

Exploring Political Socialization through the Lens of Giddens' Structuration Theory

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Abstract

Socialization is a fundamental process for the dissemination and comprehension of ideas, essential for maintaining and strengthening societal structures. It involves the exchange of values, beliefs, and perspectives, ensuring that these ideas are understood and valued within a community. This process also integrates individuals into social groups, fostering familiarity and acceptance among members. This study explores political socialization through the lens of Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory, which emphasizes the duality of structure and agency. By examining the interplay between social structures and individual actions, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how political norms and practices are produced and reproduced. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method, specifically the Literature Study Method, to trace theoretical details and provide an analytical focus on political socialization and Structuration Theory. The findings highlight that political socialization is a complex process influenced by various agents such as family, education systems, media, and political institutions, which shape individuals' political identities and behaviors. Moreover, Giddens' Structuration Theory elucidates that social structures both constrain and enable political actions, emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their social contexts. This study contributes to our understanding of how political socialization mechanisms contribute to societal stability and change by elucidating how individuals navigate and negotiate political structures through their everyday practices and interactions.

Keywords: *Giddens' Structuration Theory, Individuals, Political Socialization.*

INTRODUCTION

Socialization serves as a cornerstone for the dissemination and comprehension of ideas, essential for preserving and fortifying societal structures. It encompasses the exchange of values, beliefs, thoughts, and observations, ensuring these ideas are understood and valued by others (Arikan, 2023). Through socialization, individuals communicate their perspectives, which ultimately enhances their relevance and acceptance within a community.

Moreover, socialization plays a crucial role in integrating individuals into social groups, fostering familiarity and acceptance among community members. This process is not only about sharing ideas but also about marketing these ideas, making them more valuable and influential within the societal framework (Irwin et al., 2023). The dynamics of socialization are complex, involving various forms of communication and interaction that help individuals adapt to and navigate their social environments.

In the realm of politics, socialization is particularly significant. Politics serves as the bedrock of societal life, providing a platform where ideas and dialectics find their place. The absence of socialization in politics would render societal structures incomplete, as the acceptance of ideas, manifestos, and the expansion of influence heavily rely on political socialization. Political socialization is the mechanism through which individuals and groups develop political attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, contributing to the shaping of public opinion and political culture (Akbar et al., 2022; Adam et al., 2024).

Furthermore, understanding the process of political socialization involves examining the various agents and institutions that play a role in this process. Families, educational systems, media, peer groups, and political institutions all contribute to shaping an individual's political perceptions and behaviors (Deng et al., 2024; Suma et al., 2023). By analyzing these factors, we can gain a deeper insight into how political socialization influences societal stability and change.

This study aims to explore "How to Read Political Socialization in View of Anthony Giddens' Structuration

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Theory," delving into the intricate relationship between socialization and political structures, and how these interactions shape societal dynamics. Giddens' Structuration Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the duality of structure and agency in the context of political socialization. By applying this theoretical lens, we can better understand how individuals and institutions interact to produce and reproduce political norms and practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Socialization

According to Hooghe, (2022) political socialization is the process through which individuals acquire political knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviors, playing a crucial role in shaping how people understand and engage with political systems and institutions. This process is continuous, starting from early childhood and continuing throughout an individual's life, influencing their political identity and participation. Key aspects of political socialization include the internalization of societal norms, values, and beliefs, which help individuals understand and accept the political culture of their society. Social norms related to politics are transmitted through various agents, ensuring that individuals learn what is expected of them in terms of political behavior and attitudes. Additionally, political socialization involves the formation of political identity, shaped by factors such as family, education, peer groups, media, and significant life events (Çiçek, 2023; Kuznetsov, 2024; Weda et al., 2022). This political identity influences how individuals perceive political issues, parties, and candidates, affecting their political participation and voting behavior.

The process of political socialization is influenced by several key agents, including family, education systems, peer groups, media, and political institutions and leaders. Families often serve as the first and most influential agents, shaping early political beliefs and attitudes (Pachina et al., 2022; Junaid et al., 2024). Schools provide formal education about political systems, history, and civic responsibilities, promoting critical thinking and political engagement. Friends and social groups influence political attitudes and behaviors, particularly during adolescence and early adulthood.

