

The Constitution of Society as Duality: The Case of America

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Within Mocombeian structurationism, phenomenological structuralism, two ontological forms of how human beings would evolve to reproduce their being in the material world emerged amongst the species: the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism (communally) and the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism (individually). According to Mocombe, society emerged through five subsystems (mode of production, language, medium of communication, ideology, and ideological apparatuses), enframed by one of the two forms of system and social integration, constituted by those, i.e., power elites, who control the materials needed for survival in a material resource framework. The five subsystems are used to interpellate, integrate, and socialize the human species to constitute society and recursively organize and reproduce the ideas, ideals, values, and norms of the power elites as enframed by the two forms of system and social integration thereby forming a duality. This article highlights how society is constituted as both duality and dualism from the aforementioned structurationist perspective using America as a case study.

Keywords: structurationism, praxis, panpsychism, social class language game, phenomenological structuralism, ORCH-OR Theory, univon multiverse hypothesis, free-will, determinism, haitian epistemology, Consciousness Field Theory, Conscious Electromagnetic Information Theory (CEMI)

Introduction

According to Mocombe (2019), two ontological forms of how human beings would evolve to reproduce their being in the material world emerged amongst the species: the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism (communally) and the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism (individually). For Mocombe (2019; 2021b), society emerged through five subsystems (mode of production, language, medium of communication, ideology, and ideological apparatuses), enframed by one of the two forms of system and social integration, constituted by those, i.e., power elites, who control the materials needed for survival in a material resource framework. The five subsystems are used to interpellate, integrate, and socialize the human species to constitute society and recursively organize and reproduce the ideas, ideals, values, and norms of the power elites as enframed by the two forms of system and social integration, forming a duality, i.e., the social structure and the internalization of the rules, norms, and values of the social structure by social actors to constitute their practical consciousness. This article highlights how society is constituted as duality and dualism from the aforementioned structurationist perspective using America as a case study.

Background of the Problem

Sociology is the scientific study of society and human actions. Three dominant figures and their sociological approaches dominate the discipline: Max Weber, symbolic interactionism; Emile Durkheim, structural functionalism; and Karl Marx, conflict theory (Habermas, 1987; Giddens, 1984; Ortner, 1984). All subsequent sociological theorists would build on the approaches of these three men in the discipline even though their approaches are unable to adequately resolve the problematic of what determines the constitution of society and human actions, i.e., the institutions of society or the rational potentiality of the human actor (the structure/agency problematic) (Ortner, 1984; Crothers, 2003). Mocombe, in keeping with the logic of traditional structurationism in their attempt to resolve the structure/agency problematic of the aforementioned theories through the concepts of duality and practical consciousness, synthesizes the three positions (Ortner, 1984; Giddens, 1984; Habermas, 1987; Mocombe, 2019).

In Mocombean phenomenological structural sociology, all societies in recorded human history have been Durkheimian mechanical solidarities or systemicities constituted based on the mode of production, power, and power relations operating through five subsystems, i.e., mode of production, communicative discourse, language, ideology, and ideological apparatuses, to constitute society as both a dualism and duality enframed by one of two forms of system or social integration, i.e., the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism or the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism (Mocombe, 2016; 2019; 2025a; 2025b). It is upon this theoretical assumption that all theories of society and human actions must commence. This notion of Western societies, as Durkheimian organic solidarities, representing a break from all primitive societies in recorded history, which according to Durkheim were mechanical, according to Mocombe, is an ideological (economic) myth perpetuated by the sociological imaginations of Western bourgeois intellectuals such as Durkheim, Parsons, and Habermas, amongst many others (Ortner, 1984; Crothers, 2003; Mocombe, 2016; 2019; 2021a; 2021b; 2025a; 2025b).

