



# Structuration and Convergence Theory

*Julia L. Modenbach*

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Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject Communications - Theories, Models, Terms and Definitions, grade: 1,3 (A), University of Erfurt (Communication Science), course: Intercultural Communication, 10 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: The main representant of Structuration Theory is Anthony Giddens who developed the idea of structuration in his book "The Constitution of Society" written in 1984. The theory wants to explain the ways in which social systems are produced and reproduced in social interaction. In contrast to other social theories, structuration theory claims to explain the relationship between the micro-societal and the macro-societal level. Giddens says that social life is not only explained by individual actions but can on the other hand neither be explained only by looking on macro-level social force. The central proclamation of structuration theory is that the repetition of individual acts reproduces social structures. This means, individuals act on the micro level in order to accomplish their intentions, but these actions have "unintended consequences of establishing structures that affect our future actions" (Littlejohn, 2002: 152). Like this, human beings can modify these structures by replacing them or reproducing the structures in a different way. Thus, structuration means studying the reproduction of individual face-to-face interactions on the societal level.

The reproductions of the structures is illustrated by Giddens' so called "stratification model of the agent". At first, there is the motivation of the action, the reason why the agent acts. In the rationalization process, the agent adapts his action to his general theoretical understanding of the basis of his activity. Reflexive monitoring of action means that individuals monitor continuously and routinely the social and physical contexts of their actions and the actions themselves. But this monitoring cannot prevent that the actions has some unintended consequences. These can modify the structures the action was placed in and then lead to new unacknowledged conditions of the action. These new conditions influence the following actions and like this close the continuous circle.

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