

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03269-8 - The Logics of Social Structure
Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

In this ambitious book, the author proposes a fundamental new approach to the study of one of the most central concepts in social analysis, that of social structure. He critiques the leading models and argues that each is inadequate to the task of explaining the complexity of structures that make up society and the processes by which these structures are formed and are interlinked.

A new conceptualization of the processes of societal formation is then presented, drawing on recent developments in the physical, biological, and cognitive sciences. This conceptualization allows for a multiplicity of processes of structuration, which the author refers to as logics, some of which function at the individual or “micro” level of society, others of which function at the organizational or “meso” level, and still others at the society-wide or “macro” level. The author terms this new conceptualization a theory of heterarchy, and it is the first truly comprehensive theory of societal structuration.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03269-8 - The Logics of Social Structure
Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The logics of social structure

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03269-8 - The Logics of Social Structure
Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences

Mark Granovetter, editor

Other books in the series:

Mark S. Mizruchi and Michael Schwartz, eds., *Intercorporate Relations: The Structural Analysis of Business*

Barry Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz, eds., *Social Structure: A Network Approach*

Ronald L. Breiger, ed., *Social Mobility and Social Structure*

David Knoke, *Political Networks: The Structural Perspective*

John C. Campbell, J. Rogers Hollingsworth, and Leon N. Lindberg, eds., *Governance of the American Economy*

Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*

The series *Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences* presents approaches that explain social behavior and institutions by reference to *relations* among such concrete social entities as persons and organizations. This contrasts with at least four other popular strategies: (1) reductionist attempts to explain by a focus on individuals alone; (2) explanations stressing the causal primacy of such abstract concepts as ideas, values, mental harmonies, and cognitive maps (thus, “structuralism” on the Continent should be distinguished from structural analysis in the present sense); (3) technological and material determinism; (4) explanations using “variables” as the main analytic concepts (as in the “structural equation” models that dominated much of the sociology of the 1970s), where “structure” is that connecting variables rather than actual social entities.

The “social network” approach is an important example of the strategy of structural analysis; the series also draws on social science theory and research that is not framed explicitly in network terms, but stresses the importance of relations rather than the atomization of reductionism or the determinism of ideas, technology, or material conditions. Though the structural perspective has become extremely popular and influential in all the social sciences, it does not have a coherent identity, and no series yet pulls together such work under a single rubric. By bringing the achievements of structurally oriented scholars to a wider public, the *Structural Analysis* series hopes to encourage the use of this very fruitful approach.

Mark Granovetter

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03269-8 - The Logics of Social Structure
Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The logics of social structure

KYRIAKOS M. KONTOPOULOS
Temple University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-03269-8 - The Logics of Social Structure
 Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521417792

© Cambridge University Press 1993

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1993
 This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Kontopoulos, Kyriakos M.
 The logics of social structure / Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos.
 p. cm. – (Structural analysis in the social sciences)
 Includes bibliographical references and index.
 ISBN 0-521-41779-1 (hardback)
 1. Social structure. I. Title. II. Series.
 HM131.K6931993 92-2470
 301 – dc20 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-41779-2 hardback
 ISBN-10 0-521-41779-1 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-03269-8 paperback
 ISBN-10 0-521-03269-5 paperback

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03269-8 - The Logics of Social Structure
Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

For Michael and Alexandra,
my eternal mentors in life

and

For Ourania, Eirene, Michael, and Alexandra,
my Castalian springs of meaning
in an otherwise disenchanting world

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page ix</i>
Introduction	1
Part I Metatheoretical considerations	9
1 Epistemic strategies in contemporary science	11
2 The dynamics of emergence: the case against reductionism	25
3 The nature of hierarchical and heterarchical organization	42
4 Some formal theses on hierarchy and heterarchy	59
Part II Compositionist logics	73
5 Methodological individualism	75
6 Constructionism/compositionism: elementary notions	102
7 Complex systems of interaction	126
Part III Logics of hierarchy	151
8 Hierarchy theory and postfunctional analysis	153
9 The hierarchical theory of social structure	180
Part IV Heterarchical logics	209
10 Heterarchical thinking in social thought	211
11 Neural networks as a model of structure	243
Part V The phenomenology of social structures	269
12 Modalities and systems of interaction	271
13 Heterarchical levels of social structure	287
14 On structural totalities	304
15 In conclusion	326
<i>Appendix: The logics of structuration</i>	333
<i>Glossary</i>	375
<i>Bibliography</i>	393
<i>Index</i>	449

Preface

This book is the result of ten years of measured thinking, adventurous reading over a wide spectrum, and accelerated, almost compulsive writing as I neared the completion of my goal. With some trepidation, I present here some provisional notions, taking stock of my progress at this first stop in my ongoing program of research. Since my graduate days at Harvard I have been bothered by the failure of sociologists to address the fundamental question of upward structuration, an issue to which I developed a special sensitivity there in the course of frequent discussions with George C. Homans, Seymour M. Lipset, and Gino Germani. I owe to the last, among many other things, the cultivation of a flexible, dynamic view of structural processes and collective agencies. At the time, although admiring it considerably in secret, I was an outsider to Harrison C. White's group, which was so successfully advancing network research. Having read Wittgenstein, Kuhn, and Lakatos, I was searching for a way to engage with the most fundamental issue of sociology in a postpositivist, nonfoundational manner. I have been working since then, in silence, exploring the borders of our discipline. I now feel that I have found an answer in what I would describe as the *heterarchical conception of structuration*. With this book, I stake a claim to new fields and conceptions and invite one and all to come and plow them together.

Given my rather heterodox trajectory, several influences on my thought were rather indirect and from a distance. I have never met Bourdieu, Boudon, Schelling, Edelman, or Hofstadter, whose work I both value and appraise. Also, I have missed the pleasures associated with the ongoing interaction with respected colleagues during the formative stages of my project. Mark Granovetter and Harrison C. White were the first to read my already completed manuscript and to give me extremely valuable comments on it. This has become a much better book as a result of their editorial advice, which I have tried to follow to the extent possible at this stage. I must also express my gratitude to Emily Loose and Andrée Lockwood, my Cambridge editors, for their personal encouragement and highly professional editorial suggestions. For all substantive problems, omissions, faux pas, creative misreadings, and the like, I alone, of course, must bear all responsibility.

I would also like to acknowledge the special contributions made by people in my own institution, Temple University. Here I must mention

x Preface

the philosophers Joseph Margolis and Chuck Dyke with whom I have shared a long association of labors on matters of postpositivist theorizing, the brain/mind, complexity, and emergence – many common themes are woven individually in our respective works. My colleague Leo Rigsby, a true alter ego, deserves my limitless gratitude for his indefatigable support and enthusiastic encouragement for so many years; without his trust and prodding, this project might not have taken off at all. Thanks also to Doug Porpora, David Kutzik, and Donald Eckard, who inspired me by their warm expectations, and to Maria Gasi, Chris Gannon, Kostas Markou, and Vassilios Alexopoulos, who helped me with the bibliographic checking and the completion of figures and graphs.

I also wish to express my eternal gratitude and sincere apologies to my beloved family for their understanding and ongoing support, their many sacrifices and accommodations so that my project could be completed. They – and the many others I have referred to above – are real coauthors of this work, as producers of its possibility, or as energizing partners and interlocutors affecting its development at different moments.