Giddens' Structuration Theory

Giddens' Structuration Theory, developed by the renowned sociologist Anthony Giddens, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between individuals (agents) and the social structures in which they operate. Unlike traditional theories that emphasize either the dominance of structures over individuals or the primacy of individual actions in shaping society, Giddens' theory posits a duality where both elements are interdependent and mutually influential. According to Giddens (1979), social structures are not merely external constraints on human behavior but are also the medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. This means that while structures shape the actions of individuals, these actions simultaneously produce and reproduce the structures. This duality is central to understanding how societal norms, rules, and resources are maintained and transformed through everyday practices.

The core of Structuration Theory lies in its analytical focus on the interplay between agency and structure. Giddens argues that individuals possess the capability to act independently and make choices, but these actions are always situated within pre-existing social structures that provide the context and conditions for their actions. This perspective emphasizes that social practices, which are organized across time and space, are the primary units of analysis in social theory. The theory also introduces key concepts such as "rules" and "resources," which are seen as the properties of structures that agents draw upon in their interactions. Additionally, Giddens highlights the importance of "duality of structure," where structures are both the medium and outcome of the practices they organize, and "reflexivity," where individuals continually monitor and adjust their actions based on the social context. By integrating these elements, Giddens' Structuration Theory offers a dynamic view of social life, where stability and change are understood as ongoing processes emerging from the complex interplay between human agency and structural conditions.

View Structuration Theory in General

The Structuration theory is a sociology theory proposed by a renowned English sociologist, Antony Giddens,

whose biography is briefly described in (Ashaf, 2006): "Anthony Giddens is a world-class social scientist and a permanent sociology lecturer at the University of Cambridge. Giddens is also an extraordinary and honorary guest lecturer in many large tertiary institutions spanning five continents. Giddens' achievements include being a world-class social scientist, successful administrator, a businessman and a person with political and interpersonal skills".

Structuration theory is an analytical tool that looks into the social practices that determine the reciprocal relations between structures and individuals (Sarason et al., 2006; Abbas et al., 2023). This theory is not limited to the conflict between structural determinism and individual determinism. This structural determinism emphasizes that structures are more dominant over individuals. Therefore, social actors, or individuals, are only a shadow of their structure. Meanwhile, the individual/actor determinism or school of thought believes that individuals are more dominant than structures. Structures were put in place in order to accommodate the interests of individuals. This was further reiterated in Ritzer (2012) and Sandfort & Moulton (2020), that the core of the Structuration theory in regard to social practices is a theory of the relationship between agency and structure. Structure and agency are therefore deemed an inseparable entity, like two sides of the same coin. According to Giddens' terms, they are referred to as a duality. All social actions include structures, and all structures include social actions. Agencies and structures are interrelated and inseparable in sustainable human activities or practices.

Furthermore, it was added in Nashir (2012) and Wiendijartia et al., (2020), that "Structuration sees community life as important, especially when its action and structure are considered. The references are related to how a social structure is produced, reproduced, changed and reformed in and through practice. The understanding of structuration is connected with structure duality and its concept, where they are produced and reproduced by human and social actions.

Method and Sources of Data

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method to elucidate the essence of political socialization within the framework of Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory. The primary approach used is the Literature Study Method. This comprehensive approach aims to trace theoretical details and provide an analytical focus on political socialization and Structuration Theory. The Literature Study Method, often referred to as a literature review, involves systematically identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research and theoretical contributions relevant to the topic. (Rowley & Slack, 2004) To source these documents, this research explored journal articles and research materials available on platforms such as Google Scholar, the Indonesian National Library's database, Google Books, and E-Resources Perpustnas.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This research aims to explore the comprehensive scope of political socialization by focusing on its pivotal role in the internalization of social norms and its profound significance in shaping human and social interactions. By delving into the mechanisms through which individuals acquire identities and become active members of society, guided by established norms, rules, and relationships, this study seeks to shed light on the multifaceted nature of political socialization. Additionally, it aims to understand how political socialization can be analyzed through the lens of Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory, which emphasizes the duality of structure and agency in political contexts. This involves examining the reciprocal relationship between social structures and individual actions, and how this interplay influences the dynamics of political phenomena.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Political Socialization

