

Analysis of giddens on agency and structure sociology essay



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Anthony Giddens, a famous writer on society, had developed his thoughts in his books year after year. His book titled, *Constitution of Society*, written in the year 1986, has led him far ahead to achieve his goals. Each of the chapter, in this book; has covered the agency and structure theory and proposes good statements (Giddens, 1986). The author has clearly described what he means with the agency term. He has also given due focus on time and the social actions for space. The discussion on the ways of handling different norms by the people, and the social constraints that exists in the society, are done as well. In addition, he uses empirical research in his book to elaborate further the aspects associated with structure and agency within the society.

The text thus discusses the routine practice, which becomes a social act as a principle of duality for the agency- structure relationship. It aims to understand what the strength areas covered in the text is. Additionally, weaker sections are also given consideration. Thus, the report here discusses about various aspects of relationship that exists between agency and structure. The notion of duality by the author is considered too, with due focus on the book ' *Constitution of Society*', by Giddens. The notion of studies done to relate the two terms is also covered within the scope of this report. Furthermore, the researchers involved to explore the term are also discussed hereon. This helps in understanding the extent to which both the terms are integrated in this society. These all have helped to reach to certain outcomes of the report at the end.

Discussion

Agency and structure have been termed as indispensable parts in the social context. These terms are required to relate at one or the other instance.

Agency is termed as the capability of individuals to generate wide variety of powers in causal term, while the structure is the set of rules and regulations existing within the society (Frohlich et al., 2001). The relationship between these two instances is yet to explore. Some of the researchers stand in the point, that the two terms inter- relate in themselves, while others consider these as different terms.

There does not exist, any discussion of relationship between structure and agency in real terms (Macintyre, 1997; Frohlich et al., 2002) according to some of the researchers. While others state that, these structure and agency are considered as co- dependent and recursive in nature (Nussbaum and Sen, 1993; Sen, 1992). This clearly demonstrates how conflicting the terms are in social context. There is no generalized thought in this arena, instead complete satisfaction and dissatisfaction is noted for the question at hand. This needs to be further explored to understand the concepts associated with the terms. There are different contexts, which integrates the agency and structure. Structural forces are the main determinants for the relationship between agency and structure (Williams, 2003). Thus, the structural forces shall be considered in discussion to understand the concept associated with the terms. This might also help in exploring the text by Giddens in a better manner. Although, in his writings, the discussion of structural forces is missed, he has attempted to use time and geography as basic parameters in his studies.

There are number of authors who studied about the relationship of agency and structure (Musolf, 2003; Callinicos, 2004), however the work done by Giddens is important to note in his books such as Constitution of the Society (1986). Most of the writers believed that agency and structure are different terms; however, Giddens consider them as similar. Giddens consider these two as different ways to look one thing. Researchers contribute to routine activities, i. e. those that take place in a similar manner for continuation. Routine activities are considered as social for the organization, as these activities occur in regular fashion. This regular fashion further becomes the set of rules for the society. These rules act as the social orders for an organization.

Giddens also consider that time and space results into organizing us in a better manner. Time and place are being considered as important aspects not only for the agency but also for the structure of society. The author considers the time as an aspect, which affects the routine practices. Proper time management is helpful in attaining good routine activities. Thus, author lays focus on right use of time to obtain maximum outcomes. In case one wishes to generate results, there is the need to perform with dual nature. The collaborated approach of using structure and agency is required at such instances. This would entail proper use of time management technique to minimize the wastage of social time. The author thus lays importance on the time. Time is the aspect that demonstrates routine activities. Time is an indispensable part for one's life. He considers people to utilize properly the daily schedule, to make optimal use of time. In case one does not use time in a proper manner, it might result in losses of one's routine plan.

Giddens also discussed about the consequences attached with improper use of time management. In case, one does not use the time in a proper manner, it affects the routine activities of an individual. However, if one wishes to work on his knowledge, he can act well in this arena. This affects the agency structure by the mismatch that generates due to lack of control on structure concerned of an entity.

