Appointed director of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in 1997, Anthony Giddens was previously a Fellow and Professor of Sociology at King's College, Cambridge.

He is the author of 34 books, published in 29 languages, and numerous articles and reviews. In 1985, he co-founded the academic publishing house Polity Press.

More recently, Dr. Giddens has been an advisor to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, helping in popularizing the ideas of left-of-center politics known as the "Third Way." (The Globalist, 2004)
Rooted in social theory

Creator of structuration theory

Making an impact on the world
STRUCTURATION THEORY

‘The basic domain of ... the social sciences ... is neither the experience of the individual actor nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across time and space. Human activities are recursive. ... They are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities as agents, they reproduce the conditions that make their activities possible’ (C of S, 1984: 2)

‘According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise... Structure is not to be equated with constraint, but is always both constraining and enabling’ (C of S, 1984: 25)
CONCEPTS OF STRUCTURATION THEORY

Agency: the capability to make a difference to the world, i.e. to exercise some sort of power, reliant on knowledgeable, competent human actors

Structure(s): rules (routines, norms) and resources (material, authoritative), organized as properties of social systems

System(s): reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organized as regular social practices; under modernity, plural and open

Structuration: conditions governing the continuity or transmutation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of social systems
CONTRIBUTIONS OF STRUCTURATION THEORY

- ‘third way’ between voluntarism and determinism, important to strategic choice

- respect for competent human agency, relevant for methodology

- multi-level, recognising the embeddedness of human actors in wider society
TWO STRUCTURATIONIST STUDIES


Comparative ethnography of two hospital radiology departments implementing the same new scanner technologies, demonstrating qualitatively and statistically similar dynamics, but different outcomes in terms of centralisation.


Comparative case studies of Taiwanese computer entrepreneurs, explaining strategic choices in terms of reflexive exploitation of rules and resources afforded by positions in plural social systems (‘technological’, ‘political’ and ‘national’).
SOME QUESTIONS

1. How does Giddens add to (or subtract from) other theorists of practice?

2. How far does ‘strategy-as-practice’ incorporate Giddens’ dual attention to the ‘micro’ and the ‘macro’?

3. What kinds of methodologies does Giddens mandate (or rule out)?

4. Does Giddens license an exaggerated view of managerial agency?
FURTHER READING


Parker J (2000), Structuration, Open University Press
