SOCIAL STRUCTURATION IN TIBETAN SOCIETY:
EDUCATION,
SOCIETY AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

By

LUO JIA

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Graduate Department of Social Justice Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Luo Jia (2015)
SOCIAL STRUCTURATION IN TIBETAN SOCIETY: EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

Doctor of Philosophy (2015)
Luo Jia
Graduate Department of Social Justice Education (SJE)
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

ABSTRACT

Social structure is a core concept in the field of sociology, and Anthony Giddens has extended this concept to structuration theory. This theory has multiple applications, but has never been used to analyze the structure of Tibetan society. Tibetan social structuration is an under-researched area. The lack of basic sociological understanding of Tibetan society is due to insufficient study on the question of why neither Tibetan monastic education nor the state school system have produced Tibetan sociologists and social theory able to identify the social problems in contemporary Tibetan society.

This study aims to construct a theory of Tibetan sociology and, emerging from this, a preliminary Tibetan sociology of education, that sets Giddens’s theory of structuration in dialogue with Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy. Through a process of dialectical co-construction, it links Tibetan analytic approaches with international sociological perspectives. The resulting synthesis helps us to analyze social structuration in a spiritual society and how the two types of Tibetan society—oral and literate society—are situated in this dynamic context. The study extends structuration theory to several sub-divisions including personal life and education, analyzes the social relations of political and spiritual authority, and compares the two thinkers’ ontological approaches to conventional and ultimate reality. It also applies Giddens’s theory to
the social tensions and realities resulting from Je TsongKhapa’s dramatic religious restructuration of Tibetan society.

Education is the force of social change. Yet the uneasy co-existence of three distinct forms of education in Tibetan society—monastic, oral and state school education—challenges the practice and potential of social transformation. The study analyzes these forms of education in relation to Tibetan social structuration and argues that the current distinctions between oral and literate society need to be narrowed, that village culture and agency need to be empowered, and that the strengths of each form of education need to converge in the mutual aim of a new educational approach that is socio-culturally relevant and also critically attuned to the realities of modernization and globalization. It is hoped that this study will contribute to reinforcing Tibetan social structure and the long-term sustainability of Tibetan society and culture.

**Word Count:** 350

**Key words:** Tibetan Society, Social Structure, Structuration, Spiritual Society, Education, Sociology, Philosophy, Village, Tribe, Social Change, Causality, Interdependent co-rising.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My journey to today is a complicated experience, from being a rural Tibetan village boy to a doctoral candidate in sociology of education at OISE/University of Toronto. I’ve received various unforgettable supports. I would have not been able to complete my learning journey without people’s support in Canada and in China. I hope that all those who have contributed to this research find in these pages the expression of my most sincere gratitude.

During my learning journey in Canada, I have received many key supports from Ron Silvers, who has been my academic collaborator and very close friend for over fifteen years, and Roger Simon, who guided me in carrying out the initial outline of this thesis through taking a reading course with him. I would like to thank my supervisor Paul Olson who dedicated countless hours of meetings and correspondences, providing encouragements, intellectual stimulation and guidance, crucial emotional support. Moreover, I am infinitely grateful to my co-supervisor Peter Sawchuk, who consistently provided thoughtful and precious advices, comments and suggestions. I would like to express my gratitude to all the members of my thesis committee, Jack Miller, Normand Labrie, and Njoki Wane for their intellectual openness, and enthusiasm in supporting me through my doctoral studies. Many thanks to Terry Wotherspoon for his engaging and considerate evaluation of my work in his role of external appraiser. Finally, I would like to thank Arleen Schenke for her excellent editing work and comments and suggestions for the revisions. Furthermore, I also would like to give thanks to my friend Stephen Bahry for all his support. Their comments, reflections, and advice have greatly contributed to making this dissertation readable and useful for international Tibetan studies, and for those who hope to conduct sociological analysis of Tibetan society and education and apply it to similar social-educational contexts.
During my learning journey in China, I would like to give thanks to Wan Minggang, Wang Jian, and Wang Jiayi at the Northwest Normal University in Gansu, who welcomed me in China and provided institutional support for my supplementary activities at different stages of my doctoral studies. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Department of Tibetan Language and Culture at the Northwest University for Nationalities in Gansu and all the Tibetan village elders who dialogued with me in my research and openly shared their views and work experiences.

This study has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Ontario Graduate Scholarships. Additional funding for fieldwork was provided by Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements Award, University of Toronto’s research travel grants, and a Trace Foundation research grant. These funds were crucial in completing this study.

Finally, this study would not have been possible without the support of Tri Samden and Lha Motso, Ma Xue Feng, the love and encouragement of my wife, Dai Gyki Tso, and my daughter So Nam Gyki, and my parents, as well as my sister and brothers.
Table of contents

Abstract ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------(ii)
Acknowledgements --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- (iv)
Chapter 1: Introduction --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------(1)
  1.1. Rationale for the study ----------------------------------------------- (2)
  1.2. Research problem -------------------------------------------------- (10)
  1.3. Research questions ------------------------------------------------- (13)
Chapter 2: Research Design and Methodology ----------------------------- (15)
  2.1. Critical conceptual review and synthesis ----------------------------- (15)
    2.1.1. Conceptual review of sociology ----------------------------------- (17)
    2.1.2. Conceptual review of anthropology ------------------------------- (18)
    2.1.3. Conceptual review of Tibetan history ----------------------------- (19)
    2.1.4. Conceptual review of educational textbook ------------------------ (19)
    2.1.5. Conceptual review of philosophy --------------------------------- (19)
  2.2. Creative Theoretical Synthesis -------------------------------------- (21)
    2.2.1. The method and principle of adaptation --------------------------- (23)
    2.2.2. The method and principle of integration -------------------------- (23)
  2.3. Multiple adaptive applications -------------------------------------- (24)
  2.4. Other methods ------------------------------------------------------ (26)
    2.4.1. Unstructured interviews ----------------------------------------- (26)
    2.4.2. Narrative dialogue ---------------------------------------------- (27)
    2.4.3. Field notes ----------------------------------------------------- (27)
Conclusion ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------ (29)

Chapter 3: Applicability of the structuration theory to Tibetan Society (30)

Rationales for choosing Anthony Giddens’s structuration theory ------ (30)
  A. Anthony Giddens’s position among key sociological thinkers -------- (32)
B. Anthony Giddens’s rationale for the structuration theory  (35)
C. Anthony Giddens’s critique of Functionalism  (36)

3.1. Anthony Giddens’s structuration theory  (39)

3.1.1. The notion of structuration  (39)
3.1.2. The two elements of Structuration: a) Social integration  (40)
                 b) System integration  (40)
3.1.3. Connections between micro and macro  (41)
3.1.4. Simultaneous multi-dimensional interactions at the same time  (42)
3.1.5. The duality of structure  (42)
3.1.6. The notion of practical consciousness  (43)
3.1.7. The three types of constraint  (44)
3.1.8. The concept of interaction and action  (45)
3.1.9. The two types of contradiction  (46)
3.1.10. The notion of agent and agency  (46)
3.1.11. The notion of institutional stability and change  (47)
3.1.12. The notion of three types of society  (48)
3.1.13. The notion of seriality  (49)

3.2. Critique of Anthony Giddens’s structuration theory  (50)

3.2.1. Functionalists critique of structuration theory  (51)
3.2.2. Social theorist critique of structuration theory  (53)
3.2.3. Methodological critique of structuration theory  (55)
3.2.4. Ideologist critique of Structuration theory  (56)
3.2.5. Philosophical critique of Structuration theory  (57)
3.2.6. Ontological critique of structuration theory  (57)
3.2.7. Structuralist critique of structuration theory  (59)
3.2.8. Critique of structuration theory from Sociologist of religion  (62)
3.2.9. Four concepts of social structure and Giddens  (63)

Conclusion  (66)

Chapter 4: The introduction of Je TsongKhapa to sociology
of education

4.1. Je TsongKhapa's Philosophical Thought

4.1.1. A brief overview of Tibetan philosophy

4.1.2. Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical position

4.1.3. Introduction of Je TsongKhapa to sociological field

4.2. Je TsongKhapa’s a number of social structuring effects

4.2.1. Interdependent co-rising and its influences on Tibetan literate society

4.2.2. Causality and its influences on oral society

4.2.2.1. The practice of causality in friendship

4.2.2.2. The practice of causality in marriage

4.2.2.3. The practice of causality in the workplace

4.2.2.4. The practice of causality in family relationships

4.2.2.5. The practice of causality in education

4.2.2.6. The practice of causality in food supply

4.3. Je TsongKhapa’s notion of conventional and ultimate realities

4.3.1. Defining conventional reality

4.3.2. Defining ultimate reality

4.4. Relation of Je TsongKhapa’s and Anthony Giddens’s ontological approaches to reality

4.4.1. The notion of Self-identity

4.4.2. Comparisons between Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy and Giddens’s sociology

4.5. Reinterprets and Critiques of the Works of Je TsongKhapa

4.5.1. Relationships between Je TsongKhapa’s thought and social structure until 1951

4.5.2. Je TsongKhapa’s religious reform effect on Tibetan social structure as a political influence through traditional education institutions

4.5.3. Spirituality as an element of social change

4.5.4. Critique of Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical theory
Chapter 5: Multidisciplinary perspective on social structuration

5.1. Spirituality and social structuration

5.1.1. Relating spirituality to society
5.1.2. Spiritual power relations in Tibetan society
5.1.3. Critique of spirituality studies
   A. Defining spirituality
   B. Epistemological challenges of spirituality

5.2. Language and social structuration

5.2.1. The relations of language to social structure
5.2.2. The relation of language to agency
5.2.3. The relation of language to agent in Tibetan society

5.3. Tibetan and Chinese perspectives on social structure and education

5.3.1. The duality of kinship and region
5.3.2. The duality of tribe and state
5.3.3. The duality of polity and spirituality

5.4. Outsiders’ research on Tibetan social structure

5.4.1. The notion of controlling time and space
5.4.2. The role of religion in social development
5.4.3. Sharing the similar institutional structure
5.4.4. Nomadic Tibetan society

5.5. The theory of social change

5.5.1. Social change in two levels of realities
5.2.2. The categories of social change

Conclusion
6.1. A brief history of Tibetan social structure and education -------------(132)

6.1.1. Historical analysis of Tibetan social structural changes -------------(132)
   a). Tibetan social structure and education during Tibetan emperor period (133)
   b). Tibetan social structure and education in fragmentation period ------ (135)
   c). Tibetan social structure and Education after Je TsongKhapa’s reform (136)
   d). Chinese sociologists’ analysis of China’s social structure---------------- (137)
   e). Dual social structure of Tibetan society in China (1951-present) ------ (138)

6.2. Defining the notion of agent/agency in Tibetan society ----------------- (141)

6.2.1. Giddens’ notion of agent and agency ---------------------------------- (141)

6.2.2. None-sociologist notion of agent and agency -------------------------- (142)
   a). The concept of agent ----------------------------------------------- (142)
   b). The concept of agency ---------------------------------------------- (143)

6.2.3. Relating the concept of agent/agency to interdisciplinary fields ------ (145)
   a). Agency/agent and language ------------------------------------------ (145)
   b). Agency and Culture ------------------------------------------------- (146)
   c). Agent and adult education ------------------------------------------ (146)
   d). Agent and spirituality -------------------------------------------- (150)

6.2.4. The notion of Tibetan agent and agency ----------------------------- (151)
   a). Agents and agency in Tibetan oral society ------------------------- (154)
   b). Agents and agency in Tibetan literate society ---------------------- (154)

6.3. The macro level elements of social structuration in Tibetan society (155)

6.3.1. Tibetan cultural and natural environment ---------------------------- (156)

6.3.2. Population -------------------------------------------------------- (157)

6.3.3. Language ---------------------------------------------------------- (160)

6.3.4. Culture ----------------------------------------------------------- (161)
   a). Religion— Buddhism and Bön ---------------------------------------- (161)
   b). The ethos of Tibetan folk-culture ---------------------------------- (163)

6.4. The constituents of micro level Tibetan social structuration -------- (165)

6.4.1. The local cultural context of the Tibetan micro social structuration -- (165)
   a). The oral literacy context of The King Gesar epic ------------------- (166)
Chapter 7: Setting Giddens and Je TsongKhapa in Dialogue:  
Structuration in Spiritual Society  
7.1. The elements of structuration in spiritual society  
7.1.1. Social integration  
7.1.1.1. Social integration in Tibetan oral society  
7.1.1.2. Social integration in Tibetan literate society  
7.1.2. System integration in Tibetan society  
7.1.2.1. System integration in Tibetan oral society  
7.1.2.2. System integration in Tibetan literate society  
7.1.3. Spiritual integration in Tibetan society  
7.1.3.1 Spiritual integration in Tibetan oral society  
7.1.3.2. Spiritual integration in Tibetan literate society  
7.1.4. Rules and resources in Tibetan society  
7.1.4.1. Rules in Tibetan society  
7.1.4.2. Resources in Tibetan society  
7.2. Sub-divisions of structuration types  
7.2.1. Personal life structuration  
7.2.1.1. Defining the elements of personal life structuration  
A) The ultimate elements of personal life structuration  
B) The conventional elements of personal life structuration  
7.2.2. Institutional structuration
7.2.2.1. Defining the elements of institutional structuration  (195)
   A) The ultimate elements of Institutional structuration  (195)
   B) The conventional elements of Institutional structuration  (197)

7.2.3. Educational structuration  (198)
7.2.3.1. Defining the elements of educational structuration  (198)
   A). The ultimate elements of educational structuration  (199)
   B). The conventional elements of educational structuration  (200)

7.2.4. Spiritual structuration  (202)
7.2.4.1. Defining the elements of spiritual structuration  (202)
   A). The ultimate elements of spiritual structuration  (203)
   B). The conventional elements of spiritual structuration  (207)

7.3 Authority types  (210)
7.3.1. Political authority  (212)
7.3.2. Spiritual authority  (214)
7.3.3. The structure of the governing systems in Tibetan society  (215)

Conclusion  (219)

Chapter 8: Tibetan Society and Education  (221)

8.1. Classifying Tibetan Society  (221)
8.1.1. General structure of Tibetan society  (225)
8.1.1.1. Oral society and its social structure  (226)
8.1.1.2. Social structure of oral society  (229)
8.1.1.3. Social control in oral society  (230)
8.1.1.4. The structure of the clan  (231)
8.1.1.5. The structure of the village  (231)
8.1.1.6. The structure of tribe and Sub-Tribe  (232)
8.1.2. Literate society and its social structure  (233)
8.1.2.1. Monastic network based macro level of social structure  (234)
8.1.2.2. Monastic institutional relation and interaction  (236)

8.2. Education and social structuration in Tibetan society  (237)
8.2.1. The three forms of education and its relation to social structure ------(237)
8.2.2. Tibetan monastic education and its relation to social structure--------- (238)
8.2.3. Tibetan oral education and its relation to social structure ----------- (243)
8.2.4. School education and its relation to Tibetan social structure-------- (245)
8.2.5. The exploratory critiques on the purpose of the three forms
of education in Tibetan society ---------------------------------------- (251)

Conclusion --------------------------------------------------------------- (252)

Chapter 9: Conclusion -------------------------------------------------------- (254)

9.1. Contributions of the study --------------------------------------------- (254)
9.2. Limitations of the Study ----------------------------------------------- (256)
9.3. Implications of the work of Je TsongKhapa and Giddens
for the future of Tibetan society ------------------------------------------- (257)

REFERENCES ----------------------------------------------------------------- (263)

List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>The three forms of education in Tibetan society</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Giddens’s comparison between Functionalist theory and Theory of structuration</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Types of resources</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Bryant and Jary’s comparison of Functionalist theory and Structuration Theory</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Comparison of philosophies</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Analysis of Giddens’s and Je TsongKhapa’s ontological approaches to reality</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Analysis of Giddens’s and Je TsongKhapa’s ontological approaches to reality</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>Comparisons between Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy and Giddens’s Structuration theory</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Characteristic Comparison of Informal Learning/Education</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Defining the multi-aspects of monastic education</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 Types of Resources ----------------------------------------------- (188)
Table 12 Types of Sub-Structuration in Tibetan Society ---------------------- (189)
Table 13 Types of Authority in Tibetan Society ---------------------------- (212)
Table 14 Presence & Absence of Authority types in Tibetan Society -------- (214)
Table 15 Types of Authority in Tibetan Society ---------------------------- (218)
Table 16 Giddens's Three Types of Society Compared with Tibetan Society -- (223)
Table 17 Content of School Textbooks*: Grades 1-9 ------------------------ (246)
Table 18 The types of society -------------------------------------------- (258)

List of Figures

Figure 1 The fabric of Tibetan society ------------------------------------- (12)
Figure 2 Traditional Social Structure of Tibet ---------------------------- (137)
Figure 3 Tibetan Societies in China as of 1950 --------------------------- (139)
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Despite the growing interest in Tibetan Studies as an international, interdisciplinary field, the structure of Tibetan society is still relatively underexplored (Goldstein, 1971; Samuel, 1993). Studies prior to the 1990s focused mostly on Tibetan history, religion, and philosophy, and on Tibetan border societies such as the refugee communities in Nepal and India. Over the last three decades much time has been spent on arguments about policy, politics, and social change without producing any new in-depth data.

This study attempts to redress this situation by proposing a sociology of Tibetan society and, emerging from this, a Tibetan sociology of education. Set in the wider context of concerns about Tibetan society in China, the sustainability of its culture, history and identity, and the need for a relevant system of education, it presents an analysis of Tibetan social structure and the conditions for social change. Specifically, I investigate social structural shifts in what I see as the three historically institutionalized structural pillars of Tibetan society. The first is the spiritual dimension of Tibetan social life and the three distinct forms of education—oral education, monastic education, and state schooling. The second involves examining how spirituality is a force of structuration in Tibetan society that integrates virtually all the traditional social elements of family, knowledge production, hierarchies of power, relations of urban to rural, and relations with the external world. The third involves analyzing Tibet's own particular institutions of knowledge production, how they interrelate, and how they have evolved historically to produce differing outcomes for individuals, institutions and sectors within Tibet’s social structure.
In this introduction, I outline the rationale for my study, the background that has led me to these concerns, and the central questions that guided my research.

1.1. Rationale for the Study

Tibetan social structuration is an under-researched area. Interestingly, no demographers, sociologists, geographers, economists, education researchers or political scientists have engaged in large scale societal research on Tibetan society to date. A few articles\(^1\) have attempted to address Tibetan demography, social change or political issues and, more recently, social scientific research (Bauer & Childs, 2008). These intellectual contributions are enabling researchers to examine how economic prosperity and transformative structural changes are affecting Tibetan culture and politics, but they are limited in scope.

In this historical-theoretical study, I seek to apply Western sociological theory to an analysis of the Tibetan context, but also to localize and develop this theory in relation to the rich analytical traditions of Tibet. It is an initial attempt to produce a fruitful analysis of Tibetan society by developing a synthesis of internal and external approaches. I use the Tibetan approach of traditional philosopher Je TsongKhapa,\(^2\) and the Western approach of contemporary British sociologist Anthony Giddens. My aim is to reconcile these two social forms and theories through the use of 'conventional' micro and macro analysis, and 'ultimate' micro and macro analysis. According to Giddens, sociologists need to see society as a complex whole dialectically structured by many different elements such as social classes, in-groups, organizations, tribes and sub-tribes, cultural trends, social relationships, forms of leadership, ways of taking on social

---

\(^1\) This refers to literature written in English, Chinese, and Tibetan.

\(^2\) This study uses the name form Je TsongKhapa. Je (Jets) is an honorary word of respect in Tibetan tradition (རྗེ་ནང་ཁ་ or རྗེ་ཙོང་ཁ་). Elsewhere in the literature, scholars refer to him as: Dzong-ka-ba (Napper, Dreyfus, Hopkins); Lama Tsong kha pa (Singh); Tsong-Kha-pa (Newland); Tsong kha pa (Laird, Tillemans, Thupten Jinpa); and Tsong khapa (Garfield, Sonam Thakchoe, Ruegg).
roles, historical causes and effects, and family members’ experiences. Up to the present, however, there has been no sociological study that has analyzed Tibetan society in relation to how: a) spiritual monastic institutions influence social structuration at the macro societal level, b) oral society is constituted and sustains social structuration at the micro local level, and c) issues of education and language are connected to both these aspects of social structure.

Social structure is a core concept in the field of sociology (Williams & Sewell, 1992; Porpora, 1989) that Giddens has extended through his development of structuration theory. This theory has many applications, but has never been used to analyze the structure of Tibetan society. Despite the broad set of approaches that could be used for this analysis—functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and theories of rational choice, modernity, and rediscovering the body (Wallace & Wolf, 1998)—I have chosen structuration theory for several reasons. Giddens’s concepts of the duality of structure and the separation between structure and system are particularly useful in analyzing the Tibetan context. In addition, his non-Functionalist and non-Structuralist approach to sociology (Bryant & Jary, 1991) provides a powerful framework for understanding educational structuration in various types of societies. Although schooling reproduces social capacity and shapes social structure significantly (Sawchuk, 2005; Heyman, 1999; Wotherspoon, 1998), Giddens has neglected education in his structuration theory. Nevertheless, a number of researchers such as Shilling (1992) have been applying his work to education. At the same time, bringing these ideas into dialogue with Tibetan traditions presents challenges. Specifically, in this dissertation we see that transmitting these foreign ideas to Tibetan context requires adapting Je TsongKhapa’s notion of natural existence to the secular domain, and especially his emphasis on practice.

Developing a foundation of Tibetan sociology of education requires two steps. First, it
requires a clear vision of a sociology of Tibetan society; second, the three forms of Tibetan education need to be situated within this sociology. In turn, creating a comprehensive sociological perspective on Tibetan society involves understanding what is rooted in Tibetan society and how it affects social structuration. Tibetan philosophy sees reality as consisting of two interrelated levels—conventional reality and ultimate reality. With its two levels of macro and micro analysis, Giddens’s theory resembles this binary Tibetan approach in some ways.

By way of introduction it can be said that in Tibetan philosophy, ultimate reality refers to the idea that all objects or phenomena are composed of various non-identical elements, and that these elements exist in dialectical relationship both to each other and to perceived (or conventional) reality. The aim is to deconstruct an object or phenomenon in order to understand its constituent parts and how these parts co-exist with and influence each other. In terms of sociology of education, the concept of ultimate reality helps us to comprehend deeper levels of social reality; for example, the relationship between organizations, institutions, authority systems, and the context of teaching/learning. The concept of ultimate reality also gives us a methodological approach based on dialectical analysis.

The idea of how reality can be interpreted in relation to ultimate and conventional approaches may be unfamiliar to some Western readers. Yet it is the core concept in Buddhist religion and philosophy—the concept that human desire clouds and distorts our understanding of our nature. Conceptually, it argues with empiricists who believe that observation and deduction from observation is straightforward and more or less monotonic. The Buddhist worldview postulates that happiness and authentic comprehension of our nature is filtered, and in a fundamental way 'corrupted' by our desires. The argument is that, as humans, we will never
achieve comprehension of the essential or universal character of ourselves and our world.³ This is a simple expression of the complex ideas developed by Buddha and his followers including Je TsongKhapa. This idea has a long standing parallel in many Eastern and Western philosophies.⁴ It is possible to argue that both Hegel and Marx's concept of false consciousness is a similar realist view of the world and knowledge construction.

