

Structuration Theory

Anthony Giddens

Central Problems in Social Theory (1979)

The Constitution of Society (1984)

Who is Giddens?

- Anthony Giddens (1938- ,) British sociologist.
- Professor at the University of Cambridge
- Director of the London School of Economics.
- Cofounder of Polity Press
- Advisor to the British Labour Party and Tony Blair

Focus of Structuration Theory

- Agency
- Duality of structure - members of an organization depend on both rules and resources to guide their actions.
- Unintended consequences

Produced and reproduced

- The social environment is **created and re-created** by the behaviors that humans choose to engage in during their involvement in groups.
- Produced and reproduced

Macro interrelated to Micro

- Macro- large
- Marriage example
- sexuality (micro-level change) are associated with the decline of religion and the rise of rationality (macro-level change), but also with changes in the laws relating to marriage and sexuality (macro), demand for which came from the level of everyday lives (micro). These, in turn, had been affected by the social movements of women's liberation and egalitarianism (macro); which themselves had grown out of dis-satisfactions within everyday life (micro).[

Systems

- Systems are "patterns of relations in groupings of all kinds, from small, intimate groups, to social networks, to large organizations" (p. 131).
- "enduring cycles of reproduced relations" (p. 131)

Rules

- Procedural rules – how the practice is performed. Ethnomethodology analyzes these. Give and take of encounters, language rules, walking in a crowd.
- Moral rules – appropriate forms of enactment of social action. Laws, what is permissible and what is not. Not ultimate values, but appropriate ways of carrying out social action and interaction. Durkheim emphasized the importance of these.
- Material resources – allocation of resources among activities and members of society. Means of production, commodities, income, consumer and capital goods. Marxian analysis demonstrates the inequalities associated with allocation.
- Resources of authority. Formal organizations, how time and space are organized, production and reproduction, social mobility, legitimacy and authority. Weber analyzed the latter issues in the context of power and its exercise

Adaptive Structuration Theory: Poole, Seibold, and McPhee (1985)

- Examines the process of group decision making.
- Objective factors are attributes associated with the task. Examples include whether information is easily understood, guidelines are clearly stated, and moral implications associated with a decision are discussed.
- Group-task factors involve the resources that a group has available for accomplishing the task or goal (e.g., does the group have the financial backing to support the proposal?).
- Group-structural factors involve how the structure or organization of a group will impact its decisions (e.g., does the structure promote majority rule?).

Adaptive Structuration Theory

