modern societies. He is considered to be one of the most prominent modern sociologists, the author of at least 34 books, published in at least 29 languages, issuing on average more than one book every year. In 2007, Giddens was listed as the fifth most-referenced author of books in the humanities.

He has served as Director of the London School of Economics in 1997 until 2003. Structure is defined by Giddens as rules and resources, organized as properties of social systems. The theory of structuration is a social theory of the creation and reproduction of social systems that is based in the analysis of both structure and agents without giving primacy to either. In other words, when we communicate with one another, we create structures that range from large social and cultural institutions to smaller individual relationships.

As communicators act strategically according to rules to achieve their goals, they do not realize that they are simultaneously creating forces that return to affect future action. Structures like relational expectations, group roles and norm, communication networks and societal institutions affect social action. But these variables may also both affect and are affected by social action. These structures provide individual with rules that guide their actions, but their action in turn create new rules and reproduce old ones. Figure 1: Variables of the theory. 2.

ORIGINS OF STRUCTURATION THEORY

Sociologist Anthony Giddens adopted a post-empiricist frame for his theory, as he was concerned with the abstract characteristics of social relations. This leaves each level more accessible to analysis via the ontologies which constitute the human social experience: space and time and thus, in one sense, 'history'. His aim was to build a broad social theory which viewed basic domain of study of the social sciences neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time.

His focus on abstract ontology accompanied a general and purposeful neglect of epistemology or detailed research methodology. Giddens used concepts from objectivist and subjectivist social theories, discarding objectivism's focus on detached structures, which lacked regard for humanist elements and subjectivism's exclusive attention to individual or group agency without consideration for socio-structural context. 3.

DUALITY OF STRUCTURE

Structuration theory may be seen as an attempt to resolve a fundamental division within the social sciences between those who consider social phenomena as determined by the influence of objective, exogenous social structures and others who see them as products of the action of human agents in the light of their subjective interpretation of the world. Giddens attempts to square this circle by proposing that structure and agency be viewed, not as independent and conflicting elements, but as a mutually interacting duality.

Social structure is therefore seen as being drawn on by human agents in their actions, while the actions of humans in social contexts serve to produce, and reproduce, the social structure. Structure is thus not simply an exogenous restraining force, but is also a resource to be deployed by humans in their actions, it is enabling as well as disabling. More specifically, Giddens identifies three dimensions of structure, which are signification, domination and legitimation. The three dimensions of interaction are described as communication, power and sanctions.

The means by which structures are translated into actions are called modalities, which are interpretive schemes, facilities and norms as shown in Figure 2. These modalities can explain why and how interaction is affected. Figure 2: Dimensions of the duality of structure, Giddens (1984) For example, as humans communicate, they use interpretive schemes to help them make sense of their interaction; at the same time these interactions change or reproduce the same interpretive schemes that are embedded in structures as signification.

The facility used to allocate resources is manifested in the wielding of power, which in turn produces and reproduces facilities influencing social structures of domination. Norms on the other hand, referred to also as moral codes; provide both understandings and sanctions for human interactions, ultimately also producing legitimation within structures. 4. APPLICATION OF THE THEORY Donald Ellis (1999) shows how ethnicity is entailed in structuration. Ethnicity is a structural arrangement created over time as a result of many local practices throughout the world.

Yet, once created, ethnicity has a life of its own, so that it becomes almost impossible not to see and act in accordance with ethnic experience in some way or another. Well-intentioned people acting in their everyday lives create unintended categories of social structure, which limit what they can do in future interactions. These structures are not necessarily bad, but they can limit the ability to see a range of possibilities for acting in future situations.

2 Communication : Decision making Marshall Scott Poole (1985) and his colleagues have been working for several years on her structural theory of group decision making.

This theory teaches that group decision making is a process in which group members attempt to achieve convergence or agreement on a final decision and in so doing structure their social system. By expressing their opinions and preferences, group members actually produce and reproduce certain rules by which convergence can be achieved or blocked. However, good decision making depends on three sets of variables that are objectives task characteristics, group task characteristics and group structural characteristics.

Figure 3 : Variables of the theory in terms of Group Decision Making. Adaptive structuration Theory Desautels and Poole (2011) adapted Structuration Theory to study the interaction of groups and organizations with information technology, and called it Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST). Adaptive Structuration Theory is formulated as the production and reproduction of the social systems through members' use of rules and resources in interaction. This theory criticizes the technocentric view of technology use and emphasizes the social aspects.

Individual interaction with technology and in the incorporation of personal experiences can dictate outcomes and structural change as well as eventually change the design or use of the technology. The theory could be used to analyze the advent of various innovations such as the printed press, electricity, telegraph, mass transpirations, radio, telephone, TV, the Internet, etc. , and show how the structures of these innovations penetrated the respective societies, influencing them, and how the social structures of those societies in turn influenced and modified innovations original intent. Social media networks were created to provide interpersonal connectivity to its users. Users began utilizing the technology to drive trends through the sharing of experiences with good or bad regarding brands and products or rallying behind the large organizations began following these trends and implemented the cause. Technology used for themselves. This alteration of the technologies use resulted in social networking sites adjusting their design to also meet the need of organizations to connect with consumers. .

CRITICISM

John B. Thompson (said that Structuration theory needed to be more specific and more consistent both internally and with conventional social structure theory. Thompson focused on problematic aspects of Giddens' concept of structure as "rules and resources," focusing on "rules". He argued that Giddens' concept of rule was too broad. Thompson claimed that Giddens presupposed a criterion of importance in contending that rules are a generalizable enough tool to apply to every aspect of human action and interaction.

Waldeck et al. concluded that the theory needs to better predict outcomes, rather than merely explaining them. Decision rules support decision-making,

which produces a communication pattern that can be directly observable. Research has not yet examined the "rational" function of group communication and decision-making (i.e., how well it achieves goals), nor structural production or constraints. Rob Stones argued that many aspects of Giddens's original theory had little place in its modern manifestation.

Stones focused on clarifying its scope, reconfiguring some concepts and inserting new ones, and refining methodology and research orientations.

Strong structuration are: 1. Places its ontology more in situ than abstractly.

2. Introduces the quadripartite cycle, which details the elements in the duality of structure. These are: - External structures as conditions of action; - Internal structures within the agent; Active agency, "including a range of aspects involved when agents draw upon internal structures in producing practical action" and - Outcomes (as both structures and events). 3.

Increases attention to epistemology and methodology. Ontology supports epistemology and methodology by prioritising: - The question-at-hand; - Appropriate forms of methodological bracketing; - Distinct methodological steps in research; and - The specific combinations of all the above in composite forms of research. 4. Discovers the meso-level of ontology between the abstract, philosophical level of ontology and the in-situ, ontic level. Strong structuration allows varied abstract ontological concepts in experiential conditions. 5. Focuses on the meso-level at the temporal and spatial scale. . Conceptualises independent causal forces and irresistible causal forces, which take into account how external structures, internal structures, and active agency affect agent choices (or lack of them).

" Irresistible forces" are the connected concepts of a horizon of action with a set of " actions-in-hand" and a hierarchical ordering of purposes and concerns. An agent is affected by external influences. This aspect of strong structuration helps reconcile an agent's dialectic of control and his/her more constrained set of " real choices. As a conclusion, in structuration theory, neither micro nor macro focused analysis alone are sufficient. The theory most significantly in the constitution of society, which examines phenomenology, hermeneutics, and social practices at the inseparable intersection of structures and agents. Its proponents have adopted and expanded this balanced position. Though the theory has received much criticism

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