In my historical-theoretical study, I argue that part of Je TsongKhapa's unique contribution to Buddhism and Tibetan society was to establish and implement a holistic system that integrated family and monastery; family life; the relations, forms, and distribution of knowledge; the roots of power; the different sects of Buddhist philosophy; and the overall form, content, and structure of Tibetan society which has held intellectual, social, and—until very recently—legal authority over Tibet. More than this, Je TsongKhapa established a curriculum and pedagogy in which (monk) scholars learn the idea of dialogic discourse based on principles of dialectical thinking and the worldview that knowledge and understanding comes from exploring oppositions and how they develop, integrate, and transform knowledge. His worldview is similar to that of Giddens's in many respects, but supersedes the latter by over six hundred years.

This view that the world can be understood through dialectical oppositions has been adopted in a variety of disciplines including physics—in concepts like matter and anti-matter. In my study it refers to Je TsongKhapa's particular ability to grasp and implement the totality of these oppositional structures and to integrate society at almost all of its macro and micro levels. This establishment of a knowledge, power, and integrated system within and extending out from Tibet is why it is virtually impossible to understand the particular form of social structure and

³ See for instance, Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (section first published online July 8, 2011).
worldview of Tibet at so many levels without grasping these underlining empirical rationality. These levels include the spiritual dimension. It is the institutionalization of these integrated systems that explains why I use Je TsongKhapa's work to propose a sociology of Tibet. His institutional, ideational, and pedagogical constructions are the structural foundations of Tibetan society, its spirituality, and its relations with the rest of Buddhism, Asia, and the world.

In Western contexts, ultimate reality tends to be associated with absolute or universal reality. However, in my study, I use the term ultimate because it is the term most frequently used over the past several decades in international Tibetan studies, Buddhist philosophy studies, and modern science (Van der Kuijp, 2015; Jackson, 2011; Lamrimpa (Author) & Wallace (Translator), 2010b; Newland, 2008; Liberman, 2004c; Thakchoe Sonam, 2007; Chaff, 2007; Fenwick, 2004; Finkelstein, 2003; Thupten Jinpa, 2002; Neville, 2001; Hopkins, 1998; Garfield, 1994; Thurman, 1994, 1990; Napper, 1989; Hopkins, 1988; Perdue, 1976).

Using Giddens’s sociology and Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy to conduct a combined analysis of Tibetan society is a new approach. This new approach establishes the basis for a sociology of Tibetan society as the basis for a Tibetan sociology of education. Although the two thinkers are radically different and belong to different times and places, I argue that they have several commonalities. Applying and using both their concepts is a reflexive process of synthesis, the results of which enable me to categorize and extend structuration theory to several sub-areas suited to the Tibetan context: to personal life, as well as to institutional, educational, economic, societal, and spiritual life. In addition, the results allow me to analyze the structure of two types of authority—political and spiritual—and compare both thinkers’ ontological approaches to reality.

There are also differences between the work of Giddens and Je TsongKhapa that will not
be explored in this thesis. For example, Giddens posits his work as universal, meaning it can be applied to any society. Yet many of his constructions implicitly reference a secular, capitalist, and Western worldview. Je TsongKhapa's work is based on a rural society in a region where practical issues like teaching people to farm in relatively infertile soil and a short growing season is the backdrop to the institutions he forms (Hortsong Jigme, 2009; Danzhu Aangben, 2001; Jia Luo, 1999; Samuel, 1993). His conception of monasteries is also particular. Unlike monasteries in many European societies in the same era which were based on self-choice. Tibetan monasteries ask each village family to send their brightest son to become a monk and be trained as a developer, implementer, and transmitter of knowledge. Monks in Tibet never experience 'alienation' from the needs and relations of their village since they always come from and work with the community. They literally have direct connections to the family and the village so the needs of these communities are never subordinated by property or the types of relations that Giddens speaks of. Tibetan monks are also trained to engage with concepts, insights, and knowledge from the outside world.

The relations of Gemeinshaft and Gesellshaft (Tönnies, 1887; Hobbes, 1889; Jamison, 1991) found in Western society does not exist in Je TsongKhapa's institutional worldview. Issues of universals and particularly the educational sphere are integrated in a systematic and organic totality that is quite different from Giddens's view. This is part of Je TsongKhapa's originality and why his social changes are so integral to understanding how Tibet works and to developing a sociology of Tibetan society.

My analysis of the two idea systems also results in a critical view of the Tibetan social context. In particular, I show how Je TsongKhapa’s religious reform based on a synthesis of Tibetan Buddhist philosophical traditions reshaped and restructured the social system of Tibet. I
apply Giddens’s concept of structuration to Tibetan society before and after this reform movement. In this context, I present an analysis of: a) Tibetan social structure, b) the four micro level elements of social constitution, c) the social roles of individual agents, and d) the ‘Lhabrang’ roles of lamas in mediating between oral society and literate society. My study also aims to increase understanding of the need for social structural change in Tibet by educating people to be aware of the fundamental collapse of social structures at the local and societal level. Increasing this awareness will contribute to reinforcing Tibetan social structure and the long-term sustainability of Tibetan society across China.

This historical-theoretical study builds on previous work I have done in response to some of the above problems. In 1999 I wrote a book in Tibetan called *Sociology and Tibetan Society* based on my teaching of an introductory sociology course in the Tibetan Language and Culture Department at the Northwest University for Minorities in China. In fact, while teaching and applying modern sociology to Tibetan social phenomena, I faced several challenges due to the need for interpretation of Western theory and its adaptation to the Tibetan social context. The adaptation challenges were several. Concepts of social change, social roles, social structure, social institutions, different perspectives, and social relations all differed somewhat in Tibetan society (Jia Luo, 1999). Not only were many new terms needed to describe the old social, cultural, and political concepts but also a dialectical analysis of Tibetan society was necessary. Although, “sociology enables us to gain insights about our lives by examining the relations that exist between individuals and social forces” (Wotherspoon, 1998 p. 213), nothing on modern sociology was published in Tibetan or in translation from English or Chinese.

---

5 Lhabrang is the Lhamas’ house, a powerful social institution in Tibetan society because it manages the Lhamas’ relation to villages, tribes, and sub-tribes.
In my teaching at that time, I explored the relations of four elements of social constitution to the social structure, the central role of spirituality in Tibetan society, and how the different social organizations use religion and politics to empower themselves. Within this social and political situation, there are no insider Tibetan sociologists doing critical sociological analysis and none who are exploring undiscovered social obstacles to Tibet’s societal development. At that time, I also explored the relations of the collective perspective to societal identity and the dialectical relationship between the monastery as a social institution and Tibetan society as a whole.

Thus, in Chapters 5 and 6 of the present study, I discuss the micro and macro elements of social constitution in a spiritual centric structuration process. I also present a dialectical analysis of Tibetan society divided into several sections: a) the general structure of Tibetan society, b) the relationship between different components of Tibetan society, and c) village structure, tribal structure, monastery structure, and government structure before 1959. In Chapters 3 and 4, I focus on a dialectical review of theories of modern sociology and discuss the applicability of Je TsongKhapa’s notion of “interdependent co-arising” and Giddens’s theories of sociology to the analysis of Tibetan society. The social roles of micro agents and the roles of the Lhabrang institution in Tibetan society are also part of this discussion. In Chapters 7 and 8, I synthesize Giddens's and Je TsongKhapa's work, and Tibetan society and education.

In my study, I take both a historical and contemporary perspective on Tibetan society and education, with the demarcation being 1951 when the Seventeen-Point Agreement with China divided Tibet into multi-hierarchical autonomous regions under Chinese sovereignty. My discussion of social structural shifts in Tibetan society (Chapter 6) relates more to the period before 1951, while the discussion of education (Chapter 8) relates to the present because the
school system was established by the Chinese after 1951. Both Tibetan oral education and monastic education were the same before and after this time, and are ongoing today.

By showing the structuration process in a spiritual society, this study makes explicit the key role of Je TsongKhapa’s generalization of Buddhist spirituality in Tibet and how the multifunctional monastic institutions have reshaped and restructured Tibetan society into a spiritual-centric society. I conclude my study by addressing the future sociological and educational implications of my research.

1.2. Research Problems

As a sociologically intact field of analysis, Tibetan society has not yet been conceptualized and defined from sociological and educational points of view as Table 1 reveals below, nor has its social constitution been analyzed at either the macro or micro level. In particular, although a great number of anthropologists have done field work in Tibet, no sociologists have conducted an analysis of the relation between these constituents of Tibetan social structure and its history.

Table 1

The Three Forms of Education in Tibetan Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogies</th>
<th>Oral Education</th>
<th>School Education</th>
<th>Monastic Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogies</td>
<td>Pedagogy of local knowledge</td>
<td>Pedagogy of assimilation</td>
<td>Pedagogy of spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers</td>
<td>Local material and economic power assembled by Tibetan populations, and open to every social member.</td>
<td>Political and military power supported by state authority system, and open to all school age Tibetan children</td>
<td>Spiritual and cultural power assembled by spiritual authority system, and open to only monks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Supporting micro social structuration.</td>
<td>Undermining both oral and monastic education.</td>
<td>Supporting macro social structuration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The lack of basic sociological understanding of Tibetan social structure and its structuration problems is associated with insufficient studies on the question of why neither Tibetan monastic education nor the state school education system have produced Tibetan sociologists and social theory that can identify the actual social problems facing Tibetans in China. The lack of research on social structure and the structuration process leads to many negative consequences. As a result of current practices of social structural externalization, children are sent to schools where the curriculum is irrelevant to their lives and where they are required to speak a language that is not their own. This decreases their cultural values, makes them relinquish their identity, and disengages them from their cultural activities, which in turn leads to sociocultural and linguistic alienation.

These practices seriously impact Tibetan social structural relations from family to clan, clan to village, village to tribe, and from tribe to the macro frame of the monastic institutional network. This study is the first sociological inquiry to explore and analyze the structuration process in a rural spiritual society from sociological and educational perspectives. Historically, Tibetan society has gone through four major types of social constitution with radical changes and reconstitutions from one stage to another: a) fragmented society, b) unified state society, c) defragmented society, and d) reunified society. This aspect of Tibetan social history has not attracted insufficient attention from social scientists.

Socio-geographical Tibetan society includes U-tsong (Tibet), Amdo (Anduo), and Kham (Kang). Geographical differences among these three major regions\(^6\) influenced Tibetan social structure before 1950, as illustrated in the historical map below.

---

\(^6\)U-Tsong is roughly equivalent to the territory of today’s Tibetan Autonomous Region; Kham covers western Sichuan and parts of Yunnan, and Amdo covers parts of Gansu and Qinghai provinces in China.
U-tsong’s social structure is a state polity system, Kham’s social structure continued with tribal chief authority alongside monastic institutional networks, while Amdo’s social structure continued a monastic institutional network with the support of tribal chiefs. Nevertheless, these three regions share the same model of dual political and religious social organization. Addressing these points requires a social scientific perspective on the process by which Tibetan society has gone through fragmentation, reconstitution, and renewed fragmentation.


Several radical social and ideological changes have occurred as a result of Chinese regulations: Tibet is being compelled to shift from a premodern to a modern society, and from a spiritual to a material approach; long established social relations among regions and among tribes have been cut off. These changes are being made by re-fragmenting society and establishing a national school system. As a result of the social re-fragmentations, the three provincial Tibetan societies (U-Tsong, Kham, and Amdo) have become five different hierarchical social units within four Chinese provinces. The newly established school system has been undermining both micro and macro social structuration by affecting both oral and monastic
education. These effects can be seen in: a) removing the original authority system; b) making the Tibetan language secondary; c) turning the social structure into a dual structure, and d) enervating the monastic institutions.

Current approaches to Tibetan issues in China are problematic for several reasons: 1) international scholarly attention is mostly on politics; 2) internal attention is mostly on Buddhism and its practices; 3) no international or domestic scholars are studying the social structure; 4) sociological research development is lacking; 5) research on the relationship between language, culture, identity, and social structure is lacking; and 6) a grounded rationale for education for Tibetans in China is lacking. This last point results in a lack of Tibetan curriculum, textbooks, and teaching materials as well as teacher education for Tibetan teachers of Tibetan students.

The major research problem lies in point six above: the lack of a well-grounded education system that can maintain Tibetan language, culture, and identity while preparing Tibetan youth for modern life in general and for participation in Chinese or international society in particular. However, this research depends on preliminary analysis of points one through five. Accordingly, my study examines these issues by applying contemporary Western sociological theory, in particular Anthony Giddens’s structuration theory, in dialogue with Je TsongKhapa’s Tibetan dialectical method of philosophical analysis.

1.3. Research Questions

Based on the above research problems, the following questions guide my study:

- What has constituted Tibetan society at different stages?
- How should Tibetan society be conceptualized?
- How have monastic institutions reshaped and restructured Tibetan society into a spiritual centric society?
• What is the structuration process in a spiritual society?
• What effect has formal and informal education had on the structuration process in Tibetan society?
• What sort of education system can support the maintenance of a stable Tibetan society and a sustainable social structuration (including Tibetan language, culture and identity) in China?

These questions ground my analysis of the structuration process in Tibetan society in a sociological and educational perspective. I use the sociology of language (Gigliolo, 1972; Fishman, 1969), sociology of knowledge, and sociology of reasoning activities (Liberman, c2004; Dreyfus, 2003) to address social and linguistic concerns, and to classify the types of society and forms of education in Tibetan society.

I argue these classifications allow me to comprehend the complexity of social and structural relations among the components. In terms of methodology, I use text analysis, creative synthesis, and multiple applications. This combination of sociological analysis, methodology, and examination of the three forms of education orients my study toward a Tibetan sociology of education.
CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Grounded in the work of Anthony Giddens and Je TsongKhapa, my study proposes a sociology of Tibetan society and a related sociology of Tibetan education. In this chapter, I present the research design and methodology that guided my study. Three reasons have contributed to making this a fundamentally conceptual work. First, my research time coincided with the peak period of self-immolation protests by Tibetans in China. Given China's visa restrictions during this period, it was difficult to do fieldwork in Tibetan villages. Second, my interest lies in taking a holistic view of Tibetan social and spiritual structuration, which requires a more theoretical approach. Third, I wanted to take both an insider and outsider perspective on relating a sociology of education to the entire Tibetan society in China.

My historical-theoretical study brings literature together from multiple disciplines and languages, and is conducted using three main methodological steps—literature analysis, creative synthesis, and multiple applications (Sill, 2001). It is supplemented by elements of qualitative research such as unstructured interviews, narratives, and a field diary. In the following sections, I discuss each of these components.

2.1. Critical conceptual review and synthesis

This thesis is a socio-historical analysis of Tibetan society based on a synthesis of Je Tsongkhapa’s philosophy and Giddens’s theory of structuration. The aim is twofold: to lay the foundation for a Tibetan-specific sociology and to map a strategy for a Tibetan policy of education. The thesis deploys a range of literature in English, Tibetan, and Chinese, as well as supplementary data from experience in the field.
The literature I chose for review is written in English, Chinese, and Tibetan, and covers a range of studies in sociology, education, anthropology, Tibetan history, philosophy, religion, spirituality, language, and oral culture. I chose texts on the basis of their: a) academic credibility; b) common acceptance in the field; c) representativeness of either a distinctively insider or outsider view;; and d) ability to contribute to my inquiry into Tibetan social structure, including monastic institutions, school education, and oral communities.

My text analysis also includes compulsory textbooks used in the school education system. My purpose was to analyze their content in relation to the curriculum. Since 1951, school textbooks have been centrally organized on the assumption that knowledge is universal and should be applied universally. In my study I maintain that these textbooks tacitly assume that the ethnicity and history of all Chinese is Han Chinese. What is absent in this view is an understanding of local histories as well as local worldviews, languages, cultures, and institutions. It has been argued by indigenous peoples and minorities worldwide (Smith, 2003) that the Universalist worldview of a dominant group and its curricular and institutional forms does violence to children’s learning. Globally, there is evidence that this worldview has profound psychological effects including lowered self-esteem and alienation from self, school, family, and community (Dei, 1997).

Tibetan intellectuals argue similarly that the centralized and systematic implementation of a sole Han-based curriculum has psychological effects on the younger Tibetan generation. Each generation and society faces a cyclical 'crisis': the society must find ways to reproduce itself both biologically and socio-culturally. The latter happens in Tibet through its three forms of education and the interactions among them. The way Tibetan youth are educated—the content, pedagogy, and language of their schooling—informs the continuity of Tibetan social structuration.
Contradictory forms of socialization have the potential to drive a wedge between Tibet's youth and its ability to achieve. If the relationships between institutional and family forms in minority cultures in China are absent from the curriculum, students are unable to see their own world or a get an understanding of their worldview. Instead of allowing students to see connections between lessons at school and lessons at home, the curriculum builds a zeitgeist of uncertainty. Just as numerous scholars in other contexts have argued that the colonial curriculum ignores local knowledge at the expense of children in terms of learning, drop outs, and so on, I argue that school and home integration at the local level is an important factor in learning.

Related to these texts is also the need to reinterpret philosophical works of Je TsongKhapa. Analyzing his work plays a key role in understanding the fundamental grounding of a Tibetan sociology. His work has informed how Tibetan education and society was organized and how Tibetans viewed and educated themselves.

2.1.1. Conceptual review of sociology

This historical-theoretical study relies heavily on the seminal works of Anthony Giddens. Of particular relevance is The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration (1984), which explains the basic theoretical framework and primary notions of structuration theory. In addition, Capitalism and modern social theory: An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber (1971) allows me to understand the origins of Giddens’s work and its position in the field of Western sociology. Further, Social theory and modern sociology (1987) provides a picture of sociology in the social sciences.

Secondary literature on Giddens will also be relevant to this study. In particular, Bryant and Jary’s (1991) work, Anthony Giddens’s theory of structuration: A critical appreciation provides incisive, critical insights that support my study and balance the scope of application to
Tibetan society. Stones’s (2005) *Structuration theory* focuses mostly on the ontological dilemma of structuration theory, and his edited volume *Key sociological thinkers* (1998) provides a rich appreciation of Giddens’s sociological position. My analysis of these texts formed the theoretical foundations of my study.

In terms of China’s general sociological research, I analyzed a few of the works of leading Chinese sociologists\(^7\) Lu (2001) and Sun (2009). These authors basically omit attention to rural minority societies, including Tibet. For example, Lu’s (2001) ten social class divisions are evidence of how minorities’ are ignored or excluded from the classification of Chinese society. In addition, his application of sociological theories does not take spiritual centric minority societies into account, a fact that has incurred enormous critical arguments.

Interestingly, Sun (2009), a Chinese sociologist in Beijing, has taken a very critical and reflexive perspective on the dual social structure created by China. Unfortunately, although the process of producing new social conflicts in rural societies could apply to minority societies as well, Sun’s (2009) view is confined to Han rural society in China.

### 2.1.2. Conceptual review of anthropology

A number of anthropologists such as Ekvall, Gorstein, and Samuel, have conducted empirical studies on Tibetan communities. Samuel’s (1993) *Civilized shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan society* gives a general picture. Ekvall’s (1968) *Fields on the hoof: Nexus of Tibetan nomadic pastoralism* gives a general overview of the sub-society of Tibetan nomadic regions, and Goldstein (1989a; 1996; 2004) provides considerable insight based on interviews with Tibetan officials in Lhasa and Tibetan exiles in India.

At the same time, Goldstein’s (1989b; 1996; 2004) evidence is mainly limited to English

\(^7\) In addition to Lu xue yi (2001) and Sun liping (2009), this includes Fei Xiaotong (1991).
language materials stored in Western archives. Thus, his research excludes many versions of documents written in Tibetan and Chinese. In addition, he has not conducted research on Tibetan society and social structure in Kham and Amdo. Goldstein’s work gives an analysis of the political process and state officials, but does not provide evidence about cultural institutions or actors from civil society. As a result, information on the social structure outside of government and outside of Lhasa is not available in his work. Studies by linguistic anthropologists on the relation of language to social structure, spirituality, and agency all support the analysis of Tibetan social and spiritual structuration.

2.1.3. Conceptual review of Tibetan history

In Dungkar Tibetology Great Dictionary, Dungkar Losang Khrinley (2002) provides a wide range of knowledge on Tibetan philosophy, literature, arts, culture, religion, and sciences. These include major historical events in the past 5,000 years of Tibetan history, Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, Tibetan official documents, local law and regulations, ancient temples, major monasteries, and folk customs. This text is one of the primary resources for my study as it regards insider views of Tibetan society and education.

2.1.4. Conceptual review of educational textbook

I also analyzed texts relating to monastic education such as The two hands clapping: The education of a Tibetan Buddhist monk, as well as over 120 Tibetan articles on school education in Tibet. My analysis of Tibetan oral education and school education draws on my personal experiences and field observations.

2.1.5. Conceptual review of philosophy

In terms of philosophical texts, my analysis centres on Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical work and the work of his followers and critics. In his work The History of Amdo, Hortsong
Jigme (2009) provides insightful content on Je TsongKhapa's incomparable contributions to Tibet's social, spiritual, and political development, as well as his stabilization of the monastic institutions. Thupten Jinpa’s book *Self, reality and reason in Tibetan philosophy: Je TsongKhapa’s quest for the Middle Way* (2002), and his journal article *Delineating reason’s scope of negation: Je TsongKhapa’s contribution to Madhyamika’s dialectical method* (1998) provide the most reliable and insightful analysis of Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical account. His work enabled me to comprehend Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy and methodology, and to introduce him to the sociological field. It also enabled me to define conventional and ultimate reality in Tibetan society and establish this as a framework for my analysis.

Thurman’s (1990) *Tibetan Buddhist monasticism and intellectual culture*, and (1984) his book *The central philosophy of Tibet* discuss how Tibetan monastic institutions have developed Tibetan elite culture, Tibetan literate society, and the foundations of Tibetan philosophy. Duo shi’s (2010) *Tibetan Buddhist epistemology* gives insight into the categories of “nature human beings” and “acquired human beings” that further support my analysis of Tibetan society⁸.

Liberman’s (2004) *Dialectical practice in Tibetan philosophical culture: An ethnomethodological inquiry into formal reasoning* provides significant sociological insight into the pedagogy of monastic education. As Garfinkel writes in the Forward to this book:

Liberman’s study of reason as a public activity contributes to the re-description of the magisterial subjects of technical reason, rationality, method, and order in, about, as, as of, and inside with the local production and local accountability of sociology’s organizational Things in their details of ordinary society—contributes to the edification of social order as professional sociology’s subject—its singular, distinctive, and unique subject—by renewing that subject in its unavoidable properties of the Shop Floor Problem, that is, in its immediate and unmediated, observed, coherent workplace details (2004, p. x-xi).

---

⁸ The terms ‘nature human being’ and ‘acquired human beings’ are my translations of the Chinese terms used by Duo Shi.
Overall, the literature in English reveals research on the history of Tibet, resistance movements, Buddhist culture, and philosophy. The literature in Chinese reveals research focused on the history of Tibet, natural resources, populations, religion, and school education. The literature in Tibetan on the other hand shows more of a focus on micro social phenomena, language, literature, Tibetan Buddhism, education, and the history of Tibet. Clearly, there is no sociological study of Tibetan society in the literature originating from across each of these three linguistic areas.

2.2. Creative Theoretical Synthesis

In terms of methodology, I designed my study not only to synthesize the literature in English, Chinese, and Tibetan, but also to synthesize concepts from different fields, subjects, periods, and cultures. My study attempts to do a dialectical analysis of an internal Tibetan analytical approach and an external Western sociological approach.