Political socialization centers on an exhaustive description of the scope of socialization. As stated in Abercrombie et al. (2010) and Grusec (2011), the socialization process is conceptualized in two ways: a) socialization as an internalization of social norms, and b) socialization as a basic element of human and social interaction.

Without socialization, social interaction will be rendered ineffective. Socialization is absolute in the dynamics of the community. Social position can be achieved by the influence of socialization. Scruton (2007) describes socialization as a process through which an individual obtains an identity, ultimately making them an active member of society and, therefore, a social creature guided by norms, rules, and the ability to relate with other members of society. In politics, socialization means the transfer of a political manifesto, which begins as an individual domain to be accepted by society.

Internalization is one of the key aspects of socialization. It signifies a general acceptance of the community value system in individuals. Internalization is mainly a learning process, and as Airlangga (2014) states:

"Socialization involves a learning process that is itself a form of accommodation process where individuals maintain and change the ideologies in themselves. During internalization, individuals study habits, attitudes, ideas, patterns, values, and standards of behavior in the society in which they live. Every component grasped within the socialization process influences how individuals perceive and interact with their social environment."

The ideas of Political Socialization, Structuration Theory, and the Structuration of Political Socialization can be used to understand Political Socialization within the framework of Giddens' Structuration Theory. This study demonstrates how the process of political socialization is intricate and impacted by a wide range of elements, such as the media, political institutions, education systems, and families. These factors influence how people develop their political identities and conduct. Giddens' Structuration Theory emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between individuals and their social settings by explaining how social structures both permit and restrict political acts. By demonstrating how people engage with and adjust to political structures in their daily lives, this study advances our knowledge of how political socialization contributes to societal stability and change.

In addition to the transfer of ideas to others, socialization also involves the efforts of people to influence each other. It is because the space for social interaction is very dynamic, allowing for the exchange of ideas and influences. Also, it can be said that inter-socialization involves two or more social actors.

Socialization is effective when a person's individual identity is seen as inseparable from the societal values. This identity helps to preserve the societal value system. Socialization is a continuous, lifelong process that occurs in all phases of human life. As noted by Doda (2005), Darling-Hammond (2020), and Syahrir (2018), "Socialization is the process of making someone socially and fully human. It is a learning process where individuals are trained in basic norms, values, beliefs, skills, attitudes, and ways of acting within specific social groups or communities. This process continues from the cradle to the grave, meaning that all members of a social group undergo socialization throughout their lives. Thus, everyone needs socialization, including infants, preschool children, school-age children, adolescents, adults, and older persons."

Socialization also involves a continuous learning process aimed at creating social cohesiveness and preserving societal values. Soekanto (2007) explains that it includes a series of processes essential for the interconnection of individuals, helping them understand the social order of their environment and harmonize interaction patterns through conformity, nonconformity, self-avoidance, and conflict.

In politics, socialization involves not only maintaining existing values but also efforts by politicians to market themselves to citizens by spreading political ideas and goals. Political communication is essential for politicians to ensure that their ideas and goals are understood by the public. As stated by Rosyit (2012), Neudert et al. (2019), and Robinson (2019), the principles of political communication are:

Consistency: Information must align with the party's platform and provide solutions to constituents' problems.

Replication: Information must be repeatedly conveyed so that the public and constituents understand the party's platform and objectives.

Evidence: The party must provide proof of their claims and demonstrate their past and current actions.

Effective political communication requires a balance between the message and the role of the communicators. The success of political socialization is closely related to the roles of the agents involved. Zuhri (2010) describes these agents as follows:

Family: Influences attitudes towards authority.