For the society to develop with its full potential, it shall discuss the relation between structure and agency (Hay and Wincott, 1998). This shall not be ignored. Giddens had worked to elaborate the point further. However, his writings were not able to describe clearly the point due to lack of clarity in his thought process. His attempt to contribute to agency structure relationship was though worth noting, but for a new reader, it becomes a point of confusion. Giddens, in his book named as Constitution of Society, had not given any clear definition of the terms considered in his writings. The content seems tough to be understood by a reader who has not gone through the previous writings of the author. Thus, it necessitates the basic concept to be clarified, before going through the book.

The relation between agency and structure is always at perennial (6). It is not a one-time process. The author thus attempted to describe the relationship considering the time-geography too. This was in line with the time management of the author. This demonstrates the importance of time, and its relation to the geographic unit. The ways geographical parameters change with time are also discussed. Additionally, the variation of structure and agency with different time and geographic locations is considered in the study as well.

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This relationship between agency and structure is also well studied by researchers such as Rothstein and Hall (1993), Thelen, and Steinmo (1992). This is the reason, many researchers attempted to explore the relationship. However, the complexity associated with them in social context has acted as a hurdle to describe the two characteristics. Giddens further followed the tradition in his writings. He was unable to thoroughly explore the relationship between the two terms. The agency and structure were not thoroughly discussed in his writings. The discussion on duality of these terms was there though; the basic concepts associated with them were not described. Thus, on looking other side of the coin, we can see that the book of Giddens lacks in clearly describing the duality and social practice concept. It does not describe the ways in which practices are constituted, the way in which it relates social system etc. The book also misses practice concept, which is important to attain sustainable analysis. Thus, the book is tough to understand for someone, who has not read previous books of the author. It directly summarizes the duality structure for understanding the agency-structure relationship. This way, he created a sort of confusion situation in the minds of readers who have not read his previous writings. For an individual to understand the text by Giddens it becomes mandatory to understand the basic concepts associated with the topic; else, it would become tough for them to understand the discussion done in his writings. The authors lacks in discussing the reason, why people want certain things. It just discusses the wants of people. The subject here is constituted in a social manner. There is also the discussion laid that wants arise from the needs, which are related to ontological security. The theory discusses the way individuals can achieve proper results using the agents.

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Thus, the concept of agency- structure relationship has always been a tough task. It is with not only Giddens, but also the researchers such as Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) had failed to establish a relationship between these two characteristics of society in the daily life of the world. There is thus the need to understand the basic concepts in hand. The social context, with reference to time is to be understood at initial stages. This would help in creating a framework for the point at hand, and the integration of these two characteristics of society will be done in a better manner. The research in today's life is exploring further the structure and relationship and the behavioural pattern (Williams, 1995). These further explorations are expected to help the society in analyzing these duality and routine practices in the right manner. There would be lack of clarity, and the outcomes will be with a stronger research background. Thus, the main point of confusion exists to know the relationship between structure and agency (Gerhardt, 1979), which if explored by the researchers, can lead to attain certain outcomes, which would help us in further understanding the concept at hand. This would entail the need to use proper time management techniques. The weak background of Giddens shall not be over- focused, but shall be given an opportunity of further exploration using the basic concepts at hand, to reach to the outcomes. This would help us to attain the results at a greater pace, and with clear outcomes, which does not have conflicting situations, as at present.

Conclusion

On considering the notion of duality and the social practice of relationship between agency and structure, we have come up with some important

findings. We can interpret that the writings of Giddens are quite conflicting at certain instances. These act as the constraining and enabling at the same time. At certain instances, Giddens talk about the practical aspect of life. He considers time as real and factual to work out on the life. However, at other instances assumptions are encouraged by the author. This raises the problem of lack of clarity in his thought process. Additionally, the complexity involved with the writings of Giddens, enforce one to go through the basic concepts, prior to reading the text under review.

Thus, there was a mixed approach obtained. At some instances, it was noted that the structure and agency are well integrated with each other, while at others there was noted the lack of control and dependency of one characteristic on the other. This mixed approach has resulted in further elaboration of the associated concepts, which would help in understanding the point. Else, it would be tough to understand this text in hand, with lack of control over the text and lack of clarity by the author. The basic concepts can however be of great help in understanding the concept at hand, and the associated relationship. Thus, overall the text was a good collection of data, but lacks clarity and mandates the reader to go through basic concepts, prior to going through the text at hand. This way, one would be able to understand the associated characteristics in a better manner.