Theoretical synthesis as a methodology has been applied in and across different disciplines including the field of sociology. Particularly, as Kilminster (1991) argues, Giddens’s structuration theory is the result of a theoretical synthesis that combines and recombines many other ingredients, and includes sociological and philosophical syntheses such as those advanced by Parsons (1937), Lenski (1966), and Collins (1985). Kilminster supportively sees that Giddens has taken a holistic view in developing the theory of structuration from multiple sociological and philosophical perspectives. Like Parsons, Giddens has adapted, integrated, and further developed theories from various sociological sectors or schools of thought in his theory of structuration.

---

9 The focus is on how to increase the quality of compulsory education by teaching the national curriculum in translation.
10 Since 1995.
Of course, there are methodological contentions among sociologists. For example, Kilminster (1991) disagrees with Giddens’s assertion that structuration theory is separate from empirical research, and maintains that Giddens’s notion of action is more complicated in several ways. Kilminster (1991) appreciates that Giddens learned the key notion of relations of power from Foucault and Weber, and the analysis of economic power from Marx. This recognition allows Giddens to view agents persistently as imbalanced or biased social actors. However, Kilminster (1991) also claims that Giddens has incoherently alluded that modern societies are an ‘artificial’ environment between man and nature. Human beings’ biological evolution is a precondition that made society possible.

I value this point because it gives me a means of interpreting the geographical-cultural relationship between the Tibetan people and the Tibetan plateau. At the macro level of social structuration, all of the various forms of language use, clothing, housing, culture, and oral literacy have been conceptualized from life experiences on the Tibetan plateau. In addition, entire Tibetan populations have biologically and genetically adapted to life on the plateau (Beall et al., 1994; Jennings, 1927).

Understanding and using the method of theoretical synthesis also gives me insight into how Giddens theorizes interactions among social agents, particularly in relations of presence and absence. This is very important for my study in interpreting the relatively limited capacity of oral agents in Tibetan society and the relatively much wider capacity of literate agents. By using written and printed literature as conditions for interacting with a wider social context, monastic institutions have established the socio-cultural network that supports the macro level of Tibetan social structuration. This allows me to see the two dimensions that characterize Tibetan social structure—a spirituality-based societal level structuration on the one hand, and a locally-based
micro level structuration on the other. Thus, I accept a number of Kilminster’s critiques of 
structuration theory.

My historical-theoretical study not only attempts to apply such Western theories, but also 
to localize and develop them through a synthesis with some of Je TsongKhapa’s rich analytical 
traditions from the Tibetan context.

2.2.1. The method and principle of adaptation

The methodological challenges of adapting Western theory to an analysis of Tibetan society are several. First, there is no terminologies in Tibetan language to describe the social, 
cultural, and political concepts for the sociological use, and also required a dialectical analysis of 
Tibetan society; for example, making concepts of social change, social roles, social structure, 
Social institution, and social relations relevant to Tibetan society. However, no translations of 
modern sociology have been published from English or Chinese into Tibetan. Second, under the 
current social and political situation, there are no insider Tibetan sociologists who are taking a 
critical sociological perspective and none who are exploring Tibet’s undiscovered social 
obstacles to issues societal development. To establish a Tibetan sociology, these explorations 
need to consider concepts from modern sociological theories critically and adapt them to 
analyzing local socio-cultural problems.

2.2.2 The method and principle of integration

An examination of Tibetan Studies literature in English, Chinese, and Tibetan reveals that 
each culture presents different focuses and approaches that reveal its views on Tibetan society. 
These include anthropological research, studies of Buddhism, political studies, and limited 
educational studies, but no sociological studies. Although these different focuses and approaches
provide multiple insights for Tibetan Studies, I needed a systematic view for my study that fits analysis of society as a whole. At the same time, these pure Western modern sociologies cannot perfectly fit an analysis of Tibetan society and education. Thus, it is important to take an integrated approach.

In terms of methodology, Childs (2005) writes that exploring the tensions between structure and agency allows us to understand the history of Tibetan society. He also provides insight on how researchers can use case studies to reinterpret a past society. In this way, he maintains, researchers can gain a perspective on the widely accepted rules of a society while also using case studies to illustrate how individuals negotiated these rules in practice.

2.3. Multiple Adaptive Applications

My use of multiple adaptive applications is based on several principles. First, on the principle of cross-disciplinary applications of philosophy to sociology, education to sociology, language studies to sociology, history to sociology and spirituality to sociology. Second, on the principle of cross-time applications of past sociological theory to present society. And third, on the principle of cross Eastern to Western and Western to Eastern applications of humanities and social science.

My study is an initial attempt to develop a synthesis of Tibetan and Western sociological approaches for a fruitful analysis of Tibetan society. The internal approach I selected is the Tibetan philosophy Je TsongKhapa and the Western approach is the sociology of Anthony Giddens. Reconciling these approaches involves not only a conventional micro and macro analysis, but also an 'ultimate' micro and macro analysis based on many other social trends or elements in society. Giddens argues that sociologists need to see society as a complex whole that is dialectically structured by many different elements. Je TsongKhapa argues that reality has two
levels—conventional and ultimate—that mutually influence each other through dialectical relationships.

The two steps of building a comprehensive understanding of the sociology of Tibetan society and situating the three forms of education within this context provides me with a method for proposing a Tibetan sociology of education. I use structuration theory to assess and illustrate educational divergences in Tibetan society, how the three primary forms of education in Tibet work, and their effects on interaction. Methodologically, my analysis examines how these three forms of education play a role in sustaining macro and micro Tibetan social structuration while also undermining the foundation of this structuration.

In my study, I also argue for the need to remedy the absence of language as a central structural variable in Giddens’s structuration theory. I argue that it is impossible to analyze society without looking at language. Particularly, language is a major element of social constitution that ties in with social structure through institutions, culture, population, and the environment. Language empowers agency, links intergroup relations across time and place, extends the scope of macro social structure, supports face-to-face interaction, and is related to socialization, knowledge, and social change in Tibetan society.

Applying issues of Tibetan history to my analysis provides a picture of how Tibetan social structure and structuration have evolved from the past to today. It also enables me to avoid deviating from the focus. For example, the history of Amdo provides an analysis of how Je TsongKhapa and his followers carried out societal structuration vis-à-vis the monasteries.

There are several reasons for exploring the relationship of spirituality to Tibetan social structure and structuration. First, Tibetan society is a spiritual centric society. Second, the Tibetan macro social structuration process is informed by spiritual resources, the spiritual
system, and spiritual authority. Thus, there is no way to analyze Tibetan social structuration without the notion of spirituality. The principle of cross-time application of past sociological theory to present society supports me in analyzing current premodern society from the standpoint of contemporary sociological traditions.

Using cross Eastern-Western applications of humanities and social theories enriches comprehension of the challenges facing the social structuration process in Tibetan society. For example, in my study, I synthesize a number of relevant anthropological studies on Tibetan society with the notion of social change and causality. Further, I make multiple adaptive applications to and within all the possible contexts in my study. These applications remedy some of the deficiencies of structuration theory in analyzing premodern and spiritual centric societies like Tibet. At the same time, they broaden the study's holistic approach.

2.4. Other methods

My methodology for this study is supplemented by qualitative research in the form of unstructured ethnographic interviews, oral histories, and field notes.

2.4.1. Unstructured interviews

I collected data through a number of telephone and personally administered interviews over a period of four years. The telephone interviews were conducted as overseas dialogues with local Tibetan elders, both men and women. During the writing, when I encountered facts about which I was unsure, I conveniently made phone calls to my relatives and to other reliable persons in my village and other villages. For example, when I was not sure how social relations between clan members have been sustained, what has been causing people to obey customary law in the village, or how to name newly extended families, I obtained information by phone.
In terms of personally administered interviews, I visited three Tibetan regions across three provinces in China during my summer field trips over the last four years, which allowed me to do the interviews on a one-on-one basis. The interviews were done with people from herding communities, agricultural communities, and two forms of monastic community.

2. 4. 2. Narrative dialogue

Narrative dialogue is a major method for gaining local social knowledge. I sat with villagers at different times and of different ages to engage conversation on the social relations among different age and gender groups. I reengaged the villagers on the same topic a year later, and collected the same information that resurfaced, while abandoning other unnecessary information.

Narrative dialogue is an advanced method that requires re-examining the same topics or questions with the same narrator at least six months or a year later. The researcher also needs to pay careful attention to the frequency with which the narrator mentions the same information. This is different from questionnaire interviews that are conducted over a short period of time. I attempted to avoid collecting false information for my study by conducting re-engagement dialogues over a longer period.

2. 4. 3. Field notes

I used two additional resources for my research. The first was a Tibetan book that I wrote called *Sociology and Tibetan society*, based on my teaching of basic sociology in the Tibetan Language and Culture Department at the Northwest University for Minorities in China. While teaching and applying modern sociology to Tibetan social phenomena, I faced several challenges in terms of theory.
Through my teaching at that time, I explored the relations of four elements of social constitution to the social structure. The main questions were: How does spirituality play a central role in Tibetan society and how did the different social organizations use religion and politics to empower their social positions? During that time, I also explored the relationship between the collective perspective and societal identity, and the dialectical relationship between the monastery and Tibetan society. These questions and explorations are integrated into this study.

In terms of field notes, my study focuses on the experiences I gained throughout my journey from a village boy up to today.¹¹ I was socialized in Tibetan villages, participated in the collective activities of the villages, and fully experienced the social relations in Tibetan local society. In addition, I had the opportunity to study at the Lhabrang monastery for several years and also had the experience of teaching at a university. My experiences from this journey allow me to accurately and confidently analyze and interpret both oral and literate society.

I used a field diary to chronicle my observations and experiences during my summer trips to Tibetan local society in Western China over a four-year period. This diary included some key applications of structuration theory; for example, recognizing the rules and resources in oral and literate society, and the change in social relations between monastic institutions and village communities. It also helped me to document and understand how newly resettled communities of herdspeople maintain their social relations and structure. I also collected visual diaries from the field through video recordings. These recordings validate my analysis of Tibetan society and social structuration.

¹¹ As a living field diary.
Conclusion

This chapter documents how my study has been designed and the various research methods I used. In terms of research design, my study combines conceptual work with field information. I conducted text analysis as an interdisciplinary examination of documents from three languages in the fields of philosophy, religion, history, education, political science, spirituality, anthropology, sociology, and critiques of structuration theory.

In terms of methodology, I conducted the conceptual work by employing the methods of creative synthesis and multi-applications. Focusing on Tibetan philosophy enables me to use two sharp methodological lenses on conventional analysis and ultimate analysis which constitutes a recent contribution to sociological research methodology. In addition, I utilize unstructured interviews, narrative dialogue, and field observations as supplementary data not only to remedy the lack of studies on Tibetan society in modern sociology and structuration theory, but also to justify how my analysis fits Tibetan society.
CHAPTER 3
APPLICABILITY OF STRUCTURATION THEORY TO
TIBETAN SOCIETY

This chapter examines the key concepts and critiques of structuration theory in order to determine the extent to which Giddens's sociology applies to Tibetan society. It is divided into two parts. The first part presents my rationale for choosing structuration theory for this study, Giddens's location among other sociological thinkers, his critique of functionalism, and his key concepts. The concepts range from his understanding of macro and micro structuration through to the relationship between agency and structure, the duality of structure, practical consciousness, and institutional stability and change. The second part of the chapter presents critical insights on structuration theory from the various perspectives of functionalism, social theory, methodology, ideology, philosophy, contemporary sociology, ontology, structuralism, traditionalism, and structural comparative approaches. These critiques provide me with a basis for assessing the comprehensiveness of Giddens's theory for a sociology of Tibetan society.

Rationale for choosing Anthony Giddens’s structuration theory

Different sociological approaches can be applied to the analysis of Tibetan society. Functionalism, for example, can be used to analyze the ways in which different social organizations or institutions function in Tibetan society. Conflict theory can be used to analyze the almost intractable conflict between the different schools of Buddhism before the arrival of Je TsongKhapa. Rational choice theory can be used to analyze how Tibetans’ collective rational choices affect Tibetan society from individual daily decisions to the societal level of social
change. Theories of modernity can be used to analyze what modernization might look like from Tibetan perspectives.

These approaches are useful if we do not blindly assume that Western theory in every case is most suitable to analyzing Tibetan society; to do so would be a form of internal colonialism or self-orientalism. Thus, Western theory needs to be selected critically. My study attempts to do a dialectical contrastive analysis of a Tibetan analytical approach and a Western sociological approach. This method reveals, on the one hand, the essential aspects of Tibetan social life to which Western sociological approaches have turned a blind eye and, on the other, the important aspects of contemporary society that have been ignored by traditional worldviews and analytic systems. Thus, this analysis argue that what is needed is a synthesis of relevant approaches.

As Bryant and Jary (2011) have observed that Giddens as a global social theorist in three ways: “as a major interpreter of the classical tradition and its successor, as the author of structuration theory, and [as a] public intellectual and political networker” (p.432). Giddens’s incisive critiques of functionalism, evolutionism, and historical materialism, and his theory of structuration, are major intellectual contributions that have grounded his theory in the social sciences worldwide. Particularly, in terms of developing his theory of structuration, Giddens has gone through three stages: a) exegesis and commentary, b) structuration and the duality of structure, and c) theorization of modernity.

Giddens identified a significant separation between structure and system, which Bryant and Jary (2011) summarize as follows, citing Giddens:

To examine the structuration of a social system is to examine the modes whereby that system, through the application of generative rules and resources, is produced and reproduces in social interaction (Giddens, 1976b: 353). System refers to the situated activities of human agents (Giddens, 1984: 25) and “the patterning of social relations across time-space (ibid: 377). Systems display structural properties but are not themselves structure.” Structure refers to a system of generative rules
and resources (Giddens, 1976a: 127), or as Giddens later put it, to rule-resources sets, implicated in the articulation of social systems (Giddens, 1984:377). Structure only exists in the memory of knowledgeable agents and as instantiated in action (p. 439).

Giddens’s interdisciplinary work has extended the scope of sociology from traditional sociological approaches such as structuralism and functionalism. He first analyzed earlier sociological approaches and then developed his own broader approach which extends to all social groups and subgroups within a society, including marginalized groups. In his view, there is an interactive simultaneous relationship between multidimensional causes and effects in society. Society not only affects people, but also produces or reproduces different elements of social structure. As a result, Giddens expands the aims, scopes, and methods of sociology by using anthropology, economics, political science, and philosophy in order to present a holistic view on society. As Bryant and Jary (2011) explain:


Education is the key channel for producing and empowering capable agents through knowledge from teaching and learning. Giddens provides powerful frames that in principle would allow us to see the greater scope of educational approaches and educational structuration in various types of societies.

A. Giddens’s position among key sociological thinkers

In his edited volume Key Sociological Thinkers (1998), Rob Stones included 21 of the most widely influential sociologists from Marx to Giddens and from Europe to North America.
Written by different contributors, the chapters not only comprehensively articulate the focus and theoretical challenges of these great sociological thinkers, but also highlight their particular contributions to the field of sociology. This book offers a contemporary summary of the developmental background of different sociological theories and situates an general understanding of Giddens’s "intersecting strengths of theory," his position in the history of sociology, and his place among the best known and most productive social thinkers of post-1960s Britain (Cohen, 1998; 1989).

In many ways, it is important to understand how these great social scientists influenced each other. In terms of social practice, interestingly, Giddens conducted creative syntheses of several primary social scientists. He transitioned Marx as a key contributor to the sociological field in 1971 through his early intellectual work in *Capitalism and Social Theory*. He addressed problems in analyzing modern society by examining the differences between Marx, Weber, and Durkheim (Cohen, 1998). Joas (1987) asserts that:

Giddens’ theory of structuration is interpreted as an attempt to transform themes of the Marxist philosophy of praxis into a comprehensive sociological theory. Giddens in recent years is one of the best known authors participating in the international discussion of sociological theory. The debates on the theory of class, the appropriation of the work of the classical sociologists—Durkheim and Weber—for contemporary sociological theory, the critical examination of interpretative sociology, post-structuralism and contemporary Marxism—these are all areas that can hardly be conceived of now without Giddens’ contributions (p. 13).

Cohen (1998) argues that the term structuration theory is a qualified notion that offers an abstract insight into the generic characteristics of society. Cohen (1998) describes the conception of social life and the substantive analysis that informed Giddens’s theory of structuration. However, he also critiques Giddens for avoiding any substantive applications that explain or describe particular cultural or historical circumstances (Stone, 2005).
Notably, Giddens borrowed the notion of practice from Garfinkel and the concept of interaction in everyday life from Goffman. However, he paid little to no explicit attention to American philosophy— for example, to John Dewey’s notion of human conduct—and he appears to have likewise ignored symbolic interactionism. Giddens’s sociological foundation also particularizes him from European theorists who deal with philosophical issues through sociological meanings. In terms of the relationship between structure and system, Cohen (1989) explains that:

Structural properties in social systems may not reproduce systems, but they shape, channel, and facilitate system reproduction whenever it occurs by providing agents with the practical awareness of the practices, relations, and spatiotemporal settings they require in order to participate in the reproductive process (p. 201).

Cohen (1989) examines certain key issues in Giddens’s sociological account, including what constitutes a collectivity. He explains that the concept of collectivity has two characteristics: 1) continuing features (e.g., settings and relationships) and 2) structural features (e.g., moral codes, types of domination, class structure). Every social actor is positioned in a certain social context during a certain period of time; thus, human action and interaction occur within space and time. Giddens’s fundamental notion of collective life is based on actors that repetitively conduct regular activities and rituals over time and space. These continuous practices become structural features of collectivities that reproduce permanence. These two characteristics of collectivity offer an important insight for this study. They allow me to identify Tibetan collectivities and their structure, and to understand how Tibetan collectivities continue their positions and social relationships—one of the key aims of my analysis. It is a great micro sociological notion that provides insight into the framing and description of the daily life of Tibetan collectivities across oral and literate social contexts. Indeed, strength and duration of
relations and connections over time and space can build all forms of boundaries in any particular society.

Cohen’s (2005) intensive examination of Giddens’s notion of empowerment and risk in post-traditional society is also very much in keeping with the purpose of this study, which seeks to provide a crucial examination of how to empower agents and recognize risk in Tibetan society. Thus, all the above theoretical contributions have positioned Giddens as a major representative of contemporary sociologists and, in particular, of the conglomerated sociological theory of structuration. Further, the theory of structuration has multidimensional application to broad social contexts. This is particularly important in dealing with the ontological challenges of using applicable to examine society.

B. Anthony Giddens’s Rationale for the Structuration Theory

Structuration theory aims to combine two perspectives: functionalism and structuralism. Functionalists predominantly stress the structure of the social system and the value of human actions. Functionalism insightfully asserts that the social system, structure, and agents’ actions are interrelated and interlinked, and that they also enable and constitute each other. It is clear that human agents both constitute the social structure and that this structure mediates agents’ interactions.

Giddens (1984) further divides agents’ interactions into three dimensions: communication, power, and sanctions. In turn, social structure and human interactions are interrelated through three aspects of modality: interpretive schema, facility, and norm. He asserts that although each of these dimensions could be viewed analytically as a single aspect, they overlap relationally within the context of practicing. Furthermore, in terms of the rules and resources that constitute
the social structure, both of rules and resources continuously support each other in reproducing the social structure and maintaining the past in the present.

**C. Anthony Giddens’s Critique of Functionalism**

Giddens’s work in analyzing and critiquing functionalism is a fundamental support for my study. It helps me to understand accurately why structuration theory is different from functionalism, how Giddens developed his theory from functionalism, and how other scholars critique his theory. Giddens asserts that functionalists are not only unable to analyze social phenomena thoroughly in both explicit and implicit ways, but also to see the functional and continuative dimensions of the social structure and system comprehensively. The equivalence of the social system and the structural continuative dimension needs to be viewed more broadly. Giddens (1984) uses the example of language learning to demonstrate how functionalists understood both constraint and enablement as elements of socialization, and how they could not envision the expandability of individual capacities:

Durkheim heavily emphasized the constraining elements of socialization, but later he in fact came to see more and more clearly that socialization fuses constraint and enablement. This is easily demonstrated in the instance of learning a first language. No one ‘chooses’ his or her native language, although learning to speak it involves definite elements of compliance. Since any language constrains thought (and action) in the sense that it presumes arrange of framed, rule-governed properties, the process of language learning sets certain limits to cognition and activity. But by the very same token the learning of a language greatly expands the cognitive and practical capacities of the individual (Giddens, 1984. p. 170).

Another aspect of the distinction between functionalism and structuration theory is based on comprehending the simultaneous multi-dimensions of social function and continuation. On the one hand, Giddens asserts that functionalism places more emphasis on the importance of unintended consequences of action and that the consequences regularly involve the reproduction of social systems through aspects of institutionalization. On the other hand, he states that:
Structure is regarded as rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction; institutionalized features of social systems have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilized across time and space. Structure can be conceptualized abstractly as two aspects of rules—normative elements and codes of signification. Resources are also of two kinds: authoritative resources, which derive from the co-ordination of the activity of human agents, and allocative resources, which stem from control of material products or of aspects of the material world. (Giddens, 1984, p. xxxi)

As shown in table 1, Giddens makes explicit comparisons between functionalism and structuration. In terms of basic concepts, he concedes that both theories have the same focus of system and structure, but have different conceptions of function/dysfunction, structuration, manifest/latent functions, and production/reproduction of society.

Table 1
Giddens’s Comparison of Functionalist Theory and Structuration Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories Types</th>
<th>Functionalist theory</th>
<th>Structuration theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic concepts</td>
<td>a) system</td>
<td>a) system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) structure</td>
<td>b) structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) function/dysfunctions</td>
<td>c) structuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) manifest/latent functions</td>
<td>d) production/reproduction of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explication</td>
<td>1) system=interdependence of action, conceived of as homeostatic causal loops</td>
<td>1) System = interdependence of action, conceived of as (a) homeostatic causal loops; (b)self-regulation through feedback; (c)reflexive self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Structure= stable pattern of action</td>
<td>2) Structure = generative rules &amp; resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Function= contribution of system ‘part’ in promoting integration of system; Dysfunction = contribution of system ‘part’ in promoting disintegration of system</td>
<td>3) structuration = generation of systems of interaction through ‘duality of structure’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) manifest function = intended (anticipated) contribution of action to system integration; Latent function = unintended (anticipated) contribution of action to system integration; Distinction also in principle applicable to dysfunction</td>
<td>4) production &amp; reproduction of society = accomplishment of interaction under bounded conditions of the rationalization of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Additional concepts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5) Social integration/system integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6) Social conflict/system contradiction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, in this table, Giddens uses similar terms to explain system for both theories, but extends the meaning of system. Structuration theory shares the same focus on structure with *Functionalist theory*, and defined structure in a significantly different ontological approach. Seeing structure as generative rules and resources in structuration theory and as a stable pattern of action in *Functionalist theory* represents constitutes two different philosophical realms. This difference allowed Giddens to establish a separate foundation for structuration theory. Points 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the table show that the two theories are radically different, especially the addition of the concepts of social integration/system integration and social conflict/system contradiction.

Giddens stresses that social theory needs to deal with human agents’ actions as a rationalized incorporative practice, done reflexively. He also values the importance of language as the practical mediator and irreplaceable aspect of the ‘rational character’ of social totalities. It is clear from this that Giddens values the function of language—both oral and written—within the social interactive context, and also that the structure of rules and resources reproduces institutions and social relations.

Through these critiques of functionalism, Giddens unlocked the full potential of structuration theory. His comparisons helped me to learn the differences between functionalist theory and structuration theory, and to understand that both theories are applicable to the analysis of different aspects of social structure. Table 1 outlines not only the similarities and differences in the structural functions and structural production and reproduction of society, but also the similar focus on system and structure. This is very insightful for describing and analyzing both the Tibetan social structure and the spiritual monastic society. Given that Tibetan society is an oral society, it is almost impossible to define it without analyzing the language that mediates social relations and constitutes social life. Within monastic society, written language has been
playing an irreplaceable social role in articulating the rational character of Tibetan social totalities, particularly Tibetan literate society.