Contemporary (bourgeois) sociology in the West assumes that Western (neo)liberal (capitalist) democracy, which is an organic solidarity in the Durkheimian sense, represents the nature of reality as such by which all human societies ought to be constituted, and agential initiatives determined (the end of history thesis made famous by Fukuyama). The focus in the academy, as highlighted in structuration theory, becomes one of integrating the power and power relations, as highlighted by Marxian conflict theorists, via identity politics and negative dialectical thinking, by which the latter (Western liberal democracy) is constituted for an understanding of societal constitution that focuses on how rational human beings use symbols to create meaning and interact with each other in institutions in their everyday lives to recursively (re)organize and reproduce society as an organic whole or solidarity where conflicts of differing interests are resolved dialectically and negative dialectically, i.e., reconciling or synthesizing contradictions and or conflicts, for (rational) social cohesion and total freedom (i.e., in the Hegelian sense). Academically, this latter position is usually juxtaposed against so-called primitive societies, which are said to be Durkheimian mechanical solidarities where social actors are forced, through social norms and mores, to internalize and recursively organize and reproduce the same actions and beliefs (of the collective conscience) in their daily practices. On these three assumptions (conflict, social cohesion, and interaction) regarding the constitution of Western liberal democratic societies, in relation to so-called primitive societies, three independent major approaches or paradigms in Western academia would emerge amongst bourgeois academics to dominate sociological theory: structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism (Ortner, 1984; Crothers, 2003).

Symbolic interactionism is a microlevel approach that focuses on symbols and how (rational) people interact with each other by recursively (re)organizing and reproducing these symbols (and their meanings) in their everyday lives to constitute society and social relationships based on shared meanings and understandings. Structural functionalism and conflict theories are macrolevel approaches, which focus on the constitution of society from the perspective of institutions. Structural functionalism views society as a cohesive whole with interdependent parts, i.e., people, institutions, etc., which contribute to society's functioning as an organic whole.

Whereas structural functionalists emphasize the social cohesiveness of society, conflict theory, on the contrary, highlights competition between unequal groups (racial, cultural, class, etc.) and power as the basis for the constitution and ever-changing nature of societal institutions. In the West, all three perspectives, and their methodological approaches (quantitative, qualitative, and mix-methods), are incorporated in the research process to suggest that in the aggregate they represent the scientific and universal basis upon which societal and human agential constitutions are determined, studied, and understood in the field of sociology.

All three perspectives, whether independently or synthesized as highlighted in contemporary structurationist sociology to explain the constitution of so-called primitive and Western societies, are problematic from the standpoint of human social agency and the constitution of society, however (Ortner, 1984; Crothers, 2003). Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the actions of individuals and the meanings they attribute to those actions as the basis for the constitution of society at the expense of the overarching structures, i.e., institutions, social relations, etc., which stabilize and give individuals their practical activities. Structural functionalism highlights the cohesiveness of the groups in society at the expense of differentiating actions and conflicts amongst and between them. Conversely, conflict theory emphasizes the power and power relations between and amongst groups and their emerging conflicts at the expense of their social cohesion. These individual problems are not resolved when synthesized as is done by Western scholars to represent Western (neo)liberal democracy, against so-called primitive societies, as a paragon of the sociological imagination; instead, the agency problematic, just as in primitive societies, becomes more profound as it is difficult for scholars to draw the distinction between where social structure is determinant versus human agency.

Moreover, since the 1960's with the advent of postmodern and post-structural theories into the theoretical discourses of social science academics, given the shift from industrial to postindustrial societies, a new struggle regarding the origins and nature of agency, identity, and consciousness vis-à-vis the aforementioned (agential and societal) sociological problematics regarding the constitution of society and the individual has dominated social science and philosophical theories. The issue centers on several factors raised by postmodern and post-structural thinkers in the likes of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan against the structuralism of the sciences: (1) They question the validity regarding the Cartesian rational individual, which Foucault and Derrida deny in favor of their attempt to dissolve the subject altogether; (2) they question the interdependency of the constitution of a stable structure and a distinct subject with agency, in denying the latter they undermine the former; (3) they question the status of science; (4) finally, they question the possibility of the objectivity of any language of description or analysis.

Although these four factors raised in the writings of Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, amongst many other scholars trying to understand social actions in postindustrial societies, are theoretically legitimate and have posed tremendous problems for the social sciences and their constitution as a science based on the notion of a stable structure constituted by stable (rational) subjects with agency, these problems have not adequately been addressed by Marxist social theorists in the social sciences like Louis Althusser, Pierre Bourdieu,

Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens, and Marshall Sahlins working, under the umbrella of structurationist sociology (Giddens's term), to resolve this structure/agency issue by attempting to synthesize the rationality of the individual with the phenomenological discourses of the former theorists, and Marxist and structural Marxist philosophy.