School: Transfers societal values and attitudes.

Social Groups: Encourage conformity to group norms.

Occupation: Serves as a channel for communicating information and beliefs.

Mass Media: Print and electronic media play a key role in changing attitudes and promoting modern values.

Direct Political Contacts: Involves personal interactions and other socialization agencies.

The success of political socialization depends on how politicians use social spaces and maximize the agents of socialization to advance their political ambitions.

Structuration of Political Socialization

Every political phenomenon involves both the dualism of structure and the individuality of the politician, according to Giddens' structuration theory. Any organization or entity that bases and supports political decisions and policies is referred to as a structure. A person, on the other hand, stands for a free social actor who functions without regard to structure. According to structuration theory, social practice is important because it combines structure and activity in people's lives (Wheeler-Brooks, 2009; Reidy et al., 2015). The process through which social structures are created, replicated, and altered via practice is referred to as structuration. When the idea of structural duality is connected to structuration, human interactions—including those on social media—replicate structures.

Giddens' structuration theory encompasses actors and their intellectual capacities, the temporal and spatial dimensions of action, the openness and possibilities of action in daily life, and the fallacy of separating agents and structures in sociology.

Social practice is dynamic, aiming to strengthen structures through social reproduction to maintain sustainability. Social production may also arise when individuals use structures. A prime example of an individual's ability to resist structure is politician Fahri Hamzah. Hamzah was fired from his party, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), highlighting the dominance of structure. However, after a great deal of struggle, he successfully challenged his dismissal, demonstrating the potential for individual agency to overcome structural constraints.

Therefore, this agrees that the structure-agent duality also requires that social reality needs to provide space through values, norms and laws and collectively; this would enable individuals to make changes to their structure. Other examples of political phenomena that reflects the duality of structure and agency, are the events of the revolution triggered by the Russian Revolution, the French Revolution and the Iranian Revolution which successfully changed the monarchical order to other systems that are more open.

Political reality regarding the structuration theory places politicians as rational agents. Politicians are individuals who have motivation and are well aware of their choice of political actions with full consideration. As stated in Giddens, (1984, 1979, 1977), the operationalization of structuration theory can be seen in the figure below:

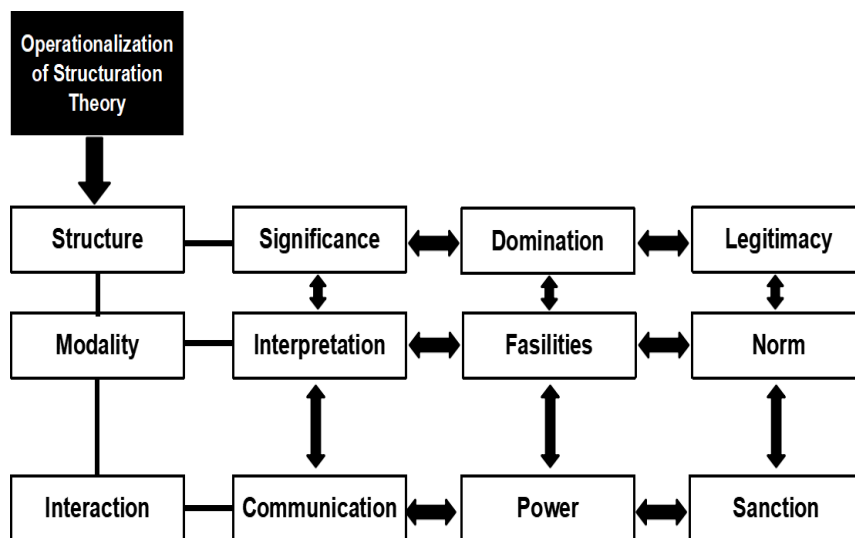


Figure 1. Agency, Structure and Structuration (Adapted from Giddens, 1984, 1979, 1977)

This structure reflects the affiliation of any party or organization where politicians are required to adhere to the prevailing value system. The value system that politicians must uphold is not as coercive as structural determinism suggests. Instead, it is considered dormant, influencing the politician's life and ideologies. The significance of a value system is defined through a binding symbol that must be interpreted and socialized by the politician. In this structure, the value system is dominant and gains legitimacy through the joint decisions of all functional arms of political institutions. Legitimacy allows the structural availability of authority for politicians.