3.1. Anthony Giddens’s Structuration Theory

Giddens has developed several key notions that have furthered the differences between structuration theory and structural-functionalism (Bryant & Jary, 1991). These key concepts are the irreplaceable stakes in the theory of structuration. The theory of structuration consists of the following concepts: agent and agency, agency and power, structure, structuration, the duality of structure, institution, time, self-regulation and reflexive self-regulation, reflexivity, practical consciousness, presence and co-presence, and social system reproduction.

Particularly, as Bryant and Jary (1991) assert, “the separations of ‘system’ and ‘structure,’ and the duality of structure, provide an analytical framework in which constraints still operate but in a non-functionalist and non-structuralist way” (p. 8). As a very attractive concept, structuration theory has been applied in multiple social science areas, and even in information science; for example, e-government (Devadoss et al. 2002), ERP implementation (Volkoff, 1999), and executive information systems (Jones & Nandhakumar, 1993).

3.1.1. The notion of structuration

Bryant and Jary (2011) state that “Giddens picked up the term ‘structuration’ from (the French of) Piaget and Gurvitch, but his usage differs from theirs” (p.438). The two key terms ‘structure’ and ‘system’ need to be explained before focusing on the concept of structuration. The concept of structuration not only focuses on dichotomous frameworks of social systems, but also on the process of social continuity across space and time. It combines macro-level structure and individual in a reflexive pattern of mutual influences. These individuals are changed through social members’ actions in order to produce or reproduce a new social structure. There is
therefore a dialectical relationship between social structure and human action—both constrain each other and produce each other. The structure limits social members’ actions, but these actions can also change the social structure. In addition, Giddens has divided the social structure into three types: signification, legitimating, and domination.

I have selected a number of these concepts for my critical analysis of various aspects of Tibetan society, and for my synthesis of sociological notions and Tibetan philosophy. The sociological theory of structuration provides several insights for analyzing Tibetan society with the support of Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy.

3.1.2. The two elements of Structuration: Social and system integration

According to Giddens (1984), “social integration means systemness on the level of face-to-face interaction. System integration refers to connections with those who are physically absent in time or space” (p. 28). He adds that “the relation of social to system integration cannot be grasped on a purely abstract level” (p. xxvi). He demonstrates this idea as follows (p. 28):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Social Integration</strong></th>
<th><strong>System Integration</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity between actors</td>
<td>Reciprocity between actors or collectivities in contexts of co-presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collectivities in contexts of co-presence</td>
<td>across extended time-space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Social integration,” for Giddens (1984, p. 28), "is operated by reciprocity between actors in the context of co-presence, and system integration is operated by reciprocity between actors or collectives across extended time-space” (1984, p. 28). Integration may be understood as involving the reciprocity of practices of autonomy and dependence between actors or collectivities. Social integration then means system on the level of face-to-face interaction. System integration refers to connections with those who are physically absent in time or space. The mechanisms of system integration presuppose those of social integration, but such
mechanisms are also distinct in some key respects from those involved in relations of co-presence.

Interaction in contexts of co-presence is the core feature of social integration. Regionalization mediates the connections between social and system integration through the time-space paths that agents follow during their daily activities. Giddens (1984) points out that, “within tribal societies, the village community is overwhelmingly the most important locale within which encounters are constituted and reconstituted in time-space, and relations of co-presence tend to dominate influences of a more remote kind, and there is also fusion of social and system integration” (p. 143).

3.1.3. Connections between micro and macro

In understanding Giddens’s approach, the connections between the micro and macro level of society, it is important to highlight that elements of structure are based on interrelationship. This interrelationship or interconnectedness shapes societies at all times and in all places. Thus, the connections between micro and macro constitute a dialectical relationship. In Giddens’s opinion, when we examine society from the micro view, we focus on dialectical interactions between agents on a small scale. Multidimensional micro level change, he argues, can reshape the macro structure.

At the same time, macro level structures can constrain the scope of multi-micro interactions. Thus, researchers need to take a dialectical view on intractable conflicts because many dialectical connections between micro and macro are involved in such conflicts. In addition to the structural relations of micro to macro, Giddens (1984) asserts that macro processes are the result of interaction in micro situations. Space and time confine the context of interaction, and interactions are also sedimented in time.
I argue that the combination of Giddens’s connections between micro and macro with Je TsongKhapa’s interdependent co-arising offers sociologists great potential in terms of achieving goals of sociological application in Tibetan areas. Sociologists also can use Je TsongKhapa’s dialectical concept of interdependent co-arising to analyze the process of social structuration. Giddens’s structuration, the mutual influence and construct of micro and macro, and Je TsongKhapa’s interdependent co-arising have interesting common points. The two approaches have much potential to inform each other in analyzing a traditional Buddhist society such as Tibet, in enriching the examination of Tibet’s social dilemmas, and perhaps in contributing to resolving social conflicts in Tibetan society.

3.1.4. Simultaneous multi-dimensional interactions at the same time

The time/space dimension has its correlation in absence/presence. Giddens has only barely laid the framework for a more comprehensive analysis of time/space routes in modern life. Conceived within a time/space dimension, social institutions lay the foundation for orderly and reversible time. Social institutions exist independently of any particular action, but present individual action with the rules and resources necessary for their occurrence.

3.1.5. The duality of structure

Giddens (1984) argues that “the duality of structure is the fundamental concept of structuration theory” (p. 297). He also explains that “one of the main propositions of structuration theory is that the rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction (the duality of structure)” (1984, p. 19). As to the notion of structure, he adds that “structure refers not only to rules implicated in the production and reproduction of social systems but also to resources” (1984, p. 23). As Giddens explains: “[I]n structuration theory ‘structure’ is defined as rules and
resources" (p. 169), and “structure, ‘structural properties,’ refers to the institutionalized features of societies” (p. 185). The rules and resources enable action, and practices are managed by routines. Thus, Giddens categorizes resources as table 2 reveals below, and the table also allow this study to define what types of resources exists and produce in Tibetan society.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Resources</th>
<th>Allocative Resources</th>
<th>Authoritative Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Material features of the environment (raw materials, material power source)</td>
<td>Organization of social time space (temporal-spatial constitution of paths and region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan Resources</td>
<td>Nomadic material; peasant material; natural material.</td>
<td>Spiritual constitution of paths and local region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Means of material production/reproduction (Instruments of production, technology)</td>
<td>Production/reproduction of the body (organization and relation of human beings in mutual association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan Resources</td>
<td>Handmade material production and reproduction, premodern instruments of production.</td>
<td>Production and reproduction of the clan and tribe in mutually association with monastic relation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Produced goods (artifacts created by the interaction of 1 &amp; 2)</td>
<td>Organization of life chances (constitution of chances of self-development &amp; self-expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan Resources</td>
<td>Produced goods: There are no artificial creations through 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Organization of life chances only exists at local level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: from Giddens (1984)

3.1.6. The notion of practical consciousness

Giddens defines the notion of practical consciousness as fundamental to structuration theory (1984, p. 6). This notion is similar to a Tibetan proverb: "speaking without action is like a water bubble, and practice is like a golden drop." This proverb emphasizes the importance of practice. Practice has more value than just repeating words without taking action. Within the
social structuration process, it is important that every single agent engage in social interactivities to practice the culture by taking rules and using various resources (Giddens, 1984).

3.1.7. The three types of constraint

Giddens identifies three types of constraint: 1) material constraints, 2) constraints associated with negative sanctions, and 3) structural constraints. Material constraints refer to people's physical capacities and physical environment. In terms of the human body, these constraints refer to people’s lifespan and their difficult survival in certain locations and during certain periods of time. Sanctions mediated through power are also a source of constraint; sanctions can stop agents’ actions or approve agents’ actions through force or violence.

Using these three types of constraint to analyze the Tibetan social context gives us insight into why and how Tibetan society remains as it is. Of course, various factors have been preventing the whole society of Tibet from moving forward with new approaches. Several negative sanctions, both internal and external, exist in Tibetan society. Internal sanctions refer to the power of conservative traditions, both individual and collective. External sanctions refer to the power of penetrative organizations such as social administrative institutions, educational systems, decision-making processes, and social development. External sanctions act as constraints by limiting agents’ capacity in the workplace, allowing agents’ work for controlling curriculum content, and reformulating social relations that evaporate oral agents’ capacity. The internal sanctions in this context refer to groups or institutions from the society that reject new approaches, sometimes forcefully stop social development reform, refuse conventional changes, and resist orienting toward radical social change.

Structural constraint refers to situations where individuals are positioned in a social context and set of social relations that reveal the limitations of their capabilities and the existence of a
social structure they are not able to change. Giddens (1984) sees this incapacity for change as “placing limits upon the range of options open to an actor, or plurality of actors, in a given circumstance or type of circumstances” (p. 177). In Tibetan society, we can identify two forms of structural constraint—first, that the majority of the people are positioned in oral society and their capacities are limited by the social contexts in which they communicate and, second, that neither oral nor literate agents/agency can change the existing social structure.

3.1.8. The concept of interaction and action

According to Giddens (1984), there are two types of interaction: unfocused and focused:

The unfocused interaction relates to all those gestures and signals which can be communicated between individuals’ co-presence within a specific context, and the focused interaction is a face engagement or an encounter. (p. 72)

At the same time, he states that “all social interaction is situated in space and time” (p. 86) and that social interaction can be examined in relation to different social contexts through individually coordinated daily activities. Social contexts or locales are not simply places, but settings of interaction.

Gould (2001) sees a relationship between Habermas’s theory of action orientations and Parsons’s action theory as they relate to the logic of cultural systems. He argues that “the notion of interaction is the culturally and socially mediated relationship between personalities, and all socially structured interaction is also culturally regulated” (p. 124). Ultimately, Giddens’s (1984) notion of unfocused and focused interactions, and Gould’s (2001) culturally and socially mediated interactions are equally applicable to analyzing the Tibetan interactive context. Giddens defines action as “a continuous process, a flow, in which the reflexive monitoring which the individual maintains is fundamental to the control of the body that actors ordinarily sustain throughout their day-to-day lives” (p. 9).
3.1.9. The two types of contradiction

Giddens (1984) provides two types of contradiction: a) existential contradiction; and b) structural contradiction. Existential contradiction refers to the elemental aspect of human existence in relation to nature or the material world. Structural contradiction refers to the constitutive feature of human societies (Giddens, 1984). Existential contradiction is weakened by structural contradiction but not dispersed altogether (Giddens, 1984).

Giddens further divides structural contradiction into primary contradictions and secondary contradictions. He explains that primary contradictions refer to “those which enter into the constitution of social totalities; [whereas] secondary contradictions…mean …those which are dependent upon, or are brought into being by, primary contradictions” (1984, p. 193).

Structural contradiction refers to disconnections in the structural principle of system organization and, according to Giddens, refers to “a specific characterization of the state except in the case of tribal society. The state is regarded as the focus of primary structural contradiction” (p. 194).

3.1.10. The notion of agent and agency

Giddens cites the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of agent; that is, “one who exerts power or produces an effect” (1984, p. 9). He maintains that “agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently” (1984, p. 9). Agency refers to the individual capacity that enables one to take action independently and to make one's own decisions. Moreover, “human societies, or social systems, would plainly not exist without human agency” (1984, p.171).
3.1.11. The notion of institutional stability and change

The focus of Giddens's analysis of institutional stability and change is on finance capital, the power of the city, and large-scale industry. This focus has no application to Tibetan monastic institutions. However, these institutions exercise the power of authority, higher teaching and learning, and spiritual rules and resources. Thus, my study uses the notion of institutional stability and change only as a framework to analyze the multifunctional monastic institution in Tibetan society.

The monastic institution is the only institution that has been historically and culturally constituted by Tibetans. Its network allows it to possess or exercise both traditional and spiritual authority throughout Tibetan society. The monasteries traditionally take on political responsibility and, because of their focus on the development of spiritual wisdom and compassion, provide more social cohesion to society than the Tibetan government. As institutions of higher teaching and learning, most monasteries cover such fields as philosophy, logical reasoning, esoteric Buddhism, medicine, poetry, history, biography, mathematics, theory of Tibetan language, and astrology. The monastery teaches these subjects in as many as six colleges.

Thurman (2008) views the role of the monastery as:

result[ing] in both assertions of Tibetan identity and dynamic social, political, and economic interaction. Moreover, the monastery also educated the scientific practitioner and philosopher, especially concerned with the discovery of the nature of reality and the fostering of the human ability to evolve through education, to develop, change, and grow (p. 37).

Based on these factors, it is important to study monastic institutional stability and change. Although Giddens cannot provide insight in this area, other sociologists such as Lindner (2003) can. Lindner explores the dialectical relationship between institutional stability and change, and
identifies four reproduction mechanisms that stabilize institutional settings. In my study, I use Lindner's work to remedy Giddens’s lack of studies relating to institutional stability and change in a spiritual social context.

Lindner (2003) identifies two types of institutional change: formal and informal. Informal change leaves the existing set of rules unchanged and takes one of three forms: unilateral interpretation, joint interpretation and third-party interpretation. Formal institutional change means *explicit rule change* and refers to on-path and off-path changes. “On-path changes can be described as small institutional adaptations of the existing path that are in line with the current mechanism of reproduction; off-path changes refers to replace the existing mechanism of reproduction and introduce a new one. It is a major institutional change” (p. 916). The four reproduction mechanisms of institutional settings are: 1) the power of the dominant actor coalition; 2) interdependence within an institutional matrix; 3) large switching costs; and 4) small on-path changes. These are all suitable for analyzing Tibetan literate society, for example of Tibetan monastic communities.

**3.1.12. The notion of three types of society**

Giddens (1984) identifies three types of society: tribal society, class-divided society, and class society. These classifications, as I explain below, enable me to define Tibetan society in different historical periods.

The main characteristic of tribal society is its practice of oral culture, which dominates local organization, tradition (communal practices), kinship, group (band or village) sanctions, and the fusion of social and system integration (Giddens, 1984). "Social reproduction," Giddens argues, "must not be equated with the consolidation of social cohesion. The locations of actors and of collectivities in different sectors or regions are their habitual conduct upon the integration
of societal totalities” (1984, p. 24). This characterizes the type of tribal society that existed in Tibet before the Tibetan empire society.

Class-divided society is characterized by tradition (communal practices), kinship, political and military power, economic interdependence (low lateral and vertical integration), the differentiation of social and system integration, dominant local organization, and the symbiosis of city and countryside (Giddens, 1984). These characteristics match the Tibetan empire society.

Class society (capitalism) is characterized by state organization, kinship (family), surveillance, political and military power, and economic interdependence (high lateral and vertical integration) (Giddens, 1984). It seems that these characteristics are largely inapplicable to Tibetan society for two reasons: first, because of the contradictions between a spiritual society based on mental health and a materialist society based on capital, and second, because it is a socially less integrated society with high lateral and vertical integration.

Drawing on Tibetan thought, the multiple factors that inform various types of society can be categorized into 'ultimate' factors and 'conventional' factors. It is clear that Giddens based his classifications of society on conventional factors, but researchers can categorize society based on ultimate factors. More importantly, doing a sociological analysis of the complexity of the relationship between ultimate and conventional social factors allows researchers to see the root of societal variations.

3.1.13. The notion of seriality

Giddens (1984) employs the notion of seriality as a framework for analyzing and portraying patterns of sequencing in day-to-day social encounters. He identifies two principles of seriality: opening-closing and turn-taking. Opening-closing is an ultimate principle that occurs in
any form of social sphere including religion, play, classrooms, teaching and learning, workplaces, and cultural ceremonies. Giddens explains that turn-taking:

is rooted in the most general properties of the human body and hence expresses fundamental aspects of the nature of interaction. Moreover, turn-taking is one major feature of the serial character of social life, hence connecting with the overall character of social reproduction. Turn-taking is one form of 'coupling constraint,' deriving from the simple but elemental fact that the main communicative medium human beings in situations of co-presence talk is a ‘single-order’ medium. …Turn-taking may apply to the seriality of encounters as well as to the interaction between agents within encounters and may be again closely bound up with differentials of power (p.77).

Relatively speaking, the processes involved in how to open and close collective or individual activities or interactions are related to social structure. In terms of Tibetan society, the notion of seriality allows me to appreciate the relationship between the monastic institution and local society, and also to see the spiritual connection within oral society. By performing religious rituals, monk agents lead the seriality of opening-closing and turn-taking for collective, individual, or family activities. The members of oral society also perform rituals to start and close the day by making offerings and gathering ritual items. This is how spirituality becomes one of the dimensions of social life.

3.2. Critiques of Anthony Giddens’s Structuration Theory

This section reviews critiques of structuration theory. Several sociologists and social scientists who have been paying serious attention to Giddens’s theory question the fundamental basis of his work, raise counterarguments, assert that he has borrowed theories, concepts and research from others (Boyne, 1991; Kilminister, 1991; Urry, 1991; Wallace & Wolf, 1998). Although some scholars concede that structuration theory has some validity, they point out certain problems and difficulties with the theory, as well as limitations to its applicability and analysis (Walliss, 2001; Schatzki, 1997; Bryant & Jary, 1991; William & Sewell, 1992;
Thompson, 1984). Of particular interest is Stones’s (2005) critique of a broad range of criticisms of different aspects of Giddens’s theory. However, Spaargaren and Mommaas (2006) argue that Stones’s critique of Giddens confuses the level of ontology by highlighting individual and society instead of agency and structure.

All of these critiques mainly target several key notions of structuration theory: the duality of structure, structure as rules and resources, structure and agency, time-space, practice and action, the notion of agent, agent’s individual action, and methodology. In the following sections, I look at critiques of Giddens's work from the perspectives of functionalism, social theory, methodology, ideology, philosophy, contemporary sociology, ontology, structuralism, and conservatism.

3.2.1. Functionalist critique of structuration theory

Several functionalist sociologists have argued that Giddens does not make his concepts, methods, and theoretical rationale clear enough. Bryant and Jary (1991), for example, appreciate Giddens’s central concept of the duality of social structure, but are dissatisfied with how he turned this notion of duality into the theory of structuration. They consider that the basic concepts of functionalism and structuration are almost the same and that there is no greater development from the foundations of functionalist theory.

As shown in table 3, structuration theory shares two notions with functionalist theory, particularly those relating to system and structure. However, while the notion of system in functionalism is conceptualized only as the interdependence of action mediated via homeostatic causal loops, in structuration theory Giddens adds the two concepts of self-regulation through feedback and reflexive self-regulation.
Bryant and Jary’s Comparison of Functionalist Theory and Structuration Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>Functionalist theory</th>
<th>Structuration theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic concepts</td>
<td>a) system—interdependence of action, conceived of only as homeostatic causal loops</td>
<td>a) System = interdependence of action, conceived of as (a) homeostatic causal loops; (b) self-regulation through feedback; (c) reflexive self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Structure= stable pattern of action</td>
<td>b) structure= generative rules and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) function/dysfunctions= contribution of system ‘part’ to whole in promoting system integration or disintegration;</td>
<td>c) structuration--generation of systems of interaction through ‘duality of structure’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) manifest/latent functions= intended (anticipated) contributions and unintended (unanticipated) contribution to system integration;</td>
<td>d) production and reproduction of society-- accomplishment of interaction under bounded conditions of rationalization of action, i.e. actors produce social action but do so in situations in which there are also ‘unacknowledged conditions’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Critical Appreciation, p.9. (Original: Figure 1.1 Key concepts of structuration theory and functionalism compared)

Bryant and Jary (1991) point out that Giddens not only mixes constraint and enablement through the notion of duality of structure in social interaction, but describes the following three elements involved in producing and reproducing the structure: ‘communication of meaning,’ ‘the exercise of power,’ and ‘evaluation and judgement of conducts.’ This is an insightful point that supports my study in terms of analyzing how Tibetan social systems constrain and enable the social interactions of oral and spiritual agents.

In brief, Bryant and Jary (2011) state that Giddens’s structuration theory has provided a number of important concepts for researchers, developed several insightful frameworks, and
formulated some intermediate complexities of society. However, they see weaknesses in the form of a theoretical system. Drawing on Stones's critique of Giddens, they argue that:

Rob Stones has long argued that what is missing from Giddens’ theory of structuration is concern for the strategic context of action (Stones, 1991) or, as he later preferred, agent’s context analysis (Stones, 1996). By reworking Giddens’ concept of knowledgeability in terms of strategic context, Stones directed attention to the agent’s strategic terrain—“the social nexus of interdependencies, rights and obligations, asymmetries of power and the social conditions and consequences of action” (Stones 1996: 98) which make up the perceived and perceivable possibilities of action and their limitations (2011, p. 443).

Based on their detailed comparison of functionalism and structuration, I realized that Bryant and Jary have neglected some parts of the basic concepts of structuration theory. It is true that both theories share the same basic concepts of system and structure. However, Giddens differentiated structuration theory epistemologically from functionalist theory. Thus, I accept that the two theories share the terms of system and structure, but argue that they are fundamentally two different theories.

3.2.2. Social theorist critique of structuration theory: agent and agency

Boyne (1991) critiques structuration theory from a social theorist perspective. First, he sees a number of limitations in Giddens‘s critiques of Weber. Second, he examines Giddens’s critiques of functionalism. And third, he focuses on the notion of the agent and the functions of social theory. Reviewing Giddens’s critique of Weber, Boyne contends that Giddens could not accurately discuss what Weber asserts and opposes social theories.

Boyne identifies eight points in Giddens's critique of functionalism. Functionalism 1) excludes actors’ rationality, 2) reduces human agency to the internalisation of values, 3) conceptualizes practices as consisting of social system not roles, 4) fails to deal with social life and social members’ activities, 5) ignores social actors’ purposes and gives no criteria for realizing what these purpose are, 6) sees power as secondary, 7) does not succeed in accurately
dealing with the notion of social actors' controversial interests and even with its own fundamental assertion of conflicts, and 8) does not even consider the concept of functional contradiction when dealing with the problem of the actual conflicts that cause contradictory interests among social actors.

Boyne (1991) critiques Giddens’s rejection of the notion of unconsciousness with regard to human agents. My analysis rejects Boyne's critique. From my perspective, the notion of unconsciousness merely intimately exists and the psychological component pertaining to human agents does not present effective evidence to justify including it in structuration theory as a matter of ‘not causing social action.’ Boyne also criticizes Giddens’s limited insight on Weber’s notion of agents’ knowledge. However, I would argue that it is important to clarify that Giddens offers his own insight on the notion of agents’ knowledgeability which is different from Weber's notion and which enables him to further his view of agents’ capacity.

This differentiation is key to understanding Giddens’s notion of agents. Being an agent in Tibetan society requires both knowledge and knowledgeability. First, oral agents in Tibetan society have knowledge but have no ability to reproduce knowledge. They both constitute and sustain the micro social structure. Second, literate agents in Tibetan society have both knowledge and reproductive ability of knowledge, and support and sustain the macro social structure.

The social theorist critique is sociologically important but has little application to Tibetan society for several reasons. First, my study is attempting to apply the theory of structuration to pre-modern Tibetan society, not a capitalist society. Second, the notion of agents’ conflicts of interest is not the case in structuration theory. Third, the critique is outside the scope of my study.
3.2.3. Methodological critique of structuration theory: Theoretical synthesis

Kilminster (1991) asserts that Giddens’s structuration theory results from the theoretical synthesis of many other ingredients, including the sociological and philosophical syntheses advanced by Parsons (1937), Lenski (1966), and Collins (1985). Kilminster supportively sees that Giddens has taken a holistic view in developing the theory of structuration. He maintains that, like Parsons, Giddens has adapted, absorbed and integrated various unripened concepts, but has also reproduced many theoretical notions from different sociological schools.