Against the absurdity of postmodern and post-structural thought, which denies rationality to the human subject or a stable structure, the structure/agency debate in the social sciences, from a structurationist perspective, emphasizes the rational origins, *vis-à-vis* a stable structure, of the reproduced and transformed social actions of social actors that constitute a social structure or society. Two questions are raised from this standpoint: Are social actors determined and driven by internal (rational) invariable structures of the mind (Lévi-Strauss, 1963; Bell, 1985 [1982]), or are social actors automatons determined and driven by external relational structures of signification (Parsons, 1951; Althusser, 2001 [1971])? Thus, in the social scientific form of the debate, biological determinism, i.e., innate senses of anything, as well as the Lévi-Straussian sense, i.e., innate structure of the mind, was out rightly rejected. Also, the idea that social actors are irreducibly situated subjects who act and react based on rational calculations as they respond to particular external social processes (social structure) or stimuli was for the most part dismissed. Total rationality was viewed as an impossibility given the inability of social actors to either know all the choices available to them in the present or know the complete future outcomes of those choices. This made rationality necessarily relative to a frame of reference or structure of signification, which rejects the ontology of the indeterminacy of meaning and decentered subject of postmodern/post-structural theorizing.

Hence, the focus in the study of action and interaction in the social sciences via structurationism was thus not a matter of denying or minimizing the rational potential of social actors as postmodern and post-structural thinkers do, but expressed rather an urgent need to understand where “the system” or structure that limits their knowledge and stabilizes society “comes from—how it is produced and reproduced, and how it may have changed in the past or be changed in the future” (Ortner, 1984, p. 146). In other words, structurationist thinkers plagued by this debate, sought “to explain the relationship(s) that obtain between human action, on the one hand, and some global entity which we may call the system, [or social structure, structure, or culture] on the other” (Ortner, 1984, p. 148), when the latter (i.e., the system) is not a necessary reflection of neither biology, nor the structure of the mind, but an external force of socially constructed rules of conduct, i.e., categorical boundaries, that stabilizes society and thereby constitutes the identity of social actors as argued by Talcott Parsons and Louis Althusser.

From roughly 1975 to the present, an enormous strand of critical writings, expounding a great many strands of theoretical schools of thought, combined to challenge this post-World War II structuralist matrix which denied alternative agencies, outside the relational logic of a structure, system, or culture to social actors. Some were advanced by rationalist thinkers seeking to preserve the idea of individuals as solitary thinkers who act in a purposive rational way, while others were offered by theorists dedicated to preserving the tenets of structural-functionalism and structural-Marxism (conflict theory) while explicating the functional role of difference or the variability of practices amongst social actors within social structure not as an invariable by-product of the mind but as an external unified structure of signification or system and its differentiation. Considering this action-oriented response to account for the different provinces of meaning within systems or structures of signification, the term *praxis* or structurationist (Giddens' term) theorists will serve as the dominant label for the arguments expounded in opposition to the idealism of postmodernism and post-structuralism, symbolic interactionism,

Parsonian structural-functionalism, and variants of structural Marxism by prominent theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, Marshall Sahlins, Anthony Giddens, and Jürgen Habermas (Crothers, 2003; Ortner, 1984). These arguments are complex, and to examine them together is necessarily to do violence to the purity of notions advanced separately by various authors. The exercise is nevertheless useful at least for revealing their main and common objective, i.e., to resolve the structure/agency debate of the social sciences.