As stated by Wadi & Mudzakkir (2013) and Giddens (1987), "Giddens points out that structures such as resources, rules, and regulations can be discovered through social practice. Conversely, actors also influence structure, meaning they do not always have to submit to it. Giddens further stated that three structural groups must be found in all agents: significance, dominance, and legitimacy. The significance structure refers to meaning, symbolism, mention, and discourse. The dominance structure involves control over individuals or goods. The legitimacy structure pertains to rules found in the rule of law. These structures can both limit and empower the actor."

Modality is connected with the individual realm and contains interpretations, facilities, and norms. Modality dimensions include the concrete capital or means owned by politicians, referred to as the space allocated to them to realize their interests. Its analysis is based on the agent applied to the structure, which acts as a medium. Giddens uses the term "agent" to symbolize the actions of actors.

This interpretation process is informative, carried out by politicians when dealing with complex political situations. Interpretation involves politicians making sense of the symbolic system of structure in specific political phenomena. Facilities are the available resources used in the structuration processes, and norms are the value systems adopted by politicians that guide their social actions.

The domain of interaction is the reciprocal relation between structures and agents. As stated by Ritzer & Goodman (2004) and Giddens (1998),

"Agents are required to begin with repeated social practices (interactions). The study of social science, according to structuration theory, is not about specific forms of social unity or any individual's experience but about social practices organized across time and space." The interrelationship between structure and actors forms the foundation for the blueprint of a social world, which contains various opportunities, primarily due to the structure being "empowering."

Human interaction involves three main processes: communication, power, and sanctions. Communication is how people share and interpret meaning at different levels of importance. Politicians understand their roles from the existing structure and communicate in ways that benefit their political goals.

Even if power is shared, individual agents are more important. Giddens (Nashir, 2012) asserts that "agents have the ability to make and affect changes in the social world." An agent cannot do their job without power because they couldn't change anything. Giddens concedes that political agents have numerous obstacles to overcome, but this does not render them helpless. Since strength is necessary for action, it is more important than intentions. Unlike theories that just concentrate on the intentions of actors or external structures, Giddens' structuration theory highlights the power of agents and their actions.

Sanctions are the penalties enforced by a legitimate structure against those who challenge its authority. In political socialization, structuration theory shows a connection between structures and agents. A politician can either uphold their party's value system through social reproduction or influence the structure through social production via socialization.

CONCLUSION

Political socialization, viewed through the lens of Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory, reveals the intricate interplay between social structures and individual agency in shaping political behaviors and identities. This study has underscored the critical role of political socialization in transmitting societal norms, values, and beliefs, thereby integrating individuals into the political fabric of society. By employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research has elucidated how various agents such as family, education systems, media, and political institutions influence the formation of political attitudes and behaviors from early childhood through adulthood.

Giddens' Structuration Theory provides a theoretical framework that highlights the dual nature of social structures—they both constrain and enable individual actions. This duality emphasizes that while individuals are shaped by societal structures, they also actively contribute to the reproduction and transformation of these structures through their everyday practices. Political socialization thus becomes a dynamic process where individuals navigate and negotiate political norms, contributing to societal stability and change.

Moreover, the findings emphasize the continuous nature of political socialization across the lifespan, influencing how individuals perceive and engage with political systems and institutions. This process not only fosters political participation but also shapes collective political identities and cultures. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial for enhancing civic education and promoting informed citizenship, which are foundational for democratic societies.

In conclusion, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how political socialization operates within contemporary societies, offering insights into the mechanisms through which political identities are constructed and sustained. By bridging theoretical insights with empirical observations, the study underscores the relevance of Giddens' Structuration Theory in analyzing the complex dynamics of political life and encourages further exploration into the evolving nature of political behavior and governance.

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