He argues that Giddens’s notion of action is more complicated in several ways, including its emphasis on: a) the reflexivity of knowledgeable agents’ social action, and b) the methodological results of the double hermeneutic. Kilminster (1991) clearly demonstrates how Giddens learned the key notion of human power in social relations from Foucault and Weber, and also from Marx’s analysis of economic power.

Interestingly, Kilminster (1991) argues that Giddens’s theory of structuration is a type of action theory. He claims that Giddens irrationally alludes to modern society as an ‘artificial’ environmental condition between man and nature, made possible by human beings’ biological evolution. This study values this point because it allows for the interpretation of the geographical-cultural relationship between the Tibetan people and the Tibetan plateau. At the macro level of social constitution, all basic vocabularies in language use conceptualized from life experiences within the Tibetan plateau, clothing adapted to the Tibetan plateau, housing designed to adapt to the Tibetan plateau, oral language and literacies expressing the relation of Tibetan life
to the Tibetan plateau. Entire Tibetan populations have been biologically and genetically adapted to the Tibetan plateau\textsuperscript{12} (Beall, Blangero & Melvyn, 1994; Jennings & Walter, 1927).

Kilminster (1991) states that interaction in greater social context need various supportive conditions to communicate and transmit information with actors from long distance, such as writing, printing and transportation. These conditions constitute agents’ presence and absence in a greater interactive context. This is a very important point for this study in interpreting or examining the limited capacity of oral agents in Tibetan society and how monastic agents interact with the wider societal level/scope. Using written and print literacy enables monastic institutions to interact with the wider social context of Tibetan society and to establish the key social net relations that constitute Tibetan societal level social structuration.

My study accepts a number of Kilminster’s insights on structuration theory—first, Giddens’s methodology of theoretical synthesis; second, the notion of power as an element of agent; and third, that interaction requires supportive conditions such as writing, printing, telegraphs, telephones, transportation, and electronically transmitted information.

3.2.4. Ideologist critique of structuration theory: Time and space

Urry (1991) examines how Giddens describes the relation of time and space, and how he positions this relation in social theory. He critiques Giddens on this concept and maintains that there are multiple levels and types of time and space within social theory. Unlike Giddens’s description of time-space as a characteristic of social systems and a frequently changing dimension of social life. Urry (1991) accordingly stands with Heidegger’s ontological thinking in relation to existence and that human beings are ultimately temporal (Je TsongKhaPa stresses the temporality of all existences). I would argue that Urry neglects the ‘conventional’ aspect of time

\textsuperscript{12} See Jennings, W., “Tibetan Civilization,” Social Science, 2:3 (1927: May/June/July).
and space that operates in dialectical relation with the 'ultimate' aspect of time and space in human society.

Thus, Urry (1991) argues that Giddens should know that the nature of time is an immeasurable conventionality. But Giddens stresses that the features of human beings' natural existence are different for a number of reasons. First, the experience and awareness of death affects human beings' practices of living. Second, human agents have the ability to learn from and practise past experiences by tracing their memories and participating in the complex interaction or interpenetration of presence and absence. Third, human beings’ awareness of time passing can be illustrated in the social institutional context. Fourth, humans experience time not as a tangible object, but as something located within both the conscious and unconscious. Fifth, every person’s movement can be understood through the time and space of presence and absence.

Giddens’s first point—on the awareness of death—can be used to accurately describe Tibetan people’s daily practices both in oral and literate society. Easy to be satisfied is an example of how death may affect people’s practice of living. But most Tibetans are eager to expend more effort on the spiritual aspect of death as the ultimate liberation from the cycle of life. This underlying effort has allowed monastic institutions to play a key role in the process of macro Tibetan social structuration. Clearly, the notion of contemporarily is simultaneously supporting spiritual structuration in oral society.

3.2.5. Philosophical critique of structuration theory: practices and action

In terms of practices and actions, Schatzki (1997) stands with Wittgensteinian’s ontological perspective, which criticizes Giddens in several ways by posing two questions: How
are practices and actions intimately linked? What is the relationship between practice and action, specifically, between the organization of practice and the determination of action?

Schatzki (1997) argues that Giddens is over-intellectualizing practices and actions, and that Wittgenstein’s theory can provide solutions as to how to avoid this problem. Schatzki (1997) observes that, “Giddens analyzes the practice and action: a) as a variety of actions; b) as the carrying out of actions, and the notion of practice is a form of ‘preforming actions or carrying out practices (p. 298)’”, but without there being performed action, no practice exists.

3.2.6. **Ontological critique of structuration theory: the duality of structure**

Thompson (1984) categorizes agency into three types of action—reflexive monitoring, rationalization, and motivation. The first type of action means that agents have the ability to explain their actions. The second type of action means that agents should be able to provide reasons for their actions. The third refers to what causes an agent to take an action.

Thompson’s extensive description of the relations between action, unintended consequences, and unaccepted conditions provides exactly the theoretical basis for my study; in other words, my aim of extending structuration to *personal life structuration*. For example, Thompson presents a vivid description of the circumstances of poverty by referring to: “The ‘poverty cycle’ of material deprivation—poor schooling—low-level employment—material deprivation” (1984, p. 152).

**Critique of structure as ‘rules and resources’**

Thompson (1984) agrees with Giddens’s notion that structure consists of rules and resources based on three dimensions: power, facility, and domination. He explains that rules can be understood in various ways, including semantic rules and moral rules. Interestingly, he stands with Giddens’s assertion that under certain circumstances of interaction, agents in society play
by the rules and use resources as the three structural dimensions of production and reproduction. He points out several conceptual issues related to structure: 1) the term ‘rule’ is a nuclear notion that needs to be made more accurate, 2) Giddens has not been able to specify the notion of ‘rule’ and what types of rules are related to social structure, and 3) the idea of paying attention to rules and structural differentiation.

Thompson suggests that Giddens needs to make an accurate distinction between the reproduction of institutions and the social structure. He argues that individuals in capitalist society not only produce and reproduce institutions through their daily activities, but also reproduce the 'conditions' for institutions. Giddens contends that one can do an institutional analysis and an analysis of strategic conduct while focusing on the duality of structure. However, from Thompson’s point of view, the distinction between these two forms of analysis is a conceptual difficulty in structuration theory. Giddens refuses to accept the criticism regarding the need to recognize the different levels of structural analysis within his primary notion of structure.

3.2.7. Structuralist critique of structuration theory

William and Sewell (July, 1992) agree with Giddens’s statement that “structure must be regarded as a process, not as a steady state” (p. 4). However, they argue that Giddens has not yet specified the notion of structure and that there are a number of disconnections and a certain deficient logic within structuration theory. They also argue that Giddens does not provide specific rules that formulate and generalize practices. William and Sewell (1992) identify two types of resources: human and nonhuman. Whereas human resources can enhance or extend an agents’ power—for example, “physical strength, dexterity, knowledge, and emotional
commitments” (p. 9)—nonhuman resources refer to any natural or inanimate object that can empower or extend an agents’ capabilities.

This study realizes that both types of resources possess mediating power and are distributed through agents’ actions. Also, it is important to note that accessing human resources depends on the capacities of agents themselves and that access to nonhuman resources depends more upon the social relations and conditions empower agents. William and Sewell (1992) assert that incorporating the notion of resources within schema is still not enough in oral society, which only constitutes collective agency, not individual agents. However, categorizing the various resources—intellectual resources, material resources, and spiritual resources—is an insightful tool for analyzing how the different types of resources empower oral collective agency and spiritual agents in Tibetan society.

It is important to clarify that every social member is able to extend or transpose knowledge creatively by using a rule or implementing a cultural schema. This action is possible in a society where all citizens have a college or high school education, but not in oral society. In oral society, social members are largely unable to extend or transpose knowledge creatively. According to William and Sewell (1992), an agent has the capacity to transpose and extend cultural schemas into new social contexts. This study argues that, within oral society, only relying on the scope of oral transmission in transposing knowledge has several difficulties such as hard to recall all knowledge. However, oral transmission is easier for social members and groups to communicate socially in organizing collective activities including knowledge transposition in oral society.

William and Sewell (1992) define structures as “sets of mutually sustaining schemas and resources that empower and constrain social action and that tend to be reproduced by that social action” (p.19). At the same time, a structure could be at risk due to its scope and intersection, the
trans-possibility of schemas, and the unpredictable nature of resources in terms of polysemy and accumulation. They define agency as being consistent with social structure and explain that being an agent requires the ability to exercise certain levels of control over social relations and also the capacity to change these relations. Agents receive empowerment from the social structure and have the capacity to access both human and nonhuman resources.

Different social positions such as “gender, wealth, social prestige, class, ethnicity, occupation, generation, sexual preference and education” (William & Sewell, 1984, p. 21) provide different cultural schemas and access to resources that differentiate the opportunities and possibilities for transformative action. William and Sewell (July, 1992) assert that there are two types of individual and collective agencies, and an ontological division among structures that consists of a “deeper set of oppositions between wet and dry or male and female that also underlies structures informing other institutionally distinct practices” (p. 22). Another term the authors use is "surface structure," which I connect to the 'conventional' structural dimension and, in my study, apply to the analysis of conventional social structure. William and Sewell (1992) also argue that language is intrinsically linked to the structural dimensions of depth, resources, and power. This is a helpful concept that enables me to discuss and position language in my analysis of Tibetan social structure.

Briefly, through their critique of structuration theory, mainly as it relates to the duality of structure, Structuralists have explored a number of key problems including categorizations of agency variations of structure, and the relation of language to social structure. These problems are related to the notion of structure as rules and resources. They reformulate this notion into

---

13 An institution based on ultimate need has durability. If an institution is based on the power of resources, then it is easy to change due to the temporal nature of resources. In addition, two elements—high power and low depth—characterize the political structure.
schemas and resources. They have also formulated a key question with regard to the dialectical relationship between agents’ practices and structure, and assert that structure.

In terms of structure as rules and resources, Structuralist contend that rules exist at various levels, and that the rules of social life should be one of various cultural schemas. Thus, they categorize resources as two types—human and nonhuman—and are concerned with the unpredictability of resource accumulation. Structuralists also argue that agency is consistent with social structure and that agents have the capacity to change and exercise certain levels of control over social relations. Moreover, they assert that agency is informed by cultural schemas and resources, by culture and its history, and affirms both individual and collective agencies. More importantly, Structuralists emphasize that the different social positions such as gender, wealth, prestige, class, ethnicity, occupation, generation, and education provide a variety of cultural schema and access to resources that condition different social opportunities and possibilities for social transformative action.

**3.2.8. Critique of structuration theory from Sociologist of religion**

Walliss (2001) problematizes Giddens's notion of tradition. He argues that tradition and reflexivity are no mutually exclusive social phenomena. In terms of restoring human agency to social actors, Walliss's (2001) argument allows me to define the notion of social actors in oral Tibetan society and to identify how monastic scholars function both in spiritual institutions and in the sociocultural domain in general. In Tibet, there are very clear boundaries and restrictions between oral society and the monastic institutions. Oral and monastic agents have different forms of power in their respective contexts. Oral agents have no access to the elite knowledge texts or written literacies of monastic education, have no authority to make rules in monastic institutions, and had no access to school education before 1953.
Monastic agents are able to access both elite knowledge texts and oral literacies. They can make rules in both oral and monastic society. They receive a comprehensive monastic education and lead the societal spiritual faith. As a result of these differences between oral and monastic agents, it is clear that, because of their limited access to resources and to influencing rules, oral agents have less capacity than monastic agents. Monastic agents are especially empowered by their unique capacity to lead the whole societal spiritual faith.

Walliss's (2001) analysis enables me to understand that Tibetan tradition has long been reflexively grounded. Two types of cultural tradition exist across all regions of Tibetan society—the local oral tradition and the institutional elite cultural tradition. These two traditions reflexively influence and constitute both social and spiritual structure through oral agents, monk agents, and cultural practices. There are no reflexive traditions without human agents.

### 3.2.10. Four concepts of social structure and Giddens

In his article "Four Concepts of Social Structure," Porpora (1989) examines social structure, which he primarily defines as follows: “1. Patterns of aggregate behavior that are stable over time; 2. Law-like regularities that govern the behavior of social facts; 3. Systems of human

---

14 This refers to monk scholars. There are several forms of agency: spiritual agency, monk agency, and spiritual collective agency. The qualified reincarnated Lamas have spiritual power, deal with secular social issues, and lead particular monastic institutions across regions. These Lamas have access to intellectual, material, and spiritual resources in both oral and monastic contexts. Furthermore, this access has empowered these spiritual agencies to formulate systems of spiritual authority and order in Tibetan society. Interestingly, these spiritual agencies can organize temporary oral and monk collective agents through their various social relations. As a form of individual agency, monk agencies not only provide mental care services to local villagers and community members, but also contribute intellectual work to the society. Two types of monastic institution—religious and academic—function in different aspects of Tibetan society. The religious institutions are normally located close to local villages and are involved in mediating the social relations between local communities and the district-level monastic academic institutions. These monastic academic institutions exercise multiple roles in the society, including functioning as universities that only educate monks and reincarnated Lamas.
relationships among social positions; 4. Collective rules and resources that structure behavior” (p.195). Each of these definitions presents a problem that is difficult to interpret and to fit well with society. Porpora argues that the first concept is too weak and cannot fundamentally interpret the larger scope of society. It also mistakenly reduces social structure to a secondary phenomenon of individual behavior. He argues that the second concept is a structuralist approach. It is ineffective because the behaviour of individual actors and the relationship between different social components is not governed by law. In terms of the third concept, he maintains that goals cannot be accomplished by only emphasizing social factors. As to the fourth concept, Porpora argues that although it includes the notion of rules, it cannot conceptualize social structure.

There is no law within both oral and literate Tibetan society informed by trust and customary law. These incomplete notions of social structure need a more advanced conceptualization supported by a wider philosophical foundation. Porpora (1989) compares Giddens’s notion of social structure as rules and resources with the third concept above. Clearly, as Porpora points out, the third notion of social structure in Giddens’s theory refers to the social system. Giddens asserts that social structure is not constituted by patterns of relationships, but by the rules and resources based on these patterns.

Through the comparison, this study realizes that Giddens’s concept of social structure as rules and resources is generative and reproductive. Porpora agrees with Giddens’s interpretation of structure as a frame that is external to the agent. He points out that social structure is the cultural practices of agents. He argues that in conceiving the duality of structure and structuration, Giddens could not provide us with an ultimate framework that supports us in terminating the ontological differences between the material (or objective) and the ideal (or
subjective) domains. For Porpora, Giddens’s conception of structure as rules and resources indicates cultural rather than social structuring. Ultimately, the difference between the third concept and Giddens’s notion of social structure as rules and resources reflects materialist and idealist differences in sociology.

By asserting that both the duality of structure and structuration refer to “the mutual dependence of structure and agency” (Giddens, 1979 p. 69), and that “structure is both the cause and effect of human action” (Giddens, 1981 p.27), Porpora asserts that Giddens has failed to provide a notion of non-reductive materialism to reconcile the material and the ideal. As a result, both the duality of structure and structuration only mediate different components of the subjective domain and cannot include material significance. Thus, Giddens has been critiqued for subjectivism (Porpora, 1989).

Porpora (1989) also argues that rules establish social positions that are related to different power, and Giddens not only gives analytical priority to rules and denies that the relationships of a social system have any causal properties independent of the rule-following activity of human actors, but also suggests that domination resides in interactive behaviour and that this behaviour reconstitutes domination through its reassertion of the rules. According Porpora (1989), Giddens’s silence on the causal properties of objective relationships is a serious missing part in his theory. According to Bertilsson (1984), structuration theory argues that the existence of structures is only ‘virtual’ in its exemplification. As this study sees that, in fact, structure is generated by actors through the ’rules and resources’ that allow structurated action and that constrain and enable action. Giddens justifies the reality of structures based on the notion of absence/presence recognized through actors’ ’practical consciousness.’
It seems that Giddens’s social actors act without motivation in reproducing the system. Porpora (1989) recognizes that there is a serious problem in Giddens’s theory, namely that many social systems are not reproducible. Rather, like capitalism, they are constantly changing through actors’ actions. Giddens’s structuration theory and the notion of duality of structure does not attempt to answer the question of what motivates actors to act the way they do (Porpora, 1989). This examination provides two crucial insights for my study. First, according to Je Tsongkhapa’s notion of causality, there are two forms of cause and effect relationships; one is visible and the other is non-visible. The non-visible form is important to my study in terms of analyzing how agents’ actions influence the systematic relationships between the two forms of Tibetan societies. Second, human beings do not take action without motivation. In other words, it is necessary to analyze not only the conventional aspect of society, but also the ultimate or less-acquired aspect of societies.

In the context of conventional and ultimate realities and human spiritual life, the core value is about motivating people to take or not to take action. The two fundamentally different approaches of mental happiness and material happiness are the roots of motivation, and both forms of happiness also motivate people to take action. Particularly, social action in society is motivated by individual need or institutional requirements. Thus, motivation causes action, and this action in turn informs the way society is governed.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed key concepts and critiques of structuration theory. The critiques enable me to draw several significant implications for applying structuration theory to Tibetan society. First, the notions of agent and agency, theoretical synthesis, time and space, practice and action, the duality of structure, three types of society, social structure, and
reflexivity and modernity are impossible to use in analyzing Tibetan society without these critiques. Second, I realized that only relying on structuration theory would result in an incomplete examination of Tibetan society. And third, a counterpart to Giddens's theory is needed to create a combined approach.

The functionalist critique enabled me to see that functionalist theory focuses on how structure has been constituted while structuration theory focuses on how the structure has been, and can continue to be, produced and reproduced. A Tibetan sociology of education needs both a structural function and continuation approach. The social theorist critique provided important insights on the concept of agents’ knowledge and knowledgeability in terms of defining both Tibetan oral and spiritual agents. Interestingly, the methodological critique provides four principles of creative synthesis—adaptation, absorbability, integration, and borrowing—that enable me to propose a dialogical Tibetan sociology of education based on empirical research from the general to the specific.

The critiques suggest that structuration theory needs to consider multiple aspects of linking agents with certain places, and that spaces have both social and political aspects. Places are the original and irreplaceable containers of knowledge, and knowledge can be both validated and invalidated through changing space and time. The philosophical critique of the notions of practice and action has clarified for me the relationship between practice and action at the ontological level. Practice is a form of performing actions, and actions consist of practice. I realize that Giddens specifies organizational action and that organization can unify various actions while directing individuals’ action/performance.

In relation to the notion of structure as rules and resources, Schatzki’s philosophical critique raised the idea that rules are practiced through agents' performances in their daily life.
activities. However, I realized that Giddens has no certainty about how rules are as proceeding actions. Proponents of the philosophical critique agree with Giddens that rules and resources constitute social structure through two types of control: a) control of space-time, and b) control of actions through practical consciousness. The concept of controlling actions and organizing practices are two angles of one reality, and their general structuring can be reached from any direction. The chapter presents structuration theory as a complex field of study that has no agreed boundaries, requires a holistic approach, and draws on the various disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science.
CHAPTER 4
INTRODUCING JE TSONGKHAPA TO THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Je TsongKhapa (1357–1419) had a significant influence on both the micro and macro levels of Tibetan social structure. His philosophical analysis of the dialectical relations between ultimate reality and conventional reality had a large impact on the multifunctional monastic institutions and their system of education. Monastic education plays a key role in producing and reproducing monastic institutions throughout Tibetan society.

In this chapter, I introduce Je TsongKhapa to the field of sociology and use a dialectical approach to position him as a Tibetan intellectual counterpart to Giddens. I begin by defining his philosophy and distinguishing it from a purely religious stance. In the second part of the chapter, I review several important critiques of his analytic approach. In the final part, I attempt to synthesize these dialogues and reviews, and apply the results to structuration in Tibetan society.

4.1. Je TsongKhapa's Philosophical Thought

This section begins with a brief overview of philosophy in order to situate Je TsongKhapa's work in relation to major philosophical traditions. It is followed by a discussion of Je TsongKhapa's position in the history and philosophy of Tibet. The third section discusses how his work relates to the field of sociology.

4.1.1. A brief overview of philosophy

In general, the original meaning of philosophy in Greek is 'love of knowledge or wisdom' (Blackburn, 2008). Many great philosophers have developed and extended the notion of philosophy into various fields by investigating different dimensions of human and natural
realities. As a result, three fields of philosophy have emerged: natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and metaphysical philosophy. At the beginning, these fields were innately entwined with religion. Through the influence of science after the Renaissance, Western philosophers separated philosophy from religion (Blackburn, 2008; Dampier, 1958). However, Tibetan philosophical thought has not completely separated from Tibetan Buddhism and the Tibetan indigenous religion of Bön. Thus, scholars from outside Tibet often assume that Tibetan philosophy is a religion or a field of religious studies. This unintended mistake is caused by the lack of wide dissemination of Tibetan philosophy, and Tibet's long cultural isolation from the international community.

In terms of positioning Je TsongKhapa within a broad philosophical context, there are several commonalities and differences between his work and ancient, medieval, and modern philosophers such Epicurus, Confucius, Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, and Marx (see table 4). Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical focus conforms in part to these great philosophers' approaches to ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of human knowledge of reality). In particular, his concept of conventional reality has some parallels with Marx’s concept of ideology. Marx posits that social phenomena are not produced or explained by conventional understandings (ideology), but by underlying material reality and relationships that humans have access to by critical, theoretical analysis.

Similarly, Je TsongKhapa rejects conventional understandings of social reality as explanations for the occurrence, persistence and changes of social phenomena. Je TsongKhapa would argue that social phenomena arise contingently and sometimes persist and sometimes dissolve according to circumstances in the total situation. Although Marx rejects the absolute reality of ideology, he accepts that ideology influences social phenomena. His aim is to
emancipate those who suffer by providing them with an alternate, more theoretical, and more accurate understanding of the source of, and therefore the solution to, their suffering.