The Structurationist Response and Its Problems

Structural-functionalists and Structural-Marxists (conflict theorists) in attempting to understand social action (i.e., praxis) within social structures of signification privilege social relations, structural differentiation, and reproduction via linguistic and symbolic representation over biological determining elements (i.e., race, sex, etc.), for meaning, human action, and consciousness constructions. In doing so, however, they fail to account for the origins and nature of the different provinces of meaning, human action, and consciousness existing within, but at the same time, outside the relational or dialectical prescribed logic of the social structure (structural reproduction and differentiation), which is of one of two types, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism and the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism (Mocombe, 2019). Neo-structuralists or structurationists in the likes of Pierre Bourdieu (1990 [1980]; 1984) with his theory of practice (habitus or constructivist structuralism), Marshall Sahlins (1976; 1995b [1981]) through mythopraxis, Anthony Giddens (1984) through his theory of structuration, and Jürgen Habermas (1987 [1981]; 1984 [1981]) with his theory of “communicative action”, however, attempt to do just that, “explain the relationship(s) that obtain between human action, on the one hand, and some global entity which we may call the system, [or social structure, structure, or culture] on the other” in order to capture the nature of social action, reproduction, transformation, and differentiation within structures of signification. They attempt to do so, for the most part, through “the central notion of the ‘duality of structure’ which refers to ‘the essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social practices: structure is both medium and outcome of the reproduction of practices’” (Archer, 1985, p. 60). That is, structures are not only external to social actors, but are internal rules and resources (“form of consciousness”) produced and reproduced by actors “unconsciously” (intuitively) in their practices. From this perspective, accordingly, structure, i.e., culture or, sociological speaking, social structure, “may set conditions to the historical process, but it is dissolved and reformulated in material practice, so that history becomes the realization, in the form of society, of the actual [(embodied rules)] resources people put into play” (Sahlins, 1995a [1981], p. 7). In this understanding, the structure is not an epiphenomenon of the structure of the mind but is a result of the internalization by social actors of external (social structural) rules of conduct which are sanctioned, recursively (re)organized, reproduced, and differentiated in material practice. Thus, social structure, human action, meaning, and consciousness are mutually constituted and united together as “practical consciousness”, i.e., a duality.

Ostensibly, like symbolic interactionism, structuralism, structural functionalism, and structural Marxism, the structurationist response to account for the nature of human action within structures of signification by collapsing structure with agency through the notion of duality, however, is also problematic. That is, the central notion of the duality of structure prevents praxis theorists from accounting for the origins and relational nature of the variability of praxis or “practical consciousnesses” within a particular structure of signification. That is to say, the part/whole dialectic of the “duality” concept cannot account for the origins of alternative “practical consciousnesses” that arises as a result of three other structuring structures: (1) the drives and sensibilities (anatomy and physiology) of the body and brain, (2) the drives and impulses, phenomenal properties, qualia, of

embodied recycled/entangled/superimposed subatomic particles, psychions, and (3) the praxes arising from the human ability to defer meaning in ego-centered communicative discourse during the internalization process as suggested by postmodern and post-structural theory (Mocombe, 2016). In essence, structurationists are only able to account for the dialectic of (4) structural reproduction and differentiation stemming from the means and mode of production of a society and their ideological apparatuses, which, as previously mentioned, is of one of two types: the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism (communally) and the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism (individually) (Mocombe, 2016; 2021a; 2021b). According to Mocombe (2016), the power elites seek to promote this duality regardless of the type of system/social integration (the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism or the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism) by which society is constituted.

Theory and Method

Mocombeian phenomenological structuralism (phenomenological structural sociology) resolves the structurationist agential problematic. Mocombe's structurationism, like traditional structurationist theory, is a sociological theory that views the constitution of society, human identity, and social agency as a duality and dualism. The paradigm posits that societal and agential constitution are a result of power relations, interpellation, and socialization or embourgeoisement via five (sub)systems, i.e., mode of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse, which are constituted and reified within two dominant (ontological) types (the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism or the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism) of system/social structure—or what Mocombe (2019; 2025a) calls a “social class language game” by persons, power elites, who control the means and modes of production in a material resource framework—determined by the specie's responses to the material resource framework. Religion and culture are the characteristics placed, by those who control the material resources in a particular material resource framework, on the two (ontological) forms of system and social integration, which are metaphors for how the human species satisfies its material needs (communally or a Hobbesian struggle of all against all for individual wealth, i.e., capital) in the material framework that is the earth. Once interpellated and socialized (or embourgeoised in neoliberal capitalism) by these five subsystems, which are reified as a social structure and society, social actors recursively organize, reproduce, and are differentiated by the rules of conduct of the social structure, which are sanctioned by the power elites (rentier oligarchs in neoliberal capitalism) who control the means and modes of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse in a material resource framework. Hence, societal and agential constitution are both duality and dualism: a dualism given the reification of the social structure or the constitution of society via the five subsystems by those who control the means and modes of production in a material resource framework; and a duality given the internalization of the rules of the five subsystems, which become the (structurally differentiated) agential initiatives or praxes (practical consciousness) of social actors. Difference, or alternative social praxis, in Mocombe's structuration theory, phenomenological structuralism, is not structural differentiation revealed by praxis as articulated by traditional structurationists; instead, it is a result of actions arising from the deferment of meaning and ego-centered communication given the interaction of two other structuring structures (physiological drives of the body and brain; and phenomenal properties of subatomic, carrier, particles that constitute the human subject) during the interpellation and socialization or embourgeoisement of social actors throughout their life span or cycle, which produces alternative praxis that is exercised at the expense of the threat these practices may pose to the ontological security of social actors in the social structure or society. These alternative praxes occur in both forms of system