Table 5

**Comparison of Philosophies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Types of philosophy</th>
<th>Ontology: Nature of Reality</th>
<th>Epistemology: Nature of Human Knowledge about Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philosophers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epicurus (341-270 BC)</td>
<td>Empiricist philosophy</td>
<td>Atomistic. There are two aspects of life goal: a) the absence of physical and mental pain; b) pleasure.</td>
<td>Division between appearance and reality gives rise various schools of thought. Criteria of truth: sensations, preconceptions, feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucius (K’ung fu-tzu) (551-479 BC)</td>
<td>Idealist philosophy of Confucianism</td>
<td>Focus on observable reality &amp; ultimate principle as an organizing principle behind the materialistic universe</td>
<td>Details of the existence of reality / beyond human senses are beyond human knowledge but the principles can be inferred from particulars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Je TsongKhapa (1357–1419)</td>
<td>Dialectical philosophy</td>
<td>Reality is fundamentally material with no spirits or gods that take an interest in human life; and our beliefs about reality create our social reality.</td>
<td>Human “knowledge” of reality is fundamentally and socially constructed and may or may not correspond to reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)</td>
<td>Political &amp; pragmatic philosophies</td>
<td>Ethics and Human Nature; how we can effectively divide power between the government and the people; human life is never without troubles and inconvenience.</td>
<td>How to maximize liberty; how to define social justice, how to draw the limits of government power, and how to realize democratic ideals; where will we go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)</td>
<td>Idealist &amp; analytic philosophy</td>
<td>Scientific knowledge, morality, and religious beliefs are mutually consistent and secure because they all rest on the same foundation of human autonomy. Causality is a contributions of mind to experience.</td>
<td>Knowledge is a mixture of what is given from senses experience and what is contributed by the mind. The content of experience under one of unity, plurality, and totality; reality, negation, and limitation; inherence and subsistence, causality, dependence, and reciprocity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georg Wilhelm Friedrich</td>
<td>Dialectical &amp; Idealist philosophy</td>
<td>The absolute idealism as a means to integrate the notions of mind, nature,</td>
<td>Criticizes approaches to natural law, and argues that empiricism is limited by its contexts and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegel (1770-1831)</td>
<td>subject, object, the state, psychology, history, art, religion and philosophy.</td>
<td>materials, thus, it is unable to form propositions regarding the concepts of reflective consciousness to social and political experiences or institutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Karl Marx (1818-1883) | Dialectical & Materialist philosophy | Social ontology: individuality and Community in social reality. Rejects Hegel's idealism, and embodied in the spirit that the mind eventually comes to recognize the world as an exteriorisation of itself. | Knowledge is not the revelation of an objective world but a product of practical activity. Philosophical analysis must begin with people. Social philosophy is about the reconciliation of people with themselves and the world. |

Source: Adapted from Blackburn (2008), Napper (2003), and Liberman (2004).

Over the last two decades, a number of Western sociologists such as Liberman (2004), philosophers such as Blackburn (2008), and Tibetan Buddhist philosophers such as Nepper (2003) and Thurman (1984) have argued that Tibetan philosophy is not simply pure religion and needs to be separated from religion. I take the position that Tibetan philosophy is an analysis of conventional and ultimate dialectical relations, is separate from belief in Buddha, and open to independent academic study. Further, Je TsongKhapa’s dialectical philosophy and analytical framework can be employed to analyze any form of modern social and political reality including education.

A number of scholars have done comprehensive studies of Tibetan dialectical philosophy and culture. Liberman (2004), for example, takes a sociology of reasoning perspective in describing Tibetan philosophy:

The public character of reason in Tibetan philosophical culture is by now obvious. However, there is a tendency in both European and Tibetan intellectual cultures to view reason as something that stands independent of social practices….it is the perspective of ethnomethodology that meanings, especially formal ones, are not personal possessions but public events; this outlook is founded upon a long tradition of sociological research and reflection that includes Emile Durkheim, George Herbert Mead, and Jürgen Habermas, among others (p.107).
He also argues that “investigating reason has a sociological pedigree that is equally impressive” (p.112) and that “more investigation into the formal practices of the thinking that…Tibetan scholars are doing” is necessary based on their "practice of thinking that employs formal analysis into its service but remains self-reflexively in control of what is being thought" (p. 238). In addition, “Tibetan philosophical culture formal reasoning is always materially embodied in the rhythmic forms of their dialectical practice” (p. 242). According to Liberman, the Tibetan philosophical system of dialectics strengthens thinking capacity through a logical reasoning curriculum. The curriculum aims to achieve adequacy of communication, reciprocity of perspectives, ability to identify and reformat philosophical weaknesses, and observation of rules for conducting a dialogue (Cabezon, 2003; Wallace, 2003; Tillemans, 1999).

4.1.2. Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical position

Tibetan scholars introduced Buddhism to Tibet at various times and in various forms from India, China, and Central Asia (Duo Shi, 2010; Hortsang Jigme, 2009; Laird, 2005; Liberman, 2004c; Dreyfus, 2003; Napper, 1989). As van der Kuijp (2005) states:

The late eighth century translation of Indian Buddhist texts into Tibetan had reached far and deep consequences for the Tibetan self-understanding and indigenous Bön sensibilities, with the newly invented word or phrase of vocabularies, formed as a matter of course the principal vehicle for the acculturation and enculturation of Buddhist ideas and ideals, and the large number of expressions having to do with the subcontinent’s material culture, flora and fauna various Buddhists played a fundamental role in the formation of Tibetan history and its interpretation and, in the creation of the awareness of a Tibetan nation and national identity (p. 4).

Tibetan Buddhism has been influenced by a variety of Buddhist traditions and practices as well as the native Tibetan animistic religion, Bön (Powers, 1995). There are four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism: Nying-ma, Sa-gya, Ka-gyü, and Ge-luk (Dreyfus, 2003; Erricker, 2008).

---

15 Monastic debating practice shares a similar structure. “The structure of the debating and its rapid give and take are oriented to keeping the debaters focused upon mutual concerns” (Liberman, 2004, p. 238).
Each school contributed its intellectual work to Tibetan society in different ways and at different levels: the Nying-ma school contributed ritual activities, the Sa-gya school contributed epistemology and cultural systemization, and the Ka-gyü school enhanced forms of meditation.

Je TsongKhapa was not only a significant thinker but also a successful reformer, a great monastic educator, and the most powerful spiritual leader in Tibetan history. The major characteristic of his approach is that he used dialectical analysis to free philosophy from the ontological extremes of externalism and nihilism. He also refined the philosophical concept of interdependent co-arising and systematized a comprehensive program of Tibetan monastic education and practice (Duo Shi, 2010; Erricker, 2008; Deje Droma, 2008; Liberman, 2004c; Dreyfus, 2003; Thurman, 1984). In addition to developing philosophy and rationalizing a new spiritual approach, he institutionalized the monasteries, formulated monastic education, established a dialectical methodology, and reformed society through religious changes. These contributions made him a leader of Tibetan intellectual groups and the Tibetan academy. He also made the Gelug Pa sect's system of education the Tibetan model of monastic education that continues to the present day.

Je TsongKhapa stabilized monastic institutions as Tibet's literate society. In the process, he formulated and normalized the idea that all monastic stakeholders should participate fully and equally in the process of teaching and learning (Duoshi, 2010; Deji Droma, 2008; Luo, 1989). He standardized monastic behaviour by prohibiting monks from getting married and from interfering in secular affairs. He also corrected the defects in various Tibetan Buddhist sects. Moreover, his followers from diverse places in the provinces of U-Tsong, Kham, and Amdo not only established three major monastic institutions in Lhasa, but also founded enormous local and districts monasteries that have similar structures and models of academic learning and teaching.
Thus, monastic institutions increased their role as both cultural and social structural mediators in Tibetan society.

Historically, Je TsongKhapa was the founder of most of the academic institutions of the Ganden monastery and the Gelupa School, and an author of nineteen scholarly volumes. Socially, he reunified the fragmented society of Tibet by establishing a monastic network connected with all of the local societies. He formulated a monastic education system that enabled the monastic institutions to construct the macro social structure at the national level. He restructured the local social structure into the form that it continues to have today. In terms of social reform, he prohibited monks from controlling secular serfs and established a "donor" system for granting financial aid. Unlike Martin Luther King, Je TsongKhapa successfully strengthened and localized Buddhism in Tibetan society through his reform movements (Danzhu Aangben, 2001).

Philosophically, Je TsongKhapa’s development and synthesis of Buddhist philosophy was not only about religious reform, but also about establishing a secular epistemological foundation for the entire Tibetan cultural sphere. He made a significant distinction between old and new interpretations of Màdhyamaka (Middle Way Philosophy) in Tibet (Duckworth, 2013). According to Ruegg (2004), no one prior to Je TsongKhapa was able to localize Buddhism into Tibetan Buddhism and develop a realistic Middle Way philosophy.

---

16 The Màdhyamaka philosophy was developed in Indian Buddhist philosophy by Nagarjuna. It was a significant advance over previous philosophical approaches in that Nagarjuna contributed a new understanding of Madhyamika. This approach was suitable for the analysis and resolution of persistent philosophical dilemmas such as two levels of reality. Almost all Mahayana Buddhists accept his “middle way” philosophy as a pragmatic solution to contradictions between earlier approaches. Nevertheless, there are differences within Buddhist philosophy concerning how to interpret his work and more specifically how to apply it to certain concrete problems. (For more on Nagarjuna and the Middle Way, see Duckworth, 2013; Duo Shi, 2011; Ruegg, 2004; Napper, 1989; and Thurman, 1984).
Je TsongKhapa explored the wider philosophical implications of Mādhyamaka’s key insight that all events, forms, and substances are devoid of intrinsic existence and identity (Thupten Jinpa, 2005). Indian philosophers later interpreted the aim of the Mādhyamaka as leading to religious awakening. Je TsongKhapa rejected this assertion and argued that the main function of the Middle Way dialectic is philosophical, not metaphysical. These same scholars had speculated that the Middle Way dialectic implied that all beings, events, forms, and substances had an intrinsic nature. Je TsongKhapa categorically rejected this view and strongly argued against essentialist ontology.

Thupten Jinpa (1998) describes the key elements of Je TsongKhapa's approach as follows:

(i) distinguishing between the domains of ‘conventional’ and ‘ultimate’ discourses; (ii) distinguishing between two senses of ‘ultimate’ in the context of Mādhyamaka dialectics; (iii) identifying ‘correctly’ the objection of negation prior to the application of Mādhyamaka dialectics; (iv) distinguishing between that which is ‘negated by reason’ and ‘not found by reason’; (v) understanding correctly the logical form of the negation involved in the dialectics (p. 276).

He goes on to state that:

The reality of this world need not be exhausted within any of the four ontological possibilities being negated in the Mādhyamaka dialectic. From Je TsongKhapa’s point of view, there is nothing surprising in finding that even the reality of everyday objects like tables, chairs, etc., is found to be untenable when searched for through such critical analysis (p. 290).

By attempting to philosophically define the scope of human reason in relation to existence, Je TsongKhapa’s intent is to develop a system that can support the taken-for-granted assumptions of everyday reality held by the majority of humanity while also establishing a critical perspective that allows for that reality to be questioned and challenged.

His reconciliation of different philosophical schools resulted in a Tibetan Buddhism distinct from Buddhism that became the source of spiritual authority followed by all primary Tibetan social groups. More significantly, as a result of his reconciliation, Tibetans were able to
produce a significant central organization that has strongly shaped the entire Tibetan society through its social structuring and system of authority. While Buddha originally identified the notion of 'the two realities,' and Nagarjuna further developed it through Madhyamika, it was Je TsongKhapa who defined how the two realities dialectically re-appear and re-form over time by revealing that all the constitutive non-identical elements of existences interdependently co-arise.

4.1.3. Introducing Je TsongKhapa to the sociological field

Je TsongKhapa was a 14th century Tibetan religious reformer (Thurman, 2011; Duo Shi, 2011; Danzhu Aangben, 2001; Thupten Jinpa, 1998) and one of Tibet’s greatest philosophers (Duo Shi, 2011; Hopkins, 2008; Sonam Thakchoe, 2007; Liberman, c2004; Dreyfus, 2003; Thupten Jinpa, 1998; Napper, 1989; Napper, 1985; Thurman, 1984). In this context, it is important to distinguish his significance as an educator, cultural reformer, and dialectical philosopher from his position as a religious figure. During Je TsongKhapa’s time, the Tibetan kingdom was divided into many, small warring states. Similarly, Tibetan Buddhism and philosophy were divided into many contending schools that caused chaos by not honouring their responsibility to educate the people and foster peace and compassion.

Although Je TsongKhapa was trained in the philosophy of one particular school, he was dissatisfied that so many different philosophical interpretations existed. As a result, he travelled throughout Tibet, read manuscripts, and had discussions with scholars from every school to seek answers to his questions. He dialectally compared and critiqued the different schools, and eventually produced a philosophical synthesis that became the basis for Tibetan cultural unification and social renewal, resolved many internal Tibetan social conflicts of that time, and formed the dominant school of Tibetan philosophy that continues to today.
Je TsongKhapa’s social influences are deeply rooted in various aspects of Tibetan society and have a number of structuring effects. For example, 4/27, Tibet's national festival, is directly related to Je TsongKhapa and is observed throughout Tibetan society. Festivals like these provide time for the majority of Tibetan people to interact collectively and individually, practise co-presence across time and place, and make links between oral and literate culture.

Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy of critical analysis and his hermeneutic of consistency and coherence are embodied in the structure of monastic education (Duo shi, 2011, 2010; Liberman, c2004; Dreyfus, 2003; Napper, 1989; Hopkins, 1988). Thus, I argue that his academic work gives sociologists and educational researchers a key approach to understanding how Tibetan society is constituted through a number of structuring effects. His work asks us to perform a critical and holistic analysis of all elements of social structure in order to achieve an ultimate understanding of society even if that society consists of two different and conflicting groups. As table 6 shows, Je TsongKhapa focused on the dialectical relationship between conventional reality and ultimate reality. These two realities exist simultaneously in relation to the same object of study, and the two concepts of interdependent co-arising and causality are used to analyze both realities. In addition, ultimate reality is understood as influencing conventional reality through human social action.
Table 6

Analysis of Giddens’s and Je TsongKhapa’s Ontological Approaches to Reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinkers</th>
<th>Je TsongKhapa</th>
<th>Anthony Giddens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of reality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>Focused on dialectical relationship between constituted social realities and naturally constituted reality. These two realities exist with the same object at the same time. Ultimate reality often influences conventional reality through human action. Causality and Interdependent co-arising</td>
<td>Focuses on constituted social phenomena, such as theory of structuration constituted by social groups’ interaction. Micro and macro connections; multi-dimensional interactions at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate reality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Je TsongKhapa’s social structuring effects

In the following sections, I draw on structuration to analyze how Je TsongKhapa's two notions of interdependent co-rising and causality relate to social structure, society, and the spiritual dimensions of social life. These two notions are the most insightful frameworks for sociological analysis in terms of both conventional and ultimate reality17.

4.2.1. Interdependent co-rising and its influences on Tibetan literate society

Je TsongKhapa’s notion of interdependent co-arising is based on a combined analysis of the place in between the extremes of essentialism and nihilism18 (Duckworth, 2013). He deepened and reified the Middle Way philosophy from a synthesis of opposing philosophical approaches. He defined the notion of interdependent co-arising as a philosophical construct that could realistically bridge two previously existing Buddhist notions: the conventional and the

---

17 Many modern scientists have been applying the notion of interdependent co-arising to their work. Examples include quantum physics and psychology.

18 Another stream of Buddhism asserts that something which is validly existent is non-existent (Tsepak Rigzin, 2008, p. 142).
ultimate truth. There had long been a deep philosophical division of Buddhist schools in Tibet over the nature of truth, with one school arguing for the reality of *conventional truth* and the other arguing for the reality of *ultimate truth*. Until Je TsongKhapa, no one had been able to reconcile these competing schools in any level of society in Tibet. However, through his dialectical method leading to a synthesis of these views and the concept of interdependent co-arising, he was able to reconcile these two schools.

As a result of Je TsongKhapa’s comprehensive synthesis, his teaching spread rapidly and became predominant in all areas of Tibet as well as in many neighboring places, particularly Mongolia. Like Giddens’s view that an individual’s beliefs about social structure influence and constrain social practices, Je TsongKhapa asserts that “our mental consciousness often—but not always—actively assents to this false appearance, conceiving of things as existing in an exaggerated way, existing in and of them” (Newland, 2008, p. 77).

According to Je TsongKhapa, individuals have personal agency, but their agency is limited by social conditions. According to Giddens, individuals can play a part in the structuration process if they share their knowledge and engage with the broader society. In the case of Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy, the potential to affect and broaden the Tibetan social structure is limited to monasteries and their affairs. In addition, his philosophy has been followed and debated mainly in the monasteries (Dreyfus, 2003).

Je TsongKhapa emphasizes that all existences are constituted by other non-identical elements that are in dialectical relation to each other at the conventional level (Ruegg, 2004). Je TsongKhapa’s dialectical concept of interdependent co-arising has never been applied to the analysis of social structure and social issues, and has had little influence on the development of oral society.
4.1.2. Causality and its influences on oral society

Searle (2010) asserts that people's capacity for consciousness and other mental phenomena is the result of long periods of biological evolution. Collective consciousness is dependent on, and derives from, the consciousness of individuals; that is, how social actors practice cultural ideas through everyday activities in producing forms of society. Tibetan people have been practicing the notion of causality for more than seven centuries across two societies.

The notion of causality refers to the natural principle of relations of cause and effect (Duo Shi, 2010). In Tibetan epistemology, there are six forms of cause: acting cause, innate cause, equal-state cause, concomitant cause, omnipresent cause, and ripening cause. There are also other types of cause including the 'fundamental' cause and 'arisen' cause categorized by nature, and the 'direct' cause and 'indirect' cause categorized by giving rise to effects (Duo Shi, 2010; Tsepak Rigzin, 2008; Muge Samdan, 1997). Furthermore, Muge Samdan (1997) asserts that cause and effect require conditions of context. There are four types of conditions: causal condition, objective condition, fundamental condition, and immediate condition.

Sociologically, it is important to recognize and define these different causes, effects, and conditions in the constituents of Tibetan society and social structuration. In the education sphere, for example, what types of cause, effect, and condition do teachers, curriculum, policy, administrators, students, and school facilities constitute in terms of educational structuration?

The relationship between cause, effect, and condition is dialectically interdependent in both conventional and ultimate realities. Cause, effect, and condition produce and reproduce each other within the conventional and ultimate contexts of time and space.\textsuperscript{19} Any entity can be a cause, effect, or condition in different levels of context, but no entity can be a cause and effect at

\textsuperscript{19}This notion should not just remain an epistemological one. It needs to be applied to the sociology of education or social sciences, and particularly to the theory of social causality.
the same time. This indicates that there is much to explore by way of application to the sociological sphere.

Tibetans have been applying the concept of causality in almost all aspects of social life and phenomena across both oral and literate society. Tibetan monk scholars use it as a tool to analyze both conventional and ultimate phenomena for Buddhist purposes. Tibetans in the illiterate, local/oral sphere use it to reawaken principles of behavior and action for ultimate purposes. Almost all local oral Tibetans believe that the next life is logically based on what they do in their current life. Thus, practices of causality influence Tibetan social and personal life at the micro/local level and are related to practices of friendship, marriage, workplace, family, education, and food.

4.2.2.1. The practice of causality in friendship

My aim is to explore how friendship relates to the process of structuration and social structure in Tibetan society. However, before looking specifically at practices of causality, it is important to look at the wider context of studies on friendship.

Hall (2012) identified six factors that reflect ideal standards of friendship in modern capitalist society: expectations, symmetrical reciprocity, agency, enjoyment, instrumental aid, similarity, and communion. Hartup and Stevens (1997) make a distinction between the 'deep structure' or reciprocity of friendship and the 'surface structure' or social exchange of friendship. Eve (2002) maintains that friendship groupings are significant social units that organize people's social trajectories and world views, and relate to how classes reproduce themselves.

Other researchers study aspects such as the rules of friendship (Argyle & Henderson, 1984), patterns of friendship (McAdams, Healy & Krause, 1984), and the meaning of friendship.

---

20 This refers to direct/indirect cause and effect relations.
(Knox & Hickson, 2001). Still others study friendship in sociological contexts and in relation to social structures (Allan, 1998). Examples include friendship in the context of: the workplace (Sias, Heath, Perry, Silva, & Fix, 2004); politics (Mallory, 2012); adult social relationships (Verbrugge, 1977); sociology (Pahl, 2002; Eve, 2002; Allan, 1998); students (Kubitschek & Hallinan, 1998); identity (Allan, 1998); and social motives (McAdams, Healy & Krause, 1984). However, little is known about how friendship relates to local social structure in Tibetan society, and particularly as a practice of causality.


The practice of causality in friendship in both oral and literate Tibetan society is a complex field. In oral society, causality is a rule that informs friendship patterns in terms of loyalty, reliability, and sustainability. In literate Tibetan society, the friendship patterns are different and include a particular type of spiritual friendship, but are equally informed by loyalty, reliability, and sustainability.

According to McAdams, Healy and Krause (1984), two patterns of friendship exist in Western society—communal patterns of friendship motivated by intimacy and agentive patterns motivated by power. This is in exact opposition to Tibetan friendship patterns. Friendship in Tibetan society is considered as Karma that has accumulated from a past life or many previous lives and is not related to power. Trustworthiness is another key factor. Allan (1998) asserts that friendships are framed through social and economic formations, and patterned by the social
context where people live. Significantly, friendships can also partially inform identity and the mapping and sustaining of social status.

Linking causality to the spiritual knowledge system allows both oral and literate Tibetan social members to practice the notion of causality in their daily secular and religious social context, but it results in different levels and quality of friendship. Three different levels of friendship—normal friends, good friends, and best friends—exist in oral society; these friendships extend across clans and other social relational boundaries. ‘Zang Sa’ is a particular quality of friendship referring to relationships across families and individuals. ‘Zang Sa’ relationships sustain the local social structure by being passed on to successive family generations over time. Only ‘normal’ and ‘good’ friendships can influence and change social organization and structure. ‘Best’ friendships in Tibetan society cannot influence or change the process of social structuration due to the limited number of best friends people have over their lifetime.

There are several types of friendship in Tibetan society. The first type reflects institutionally organized activity: classmates, members of teams, etc. This type of friendship is maintained through trust and is kept throughout one’s life. The second type occurs between prison inmates. Even when they return home, they maintain this friendship for the rest of their lives. They have both changed through their shared experience. The third type is between sworn friends who sometimes see each other as equal to or more important than siblings and, because of their awareness of spiritual causality, never betray each other. The fourth type is inter-family friendship based on cultural tradition. These friendships begin perhaps by chance, but continue

21 In Tibetan: བཟང་ས།
22 In the Tibetan village, almost everyone can be normal friends and make more friends from other tribal communities by obeying the same moral Buddhist principle of causality.
and develop for generations. The families voluntarily support each other in times of difficulty out of mutual responsibility.

There are two types of contextually different friendship patterns in Tibetan society. Friendships in the oral social context have a limited domain due to the need for face-to-face communication and in-person interaction, while friendships in the literate social context have a wider domain through unlimited written communication and interaction. It is clear that friendships in oral social contexts in Tibet are related to micro social structure and that friendships in literate social contexts are related to macro social structure. Thus, practising causality in friendship has several sociological implications. It not only supports close social relationships, but also sustains micro social stability. It is central to primary social groups\textsuperscript{23} in a society ruled by trust and morality, and predominantly concerned with governing the village and implementing local customary laws.

\textit{4.2.2.2. The practice of causality in marriage}

The notion of causality in marriage is practiced in two ways. First, marriage involves considering many factors including the prospective partners' family tree and parents’ lifespan. Within the family history, anyone who died in early adult age by illness is considered as the major factor in not allowing to get married due to their parents’ thinking of psychical genetic causality of connections. Second, the parents of both sides investigate the future bride or groom with the help of others in the village, including whether she or he obeys the causality in their village. The stability of a marriage is based on the observance of causality, not on income. Thus,

\textsuperscript{23} Primary groups are intimate, face–to–face groups whose members play a key role in linking the actor to the larger society (Ritzer, 1996 p. 14).
divorce in Tibetan villages is rare, but it is common to find single mothers\textsuperscript{24}. In general, obeying or practicing causality influences social structure indirectly through social members’ day-to-day practices.

### 4.2.2.3. The practice of causality in the workplace

In both oral and literate Tibetan society, there is no formal office or place where people can work together as employees except in the central government of Tibet in Lhasa (before 1959). However, there are socially free workplaces such as farm fields and herding pastures during certain periods or seasons. In addition, there are religious workplaces, and private workplaces for making cloth, wood, and shoes. All these workplaces produce items that people order personally. Interestingly, there are no butcher shops or business workplaces in Tibetan society. Cause and effect thinking in terms of rebirth means that butchers are seen as killing more life. Businesses involve lying about prices and charging more than items cost,\textsuperscript{25} which affects one’s status in the next life. Thus, the practice of causality as a moral rule not only confines the workplace to limited private activities, but also prohibits certain types of workplace.

Tibetans strongly believe that ‘you reap what you sow’—also a practice of causality. In agricultural regions, villagers exchange seeds before the planting season in the hope of reaping good barley. In nomadic regions, herdspeople feed weaker animals more during the winter season in the hope of keeping more animals alive as property. In places of learning, young students put effort into their studies day and night in order to build the rich knowledge foundations needed for future scholarships. These actual practices in the workplace are deeply

\textsuperscript{24} Accepting night visitors very often results in these young women becoming single mothers before getting married.

\textsuperscript{25} There is an urgent need to conduct studies on the Tibetan workplace that will explore or discover the shadow of Tibetan economic problems relating to social issues.
connected to the principle of cause and effect disseminated to local societies over time and place through Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy.

4.2.2.4. The practice of causality in family relationships

As a unity of interacting personalities, the family is a complex social organization consisting of various relationships—culture, siblings, ethics, marital communication, division of labor, kinship, gender roles, sexual behavior, and child development. In Tibetan society, sustaining these relationships requires following certain rules of tradition, morality, and causality. The notion of family relationship is very different from that in Western materialistic societies. In oral Tibetan society, three or four generations live together in one house. Elders are compassionate toward younger generations, and younger generations pay respect to the elders. This is part of obeying causalities.26

Tibetan families send the most intelligent son to a monastery to become a monk and receive an education, while the other children inherit the house and property, and take care of their grandparents and parents. As a result of obeying causality rules and spiritual beliefs, there are rarely any divorces or suicides in Tibetan society. Unlike families in Western societies, which have been steadily shrinking in size, Tibetan families have been generally maintaining

---

26 There are numerous stories on the notion of causality. I include one here called "Equality" about causality in family relationships. “Once upon a time, there was a family with a grandson and a disabled grandfather. One night, the parents were discussing how to drop the disabled grandfather in a faraway place from which he would not be able to come home. But the grandson heard the discussion between his parents. The next day, before the break of dawn, when the parents took the grandfather out of their house a few steps away, the grandson called to his father: “Dad, bring the equipment back when you come home.” The father was shocked and asked: “Why are you asking me to bring the equipment back?” The son answered, “I need it to take you away when you become grandfather’s age.” Thus, the parents took the grandfather back to their home.” This story is from Wan Minggang, Jia Luo, and Badeng Nima (Eds), 1999, *Tibetan cultural reader*, Gansu Nationalities Publishing House: Gansu, China.
their size, though this has been significantly affected over the last three decades by China’s one child policy.

4.2.2.5. The practice of causality in education

Three forms of education are offered in Tibetan society at different levels and different degrees of quality. In the oral education sphere, teaching and learning is flexible. Any place can be a site of learning, any particular meaning can be the content of teaching, anyone who has the knowledge that is needed can be the teacher. Proverbs and practical observations of work are the most effective teaching methods and content.

In the monastic education sphere, the curriculum is divided into two streams—religion and philosophy—and the teachings are very complex. In the religion stream, Buddhist religious practitioners focus on mental and spiritual development through meditation and ceremonial activities. In the philosophy stream, qualified instructors who are morally and intellectually reliable teach various academic subjects.

The practice of causality in the monastic community is founded on the belief that accumulating quality teaching and learning will produce qualified intellectuals. To produce agents who equally balance compassion and wisdom is the ultimate goal. The belief is that many compassionate, wise, and well balanced citizens will constitute a worthy society, and that the society can reproduce good people through education.

In oral education, practicing causality functions according to the rules and content of teaching. In monastic education, it functions according to the principles of teaching and learning. Interestingly, within the state school system, causality has little place. Indeed, this form of education has little connection to Tibetan social structuration in general. Thus, through the
concept of causality, oral and monastic education sustain the local and societal structuration process.

4.2.2.6. The practice of causality in food supply

Based on the life cycle of cause and effect relationships, Tibetans normally do not eat the meat of small animals such as fish, which cause many more beings to be killed in order to feed the same number of people. In some societies, fish is regarded as healthy. On the other hand, because of beliefs about causality, Tibetans are not very creative or inventive when it comes to their diet.

According to the Buddhist view, there is no perpetual status of animal or human life because the soul is believed to travel anywhere after death to pursue rebirth as an animal or human being. Actions taken during this life not only affect the present, but also the status of the next life. From a social development point of view, these day-to-day actions in both oral and literate societies significantly affect social structure.

Briefly, the notion of causality is deeply related to diet in Tibetan society. As a major principle of food supply, practices of causality not only limit food resources, but also constrain the social and economic vitality of Tibetan society.

4.3. Je TsongKhapa’s notion of conventional and ultimate realities

There is no existence without constituents across both ultimate and conventional realities. Our conventional society, for example, consists of the social system, social structure, agents, institutions, rules, resources, community, and spirituality, which all have their constituents. For sociologists, it is significant to identify what the social relations between these elements are and how they should be reified. The elements then need to be categorized according to various causes and conditions through the notion of social causality.
In addition to being the foundation of Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy, the concept of conventional and ultimate reality can also contribute an analytical framework to sociology for understanding how the two realities influence each other in our society. This framework is particularly helpful to structuration theory in dealing with ontological dilemmas. Sociologists often attempt to conceptualize conventional social phenomena and ultimate phenomena as similar. Thus, we need to comprehend the differences and connections between the two realities and how they are interactively related.

Thupten Jinpa (1998) describes Je TsongKhapa’s understanding of the two realities and related analytic framework as follows:

Je TsongKhapa made a critical distinction between different domains of ultimate analysis and conventional analysis, and the divisions allowed Je TsongKhapa to reach far beyond ramification from Mādhyamika. In terms of conceiving the two distinct categories of discourse and analysis, Je TsongKhapa not just simply describing the Mādhyamika’s two truths, it deals with the complexity of independent of the two truth issues. Furthermore, Je TsongKhapa comprehensively developed the scope of two analyses that is the objects of conventional reality such as form, sound, and other existences, can never be built through a reasoning process that examines whether or not possess intrinsic being (p. 280).

Social and spiritual structuration crosses both realities in Tibetan society. Thus, the modern sociological perspective emphasizes self-identity, individuality, competition, conflict theory, and rational choice as a means of resolving practical issues or problems within conventional reality. In fact, ultimate reality influences conventional reality and there is a dialectical relationship between the two. Thus, Western sociological theories need to include an analysis of ultimate reality in order to see the roots of social problems. The Tibetan sociological perspective on society emphasizes not only the visible reality of convention, but also spirituality and ultimate reality. The dialectical relation between conventional reality and ultimate reality provides an important framework for this study in defining both realities in society. This framework also
provides a foundation for extending the field of sociology and increasing opportunities for sociologists to analyze any form of society, not just Western, modern, or capital centric societies.

Whereas the notion of ultimate reality addresses mostly the commonalities among societies around world, conventional reality primarily addresses the differences among societies. The notion of conventional and ultimate reality has been studied in Tibetan monastic institutions for many centuries, but has not yet been used as a tool to analyze Tibetan social phenomena. Thus, it is necessary to define both conventional and ultimate realities for the purposes of sociology.

4.3.1. Defining conventional reality

Based on Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy, Thupten Jinpa (2002) states that “existence consists of both conventional and ultimate realities” (p. 152). Duo Shi (2010) has categorized human beings into two types—natural human beings and acquired human beings. These two comments allow me to define conventional and ultimate aspects of society. As an existential phenomenon, human society has been constituted by either natural human beings or acquired human beings. At the same time, each individual has both dimensions—natural and social—and individuals constitute collectivities which, in turn, inform society. Thus, there are two levels of individual and societal conventional realities, and two levels of individual and societal ultimate realities.

'Acquired' human characteristics are related to conventional contexts such as lifestyle, cultural knowledge, work skills, morality, value systems, interests, and beliefs. At the same time, the family and social environment—which includes education, the political environment, economic status, information access, fashion, and personal relations—informs and constrains these characteristics. The diverse and multidimensional traits of acquired human beings are
exhibited in conventional reality. At the same time, ideology dominates and constrains acquired humans’ thinking and state of mind.

4.3.2. Defining ultimate reality


Interestingly, Puligandla27 (1975) asserts that “ultimate reality is grasped in direct, intuitive insight into reality as it is in itself” (p.95). As a result, the notion of ultimate reality is the deconstruction of the dialectical relationship among non-identical constituents, like a fabric of diverse atoms in a pattern. For example, the school, the organization, the institution, education, and the society are parts of a conventional reality, and if we split the different parts that constitute its existence, its very entity is lost. In addition, there are two levels of macro and micro dialectical relationships: a) a macro dialectical relationship between the ultimate and conventional realities; and b) a micro dialectical relationship between the constituents. Thus, both ultimate and conventional realities are subject to analysis. Thupten Jinpa (1998) states Je TsongKhapa's definition of ultimate analysis as:

any form of reasoning which examines in the following manner—i.e., whether all things and events such as form, etc. exist in a true mode of being or not (bden par yod dam med), or whether they come into being in an essential way or not (rang gi ngo bo’i sgo nas grub bam ma grub) —is an analysis that applies to the ultimate status of objects in question (p. 282).

However, according to Thupten Jinpa, Je TsongKhapa not only rejected the concept of originality in dividing ultimate and conventional analysis, but also disagreed with the notion of

---

27 Puligandla uses terms 'lower' and 'higher' truth to refer to both conventional and ultimate realities.
origination and cessation as supporting ultimate analysis. This definition enables me to confine the scope of sociological phenomena to conventional and ultimate phenomena, to adapt new methodological frameworks to sociology, and to analyze society. These two methodological frameworks are conventional analysis and ultimate analysis, and are applied to the analysis of Tibetan social structuration and education in chapter 7.

According to Duo Shi (2010), natural human society is largely constituted by only orally educated communities and clan villages, and oral education is the key instrument that maintains and transforms survival skills, mutual oral knowledge, and daily life experiences. The evolutionary process in this type of society is slow, given the easy material satisfaction individuals have.

Unlike acquired human society, the principle of biological nature confines natural human society to basic survival needs, and to dealing with the four periods of birth, aging, illness, and death without conventional creativities and inventions. Natural human societies live closer to the natural environment than conventionalized societies, but have rich spiritualties that support their mental state. Interestingly, Tibetan oral society can be described as an ultimate approach society, and Tibetan literate society as a spiritual approach society. The conventional approach in Tibetan society is lacking; it could not build a conventional knowledge system to match modern social development.

According to the dialectical relationship between ultimate and conventional realities, both realities need to be equally balanced in any circumstance. If one way is stronger or larger, it can cause historical problems and personal suffering. The Tibetan experience is a perfect example of a society lacking the conventional approach, whereas the Western experience is a perfect example of societies lacking the ultimate approach. Taking a sociological perspective, there is a
huge need to explore not only how to bridge conventional knowledge and ultimate knowledge from diverse cultures and societies, but also how to use dialectical methods of conventional analysis and ultimate analysis.

Theoretical reconciliation can be reached by remedying the lack of ultimate analysis in Giddens’s sociological account, and the lack of conventional analysis in Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical account. Thus, the concept of ultimate reality implies that there is another form of reality that plays an important role in holistic understandings of reality. The concept can be applied in modern academia to investigating or analyzing any form of social science research including education.

4.4. Relation of Je TsongKhapa’s and Giddens’s ontological approaches to reality

As shown in table 7 below, Je TsongKhapa bridges the analysis of the two realities dialectically. The two realities exist within the same object at the same time, and ultimate reality often influences conventional reality through human action in societies. The notions of interdependent co-arising and causality can be used to analyze both conventional and ultimate realities.

Interestingly, Giddens focuses on conventionally constituted social phenomena such as social group interactions, and uses structuration to deal with conventional social beings. At the same time, his two notions of the connections between micro and macro, and simultaneous multi-dimensional interactions, are ultimate concepts that strengthen structuration theory and allow it to analyze any form of society. This comparison inspires me to pursue a new approach, different from Stones's (2005) “strong structuration theory.” Thus, the sociology I am proposing will have conventional particularity and ultimate commonality, and will enable sociologists to conceptualize any form of society and social phenomena.
Table 7

*Analysis of Giddens’s and Je TsongKhapa’s Ontological Approaches to Reality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of reality</th>
<th>Je TsongKhapa</th>
<th>Anthony Giddens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional reality</td>
<td>Focused on dialectical relationships between constituted social realities and naturally constituted reality. These two realities exist in the same object at the same time.</td>
<td>Focuses on constituted social phenomena, such as theory of structuration constituted by social groups’ interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate reality</td>
<td>Ultimate reality often influences conventional reality through human action. Interdependence co-arising and causality</td>
<td>Micro and Macro connections; multi-dimensional interactions at the same time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.4.1. The notion of self-identity**

The notion of self-identity, which focuses on how individual agents play roles in society, changes in different social contexts and time. Self-identity is constituted by many internal and external factors at the same time.

From a psychological point of view, Vanzyl and Ando (2009) discuss the notion of self/no-self within Buddhism. Ando (2009) and Galin (2003) report a contradiction in the notion of ego between Western psychotherapy and Buddhism. Western psychotherapy emphasizes the ego while Buddhism asserts that the notion of no-self and ego is an ultimately unnecessary delusion. In terms of identifying the differences between ‘ego’ and ‘I,’ Ando poses an important question about the purpose of our lives as human beings. He realizes that Western psychology has no clear definition of ego:
Ordinarily, the word ‘ego’ refers to the largely conscious source of mental activity, while ‘self’ refers to that which is reflexively aware when mental activity is observed in an objective way. These usages are far from standardized, however, and the fact remains that the terms ‘ego’ and ‘self’ are used in both psychology and philosophy in an ambiguous fashion. Ultimately, thoughts (ego) do not belong to a person but have a type of autonomous existence (p. 9).

Ando also realizes that Western psychology is mainly focused on the structure of the self, while Buddhism focuses directly on how the self is formed and how it functions. However, Lamrimpa (2010 B) analyzes this notion from a philosophical perspective, and asserts that:

The notion of “I” is a conventional truth (designated “I” is not the “I” itself but the psycho-physical aggregates), and the absence, or emptiness, of an inherent “I” is ultimate truth. Thus, there are two forms of identity: phenomenal identitylessness and personal identitylessness. The lack of inherent existence of those aggregates is called phenomenal identitylessness, and the identitylessness of “I” is the personal identitylessness; the division between personal identitylessness and phenomenal identitylessness is based on regarding to the notion of emptiness as its ultimate nature (pp. 122-123).

According to Je TsongKhapā’s dialectical philosophy, all existential objects have conventional and ultimate aspects as “existence consists of both conventional and ultimate realities” (Thupten Jinpa, 2002, p. 152). The human body follows the same principle, consisting of both conventional and ultimate realities. Conventional psychical being allows social thinkers to designate a ‘self’, ‘I’ and ‘ego’ (Waldron, 2003). However an ultimate analysis of the multiple elements constituting an existential object allows philosophers to realize that there is no ‘self’, ‘I’ and ‘ego’ without these constitutive elements.

Thus, the present study attempts to apply the two concepts of reality to social analysis in order to comprehend how the relations between the two realities are revealed in society. The two realities are related dialectically and influence one another. Society has both conventional and

28 I remember that when I was taking a Middle Way Philosophy course in my university, teachers like Duo Shi and Samdrup Gyamtso frequently asked the question: Where are you? Our bodies consist of many elements; every part of our body needs to use the word ‘my’; a single part of our body cannot represent ‘I’. For the sake of convention, researchers and thinkers have to concede the designated notions of teacher, students, ‘I’, ‘self’ and ‘ego” because they exist.
ultimate aspects, but Je TsongKhapa neglected the social conventional aspect and sociologists like Giddens have neglected the social ultimate aspect. The emphasis on these two realities has differentiated entire social approaches; one centralizes the conventional way of life while the other centralizes the ultimate way of life. The root of social differentiation is the different understanding of ‘self’ in conventional and ultimate realities.

As a result of these two biased approaches, modern societies face ultimate problems while pre-modern Tibetan society faces conventional problems. In order to rectify these problems theoretically, there is a need for dialogue between Western sociology and Eastern philosophy. Je TsongKhapa understood the conventional and ultimate aspects of the human body but never applied this understanding to societal concerns. He asserted that at the level of conventional reality there is physical being and self-identity and at the level of ultimate reality there is no self or self-identity. Giddens, who focuses only on the level of conventional reality, asserts that there is physical being and self-identity. He further asserts that:

In place of the ‘ego’, it is preferable to speak of the ‘I’ (as, of course, Freud did not in the original German). This usage does not prevent anthropomorphism, in which the ego is pictured as a sort of mini-agent; but it does at least help to begin to remedy it. The use of ‘I’ develops out of, and is thereafter associated with, the positioning of the agent in social encounters. As a term of a predicative sort, it is ‘empty’ of content, as compared with the richness of the actor’s self-descriptions involved with ‘me’ (1984, p. 7).

At the level of conventional reality, Je TsongKhapa and Giddens share the assertion of self and self-identity. However, while Je TsongKhapa treated the conventional self as a temporal entity and tried to reduce negative greed (e.g., wanting more control) and promote positive greed
Giddens tries to conceptualize a conventional social context in which human beings strive to satisfy material greed.

4.4.2. Comparisons between Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy and Giddens’s sociology

Exploring the similarities and differences between Je TsongKhapa’s and Giddens’s analytical approaches has significant benefits for developing a new sociological theory. Although both these great scholars are from different societies and different times, their theoretical contributions have much impact on our society today.

Giddens’s approach is to conceive the theory of structuration; Je TsongKhapa’s Buddhist philosophy of interdependent co-arising is based on cause and effect through dialectical analysis (see table 8). Giddens uses a dialectical reflexive method to review sociological traditions and absorb other fields into sociological theory, while Je TsongKhapa applies dialectical analysis to a review of Buddhist philosophical traditions.

Je TsongKhapa treats reality as consisting of two levels: conventional reality and ultimate reality. Giddens treats society as consisting of two levels, micro and macro. Both see the two levels as mutually influencing each other in a dialectical interactive process. Je TsongKhapa sees conventional reality as a kind of “folk” analysis of surface manifestations of underlying phenomena. Thus conventional reality is the incomplete appearance of a broader ultimate reality. Giddens sees entities, actions, and relations at the micro level as coming together into larger entities that also have relationships between them at the macro level. Therefore, the macro level is built out of micro level entities and relations.

Current micro actions have a double influence from current reality and from current macro

---

29 Based on this approach, Je TsongKhapa has written a book called: *Lam rim chen mo*, available in English translation as *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*
level patterns, which are themselves created largely of past micro patterns. Thus in Giddens’s sociology the past is in dialectical relationship with the present that in turn affects the future through micro level agency. For Giddens, practice is caused by the dialectical interaction of micro and macro factors, which can in turn change the macro level.

Table 8

*Comparisons between Je TsongKhapa’s Philosophy and Giddens’s Structuration Theory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th><strong>Anthony Giddens</strong></th>
<th><strong>Je TsongKhapa</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Periods</td>
<td>Giddens (1938--)</td>
<td>Je TsongKhapa (1357-1419)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To develop Sociological theory</td>
<td>To develop Buddhist philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories</td>
<td>a) Structuration; b) connections between Micro and Macro, has dialectical interactive relationship across space and time; c) self-identity, changing within social structuration process; d) Temporality—concept of time</td>
<td>a) Interdependent co-arising based on dialectical interactions of cause and effects; b) Emptiness is based on analysis of being; c) Within the ultimate level of truth, there is no self-identity. d) Temporality----concept of changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>a) Dialectical review was reflexively derived from sociology traditions; b) Absorbs other fields’ method into sociological theory.</td>
<td>a) Dialectical analysis was reflexively derived from philosophy traditions; b) Synthesized other Buddhist schools’ intellectual thought to found new school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Extended aims, scopes and method of sociological theories; developed modern theory of sociology.</td>
<td>a) Clarified and extended the notion of emptiness. b) This philosophical contribution restructured Tibetan society, an example of structuration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonalities</td>
<td>a) Although, Giddens and Je TsongKhapa come from different perspectives, the two thinkers have both extended their field and used a similar method of dialectical analysis and holistic review. b) The dialectical method broadens and deepens researchers’ insight into social phenomena in more complex ways. Both thinkers led to new direction for their followers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Je TsongKhapa, a dialectical analysis of the superficial appearances of conventional reality can lead to insight into ultimate reality. Ultimate reality can be understood by all, but is only understood by a few. However, those who achieve this deeper understanding can bring this
understanding to their practice, and can share this understanding with others. Thus, ultimate reality may influence conventional reality and cause changes in common perceptions of reality.

4.4. Reinterprets and Critiques of the Works of Je TsongKhapa

_This life, you must know as the tiny splash of a raindrop, a thing of beauty that disappears even as it comes into being. Therefore, set your goal Make use of every day and night to achieve it._


Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy can serve as a foundation and methodology for Tibetan sociology. In this context, both his intellectual work and his social and educational contributions need to be seen as more than a religious philosophy or religious reform. In the following sections, I begin by discussing his influence on Tibetan society and then consider critical reviews of his work by others.

Je TsongKhapa saw the relationship between the two realities not only as dialectical, but also as interactive. He restructured Tibetan society based on the integration of social and spiritual power across the two levels of reality. Tibetans see that life goals are settled both at the level of conventional reality and ultimate reality. In addition, the monasteries have been playing both social and spiritual roles within the Tibetan social system and contributing to the process of social and spiritual structuration.

4.5.1. Relationships between Je TsongKhapa’s thought and Tibetan social structure until 1951

Je TsongKhapa’s intellectual contributions shaped Tibetans’ worldview through his philosophical developments of interdependent co-arising and causality. There are two types of
causality, *tangible* and *intangible*, and both have had a strong impact on Tibetan society. Peoples’ actions within this view are not only simply for this life, but are also done with the next life in mind.

According to Je TsongKhapa, the logic of the two causalities bridges both conventional and ultimate reality. Rebirth and reincarnations are not only formed through intangible causalities, but are also examples of ultimate reality. Thus, the villagers and monk scholars practice the logic of causality as a life cycle principle in their everyday life. As a result, the majority of Tibetans help others more than satisfying their own shortsighted, temporary benefits in this life. The notion of causality, as discussed above, crosses all aspects of life: friendship, marriage, farming, family, traditional education, and diet.

4.5.2. *Je TsongKhapa’s religious reform of Tibetan society as a political influence through education institutions*

Je TsongKhapa’s reform began in a period of political fragmentation when there were neither political nor spiritual central authorities. Thus, at the societal macro level, social structures collapsed, but at the regional micro level, social structures persisted. However, without the mediating influence of the macro structures, many different conflicts arose. These in-group conflicts, institutional conflicts, and conflicts among district chiefs weakened the whole society.

The four great schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the local chiefs, and the monasteries all strove to increase their own political power through religion. This shows that each sector used the local power to strengthen their religious and institutional power, and not to strengthen the political power of state. Je TsongKhapa conducted a comprehensive philosophical synthesis that sought to establish a common spirituality as a source of pan-Tibetan social cohesion. Thus, the other sectors respectfully and mutually followed his understanding of Buddhist philosophy
which, in turn, allowed him and his followers to establish a new school of Buddhism, the Gelupa School. The head of the Gelupa School also became the head of the reconstituted central government through the efforts of many followers in spreading his thought. Thus, the renewed central government terminated the local political fragmentation and, at the same time, restructured the social order of Tibetan society. The secular villagers are influenced by oral education through monastic cultural activities several times a year. Interestingly, as Ruegg (2004) observes, “Je TsongKhapa’s successful accomplishments were not only based on intellectual power but also on centralized spirituality” (p. 342). This is very different from Western social revolutions and reforms, which are based on material force. Thus, spirituality can be an element of social change.