and social integration of the human species and become structurally differentiated in order to (relationally) define the norms, values, ideas, and ideals of the two by their respective power elites.

Hence, Mocombe's theoretical (structural Marxist) framework is a universal framework that makes no gender, racial, or ethnic distinctions in its application. Gender, racial, and ethnic (so-called intersectional) identities are structurally differentiated serial identities that do not, necessarily, offer alternative praxes (form of system and social integration) to the current dominant social class language game, i.e., the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism; instead, they are standpoint theories not alternative ontological forms of system or social integration. To serve as a counter-hegemonic different form of system and social integration, the serial identities would have to experience structural differentiation within the alternative form of system and social integration from which they originally were differentiated. That is, if they were constituted and reified within the practices of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, to serve as an alternative to the latter they would have to be interpellated, constituted, and reified within the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism form of system and social integration, which would make their practical consciousness incommensurable with the practices of the latter. The reverse also holds true; serial identities differentiated with the ontology of the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism to serve as an alternative counterhegemonic praxis would have to be interpellated, constituted, and reified within the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

Discussion and Conclusion

America and the West in relation to the rest of the world attempts, through military force, to prevent other civilizations from institutionalizing the five subsystems within the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism in favor of their bureaucratization, routinization, and institutionalization of them within the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, presented as the nature of reality as such, which they have successfully accomplished as a duality locally in their own society's and globally through neoliberal globalization. That is to say, the West and America have achieved mastery, through the concept of duality via the five subsystems, and subjugating their masses to the dualism of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, which has been reified, against any variations of the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, as the nature of reality as such by which individual social actors should recursively organize and reproduce their being-in-the-world. The American oligarchs, the upper-class of owners and high-level executives, control the five subsystems through private capital who operate through the state to control the means and modes of production, which is the first subsystem they organize. The political leaders, working with the oligarchs, of the West then institutionalize and routinize the ideals, ideas, norms, and values of the mode of production through the institutionalization and routinization of these ideas, ideals, norms, and values via the remaining four (language, communicative discourse—i.e., medium of communication, i.e., TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, and social media—ideologies, and ideological apparatuses—i.e., religion, urban environment, law, family, and schools) subsystems as bureaucracies, and achieve duality locally. Those who own the means and modes of production establish laws, schools, and think-tanks (ideological apparatuses) to reinforce the teachings and training (ideologies), in the language of the elites, necessary for the reproduction of the mode of production. Social actors are interpellated as employees/employers, and those amongst them who are graduates of elite private and state institutions, of the aforementioned ideological apparatuses, owned by those who own the means and modes of production, develop policy papers (ideologies) presented to politicians by lobbyists, also hired by the oligarchs, who vote on these policies and institutionalize them as laws of the state and the society. These laws are used to interpellate, integrate, and socialize the masses

through both ideological apparatuses and medium of communicative discourses such as TV, newspapers, and social media, where two perspectives are used to enframe the policies, i.e., a liberal one and a conservative one (the former representing the current mode of production and the latter the residual elements of the previous modes of production), in order to maintain the hegemony of the two political parties by which the interests of the oligarchs are promoted and society is constituted as both dualism and duality; the former, dualism, the reification of the five subsystems enframed by the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, and the latter, duality, the internalization of the rules, norms, values, ideas, and ideals as the practical consciousness of social actors as disseminated or taught through the five subsystems. From this perspective, society is presented as a holistic whole where social actors use symbols to interact with one another in order to resolve differences/conflicts amongst, and between them so that society can go on functioning as structure presented as the nature of reality as such.

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