4.5.3. Spirituality as an element of social change

As multifunctional institutions, monasteries play both spiritual and social cohesive roles in Tibetan society. The spiritual role is to satisfy people’s mental and emotional needs; for example, when people are ill, they typically visit a monastery for a religious treatment before going to the hospital.

Every child receives a single name from a monk or Lama, which is different from Western and Chinese customs of inheriting a last family name. In Tibetan Buddhist culture, the father of a newborn child provides the bone and mother provides the blood, but the soul is reincarnated from another life. On the third day after birth, parents ask a Lama to give a completely new name that is related to neither the father’s nor the mother’s side. As a result, girls do not take their

---

30 The Gelupa School, also termed Gelugpa, is based on the monks’ ceremonial costume, Yellow Hat Buddhism.
father’s surname, nor do they change their name when they get married. This is how the understanding of ultimate reality influences the conventional reality in Tibetan culture.

On New Year’s Day, one member of every family not only visits the monastery to offer food and pay respect, but also offers food and water to a ThangKha or an image of Je TsongKhapa. On every October 25th of the Tibetan lunar calendar, it is the parnirvana day of Je TsongKhapa, and Tibetans light butter lamps at home and at monasteries to show commemoration. On this day, it is restricted to kill any living beings.

Furthermore, almost everyone, even illiterate herdsmen, recites Je TsongKhapa’s phrases while working and walking. People believe in the causality of this life and the next, so they pay more attention to prayer than to their financial status. They would rather help each other than harm each other during their everyday life. Clearly, Je TsongKhapa’s concepts and Buddhism in general have been remotely routinizing people’s behaviors, ways of thinking, and everyday life. This was why Je TsongKhapa’s reform succeeded in Tibetan society and people have continued his social restructuration. As a social agents in the micro context, Tibetans constitute macro social structure through their centralization of spiritual beliefs. At the same time, spiritual-centric structuration constrains peoples’ reflexive insight into social problems.

**4.4.4. Critiques of Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical theory**

Similar to Giddens, Je TsongKhapa has received critiques from the same school as well as from philosophers from other schools (Garfield, 2006). Particularly, according to Thupten Jinpa (1998), Je TsongKhapa’s “insistence on the need to develop a systematic and coherent understanding of the world of conventional reality has been an object of much criticism in Tibet” (p. 157). In spite of his immense philosophical contributions, there are many Tibetan Mādhyamika thinkers who disagree with Je TsongKhapa’s interpretation. For example, he
received critiques from Sakya pa Gorampa Sonam Senge (1429-1489), Shakya Chogden (1428-1507), and Karmapa Mikyo Dorje (1428-1554) on his claim that the emptiness of Mādhyamika is the absolute negation of intrinsic being. These critiques assert that the Mādhyamika notion of emptiness is a mere absence of innate being with no certain content.

Since the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism to the English world, many scholars have been conducting comparative research on the Buddhist Middle Way Philosophy. At the same time, they also criticize Je TsongKhapa’s account. Thupten Jinpa (1998) argues that Je TsongKhapa’s “understanding of the Mādhyamika’s usage of the all-important ontological term paramartha is not comprehensive enough. In other words, Je TsongKhapa must argue that the Mādhyamika needs to have a conceptual understanding of how we perceive things and events within our naive, normal, pre-philosophical ways of seeing things” (p. 286).

Thupten Jinpa (1998) appreciates that Je TsongKhapa raises some epistemological problems in terms of asserting that the Madhyamika must develop a clear sense of what is to be negated by the Madhyamika dialectic before the actual process of de-construction has begun. How to coherently make a distinction between ‘existence only’ and ‘intrinsic existence’ creates ontological contention. In the aim of reconciling this epistemological problem, Je TsongKhapa employs the Tibetan epistemological distinction between ‘true cognition’ and ‘intellectual understanding,’ but “a ‘true cognition’ of such a distinction arises only subsequent to the actual deconstruction of intrinsic reality” (Thupten Jinpa, 1998, p. 289).

Napper (2003) asserts that all the different interpretations of Je TsongKhapa are focused on understanding the two essential Buddhist concepts of ‘dependent-arising and emptiness’, and states that Je TsongKhapa’s argument focused on three ways—of not negating enough, negating
too much, and other issues\(^\text{31}\) of difference. He also argues that it is important to correctly identify the object of negation, and if the negation is not enough then it will fall to the extreme of “permanence,” and if negated too much then it will fall into the extreme of annihilation and nihilism. Je TsongKhapa realized that many previous Tibetan scholars claimed that Mādhyamika had fallen into this incorrect field, and thus, he refuted those who negated too much in his major contribution “Great Exposition of Special Insight.”

As a result, not only did Je TsongKhapa assert that existence does not have innateness, but he also refuted many of the assertions that Mādhyamika reasoning denies phenomena with dependent-arising and emptiness. Je TsongKhapa made Mādhyamika reasoning and the compatibility of dependent arising and emptiness the key concept of both conventional and ultimate truth.

Napper (1989) summarized Je TsongKhapa’s four-point argument as follows:

Because phenomena cannot withstand analysis by the reasoning of ultimate analysis;
Because valid cognition certifying conventional phenomena does not exist;
Because Buddha refuted all four alternative-existences, non-existences, both, and neither-and there are no phenomena not included within those four;
Because the production of things can be limited to the four—from self, other, both, and all four of those are refuted (p. 54).

Napper (2003) then analyzed this argument, asserting that Je TsongKhapa maintained a proper position by distinguishing 1 and 2—“not being able to bear analysis by a consciousness and being refuted by a consciousness, and 1 not being found by a consciousness and 2 being found to be non-existent by a consciousness” (p. 55). Napper further asserts that Je TsongKhapa’s Mādhyamika interpretation differs significantly from many other scholars’ understanding of the topic, and that Je TsongKhapa has “integrated what might be seen as

\(^{31}\) Other issues include the role of reasoning, the status of emptiness and path structure.
potentially conflicting strands of the Buddhist tradition into a consistent system, massive, tremendously complex, but rationally ordered and graspable” (p. 143).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced Je TsongKhapa to the sociological field by situating his work in the context of key philosophical traditions and separating it from a purely religious stance. In fact, Je TsongKhapa’s influence on Tibetan society is much greater than on Tibetan Buddhism and the establishment of the Gelug School. By revisiting the history of Tibetan social structural shifts, I argued that a bridge can be established between his work on social structural reform and sociology. Further, his concepts of interdependent co-rising and causality provide a sociological framework for analyzing Tibetan social structure and society. At the same time, introducing Je TsongKhapa’s notion of conventional and ultimate realities is an important contribution not only to sociology, but also to understanding the dialectical relations between the two realities in Tibetan society.

Comparing Je TsongKhapa’s and Giddens’s approaches revealed that the former lacks a conventional analysis of society and the latter lacks an ultimate analysis of society. This led me to argue that there is a need for a new sociology able to integrate conventional sociology and ultimate sociology. This chapter also explored Je TsongKhapa’s influences on Tibetan society by analyzing his intellectual contributions and his religious reform of Tibetan social structure as a political practice through traditional education institutions. Based on this statement, I found that spirituality is an element of social change in Tibetan society. Finally, I conclude that any reform in Tibetan society has to start with Buddhist institutional support and the use of spirituality, and then spread to the social domain. This would be the best lesson learned from the successful experience of Je TsongKhapa.
CHAPTER 5
MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL STRUCTURATION

This chapter explores perspectives on social structuration from other fields and other conceptual frameworks. It is divided into five parts: 1) perspectives on spirituality, 2) perspectives on language, 3) Tibetan and Chinese research, 4) outsider research, and 5) perspectives on social change. Each part discusses key debates and applies these debates to Tibetan society and social structure.

5.1. Spirituality and social structuration

My aim in this section is to discuss spirituality as a framework for analyzing Tibetan society and social structure. Although Giddens does not address spirituality in his structuration theory, Hogan (2009) argues that ignoring the study of spirituality in social analysis is a mistake, and Moberg (2010) asserts that spirituality has become an important multidisciplinary field.

The existing literature relates spirituality to many aspects of society including: education (Hogan, 2009), sociology (Wood & Bunn, 2009), healthcare (Chilton, 1998), the workplace (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008; King, 2006; Howard, 2002; Burack, 1999), adult development (Sinnott, 2001), modern society (van der Veer, 2009), social change (Sheldrake, 2009), the notion of self (Rubin, 2004), public service (Houston & Cartwright, 2007), leadership (Luckcock, 2007; Burke & Bekker, 2006; Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin & Kakabadse, 2002), sustainability studies (McDaniel, 2002), identity (Pecchenino, 2009), organization (Poole, 2009; Klenke, 2005), children and students (Berryman, 2004; MacDonald, 2004), and work (Otttaway, 2003).

According to MacDonald (2004), spirituality is "a capacity and tendency that is innate and unique to all persons. [It] moves the individual toward knowledge, love, meaning, hope,
transcendence, connectedness, and compassion. Spirituality includes one’s capacity for creativity, growth, and the development of a values system” (p.30). Hogan (2009) maintains that there is a connection between spirituality and consciousness:

Spirituality exists: states of consciousness and associated abstractions (i.e. ideas, values, and beliefs) that pertain to the concept “spirituality” exist in human systems. Placing spirituality at the base of ultimate reality and at the base of creativity—Some believe that spirituality is best defined as the capacity to penetrate reality in both directions, to broaden and deepen our powers of insight and outsight (p. 140).

Spirituality is related to social structure through the beliefs, values, and ideas of agents and agencies. Spirituality is needed to accomplish individual/collective social actions and interactions regardless of religious orientation or secular approaches.

Giddens analyzes social structure as rules and resources, and posits that structure only exists in and through the activities of human agents. In Tibetan society, rules are carried out on the basis of spirituality and trustworthiness. Thus, spirituality is related to two key notions in structuration theory—agents and rules. Moreover, spirituality functions as a resource of power in both oral and literate Tibetan societies. Ignoring spirituality is therefore not just a simple mistake but, more importantly, an epistemological mistake. Spirituality affects all aspects of Tibetan society. Although Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy realistically includes materialism, it rejects pure materialism by seeing the dialectical relations between mind and body.

5.1.1. Relating spirituality to society

Griffin (1988) takes a postmodernist perspective on the relation of spirituality to society:

The relation between a society and its members’ spirituality is reciprocal. A society’s customs and laws, on the one hand, reflect the spirituality of its members. The spirituality of the members, on the other hand, is largely shaped by the nature of the society. This “largely” is never, however, “totally.” In spite of archmodernist B. F. Skinner’s denial of “freedom and dignity,” we are

---

32 Tibetan society is ruled by spirituality, trustworthiness, and customary law, not formal law or political economy.
not simply the products of our natural and social environments. We are, to be sure, deeply constituted by our relations to these environments. But in each moment, we create ourselves out of these relations in terms of our desires, purposes, meanings, and values—in short, out of our spirituality. Because of this element of autonomy, individuals are not only shaped by their society; they can shape it in return. In stating this twofold position—that their social relations internally constitute individuals, and that they are nevertheless not totally determined by them—I have already rejected a modern for a postmodern viewpoint (p.2).

Clearly, Griffin provides an important framework of reciprocal relations between spirituality, society, and its social members. His concept that a society's customs and laws both shape and reflect the spirituality of its members supports my argument that spirituality in Tibetan society is produced and reproduced in interaction between oral and literate agents, customary law, and spiritual authority, rules, and resources. Griffin defines spirituality as people's "desires, purposes, meanings, and values." His related concept that social members "are not simply the product of [their] natural and social environments," but able to act creatively and independently based on their spirituality also supports my argument about agency. Social agents in Tibetan literate society are spiritually empowered by monastic education. Social agents in Tibetan oral society are spiritually empowered by oral historical, social, and cultural traditions. In this sense, there is a certain connection between Griffin's idea of agency and Giddens's idea of agency. It is true that Tibetan Buddhist spirituality is a major social factor in shaping and reshaping Tibetan society. Both oral and monastic agents/social members practice Buddhist spiritual values every day. Tibetan Buddhist spirituality is therefore one of the causal mechanisms of social structuration.

5.1.2. Spiritual power relations in Tibetan society

Spiritual power in Tibetan society is mediated by reincarnated Lamas, spiritual texts, monastic institutional rules and regulations, spiritual authorities, deities, and the spiritual
knowledge system. The reincarnated Lamas act as spiritual agents, individual monk agents, and collective monk agencies. Their spiritual rule and authority functions in both oral and literate society, and they use various deities as spiritual resources in oral society. For example, giving a name for child; organize oral and literate societal meetings. Based on monastic institutional rules, the spiritual knowledge system confines spiritual power to celibate individuals. Ekvall (1968) defines spirituality/religion in Tibetan society as follows:

Tibetan Buddhism is a composite of abstruse philosophy, formalized doctrine, and an extensive pantheon. It is profoundly concerned with the nature of existence and the nature of knowledge. Such consideration as the relation of ‘being’ to the void’, and such concepts as that all existence is on three levels, the absolute, the relative, and the illusory, have developed. Doctrine defines the focus of worship and enunciates moral principles, monastic rules, and guidance in tantric exploration of, and experimentation with, the psyche (p.80).

Tibetans believe that birth and rebirth represents an organism's continuation over time and place. Like a time wheel, souls turn into different life forms through natural relations of cause and effect—human into animal, and animal into human. Relations of cause and effect are also practiced in conventional society; there are no absolute enemies or friends, no absolute rich or poor, no absolute higher or lower rankings in status. As a Tibetan folk proverb says: “Do not prepare a small pot when you are poor, and do not build a big house when you are rich.” This implies that the poor can become rich and vice versa.

These beliefs are held in both monastic and oral Tibetan communities, and are the major element lacking in theories of material and social development. At the same time, monastic institutions have been strengthening the creativity of Buddhist spiritual culture. From a sociological perspective, a large number of reincarnated agents/agencies exercise spiritual power in managing both the monastic institutions and socio-cultural relations with local tribal organizations. Further, while reincarnated agents/agencies have access to all types of resources
and spiritual knowledge systems, oral agents are limited to the social contexts of Bön monastic institutions and oral individual/collective activities.

5.1.3. Critiques of spirituality studies

In this section, I begin by addressing several broad questions: a) is spirituality a synonym for religion? b) is there research on nonreligious spirituality? c) is spirituality relevant to other sciences? and, d) does research on spirituality encounter special problems?

In my study, I argue that religion and spirituality are not synonymous. Religion provides a framework for belief and can encompass spirituality. Others, on the other hand, maintain that spirituality is an umbrella that includes religion, but does 'need' to include it (Chilton, 1998; Burgess, 1997; Peri, 1995). Sinnott (2001) maintains that spirituality informs social relationships and the meaning of one’s own life, while religion refers to practices and beliefs related to a particular dogma. According to Moberg (2010), interpretative studies have shown spirituality to be a natural phenomenon or a nonreligious essence in the form of self-realization.

As a formal field of studies, the concept of spirituality is relevant to disciplines such as teaching, psychology, epistemology, medical studies, and religion (Moberg, 2010). Research on spirituality faces conceptual and linguistic issues, research and design issues, and ethical issues. The non-material nature of spirituality poses limitations to empirical study and scientific observation, although research can be done by considering people's activities, commitments, and motivations. Many argue that research on spirituality, particularly in sociology and education, needs to take a holistic perspective (Yob, 2010; Houston and Cartwright, 2007; Slate, 2005; MacDonald, 2004; Zajonc, 2003; Udermann, 2000; Jackson, 1999; Dennis, 1995). Researchers need to take into account the contingent context of spiritual relationships among participants. Ottaway (2003) describes this in relation to the spirituality of work:
Spirituality of work is a source of energy empowering and transforming the life of daily work. Described in modern language, spirituality of work is beyond the rational and is creating a new order. Work can take any form: painting houses, teaching students, inventing technology, trading securities, maintaining relationships, raising children, or caring for old people. Spirituality of work can be brought to, and is needed in, all work settings (p.34).

A. Defining spirituality

Over the last three decades, spirituality has attracted scientific attention in the field of neuroscience. Researchers have also explored spirituality in philosophical and educational domains (Graham & Coholic, & Groen, 2012; Carr & Haldane, 2009; Dennis, 1995). Blackburn (2008) divides spirituality into the individual spirit and the social or political spirit, casting it as the ultimate substance of the world and motivator of world history. The Dalai Lama (2011) argues that “the time has come to find a way of thinking about spirituality and ethics that is beyond religion" (p. xv). Others assert that spirituality is an indefinable subject and that researching it is like measuring the immeasurable (Moberg, 2010). Modern educators have begun paying attention to spirituality because it matters very much in schooling (Wane & Ritskes, 2009) and in education (Graham & Coholic & Groen, 2012; Miller & Niyozov, 2010; Carr & Haldane, 2009).

Describing abstract concepts presents a linguistic challenge. We all have an attitude towards existence, and this attitude determines our spirituality. According to the Dalai Lama (2000), "the language and the term that we use to describe an object is in some sense arbitrary, it is label, a symbol. But this is not how we feel when we are confronted with a blue object" (p. 142). In other words, if the picture of a concept is unclear, then it is difficult to create a clear or common definition.

Moberg (2010) asserts that "religion and spirituality are very complex multidimensional
phenomena. They overlap so much that two leading research questions are whether ‘spirituality’
is just another word for ‘religion,’ and if not, whether it is possible to separate the two for
research purposes” (p. 4). He also lists forty definitions of spirituality and notes various types
such as “personal spirituality, functional spirituality, and positive spirituality” (p. 102). Speck
(2005) presents nine definitions from different researchers who all also agree that spirituality
should be distinguished from religion. Overall, despite its various impacts on social relations, no
widely agreed definition of spirituality exists. Clearly, applications of spirituality require new
methodological approaches.

B. Epistemological challenges of spirituality

Epistemological differences have caused a variety of fundamental understandings of the
universe and spirituality. Important questions include: Are spiritual attitudes innate or learned? If
innate, then how do we understand and define them? (Moberg, 2010). If spirituality is nurtured,
then educators have to focus on it very seriously. Among the many forms of spirituality is folk
spirituality. According to a Tibetan folk song:

The sun is setting but it will rise again
my lover left me forever,
I looked at the sky, and it became empty;
I looked at the world, and it also became empty.

As the lyrics of the song show, life becomes meaninglessness without a spiritual lover.
This is a folk experience of individual spirituality. In Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, universal
nature is divided into three aspects: dependent nature, imputed nature, and consummated nature
(Dalai Lama, 2000). Thus, when researchers define spirituality in epistemological terms, the
question that needs to be answered becomes: is it a dependent nature? Is it an imputed nature? Is
it a consummated nature? Is it neither? Or is it a combination?
The Dalai Lama (2000) maintains that “spirituality has two levels: spirituality without religious faith and the other with religious faith” (p. 118). He argues that secular spirituality is more important because the majority of people are non-believers. He also maintains that ‘inner values’ refer to a natural instinct that is biologically bequeathed with human life. Other scholars also consider that spirituality refers to inner values or a mental state. Holland (1988) explains that the notion of spirituality in postmodern society is founded on: 1) the primacy of spiritual energy, which is the foundation of all social energies—economic, political, and cultural; 2) spirituality as an embodiment that needs to be re-rooted in our bodies and social context; 3) nature as a spiritual embodiment; and 4) society as a human expansion of nature’s spirituality expressed through time and crystallized into institutions and traditions. Institutions and traditions both inform social structure. Thus, if spirituality refers to inner values, there is no contention between religious spirituality and secular spirituality—it is simply what is used in different fields and social contexts. Clearly, spirituality intimately co-exists with human life, but is interpreted at various levels and in different ways.

In the Tibetan context, each person's spirituality is connected with society at both the micro level of family, friends, and small communities, and the macro level of villages, towns, cities, and nations. Oral language agents in Tibetan society have two sources of spiritual energy—one from the spiritual institutions of the monasteries, and the other from oral culture that has crystallized historical experiences of social life into folklore such as The Epic of King Gesar. Monk agents practice elite Tibetan culture while at the same time leading collective social and spiritual activities in the village. Qualified Lhamas exercise spiritual agency in their spiritual institutions. In addition, almost all villagers share the (same) Buddhist spirituality with the

---

33 A form of Tibetan oral literacy that reflects the history of Tibetan society.
spiritual monastic institutions. For every member of society, spirituality grounds the social structure with morality and inner values.

5.2. Language and Social Structuration

In his book *Language and social context*, Giglioli (1972) observes that sociology and linguistics developed in mutually separate ways. At the beginning of the 20th century, the sociology of language was an underdeveloped sociological field, and linguistics was inattentive to the social aspects of language. Sociologists, he argues, failed to see the causal influence of language on social action. However, later in the century, as linguists began to attend to the influence of social context on language and an increasing number of sociologists attended to the social nature of language, this distinction started to narrow. "The recent interest in the social patterning of language," he argues,

is not limited to sociology and linguistics only, but is shared by several other disciplines—anthropology, political science, philosophy and even psychiatry—Language is such an integral part of culture, and has insisted on its interdependence with cultural and social structures (p. 9).

Giglioli's comments are insightful in analyzing speech and language in Tibetan oral society. "The analysis of speech," he writes, "can offer to other sociological areas, for example, face-to-face interaction, socialization, sociology of knowledge and social change" (p. 11). This linkage of sociology and linguistics—particularly in terms of face-to-face interaction—helps me to ground my study of social structure and structuration in Tibetan oral society. Face-to-face interaction is the key feature of social integration, and social integration is one of the elements of social structuration.

Giglioli highlights three areas of sociological interest: “1) the analysis of face-to-face interaction; 2) the relationship between social and cultural structure; and 3) the study of social
change and social conflict” (1972, p. 12). These interests are directly related to my study. In social interaction, speech becomes action. In addition, cultural patterns are determined by language structure and influence social structure.

5.2.1. The relations of language to social structure

Language is related to social issues in the areas of language and gender, literacy practices, and dialogic approaches to society. Language and action serve as excellent models for the development of a more sophisticated understanding of agency (Ahearn, 2001). Similarly, as Giddens (1977) maintains, language informs culture and thought—social actors’ daily activities are communicated and organized through language. "Ordinary language," he argues,

is the medium whereby social life is organized as meaningful by its constituent actors: to study a form of life involves grasping lay modes of talk which express that form of life. Ordinary language is not therefore just a topic that can be made available for analysis, but is a resource that every sociological or anthropological observer must use to gain access to his ‘researchable subject-matter’ (pp. 168-169).

The relation of language to social structure is receiving increasing interdisciplinary attention from sociologists, sociolinguists, social psychologists, and linguistic anthropologists. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1995), "language is a primary tool people use in constituting themselves and others as 'kinds' of people in terms of which attributes, activities, and participation in social practice can be regulated" (p. 470). Further, as Roberts and Winters (2012) assert:

Languages with a small number of speakers, low geographic spread and few linguistic neighbors tend to have high morphological complexity (esoteric languages). On the other hand, languages with a large number of speakers, large geographic spread and many linguistic neighbors tend to have low morphological complexity (exoteric languages) (p. 92).

The important insight here is that both social structure and language structure are historically contingent and display general patterns. According to Giddens (1984),
“communication, as a general element of interaction, is a more inclusive concept than communicative intent” (p. 29). This speaks to the particular needs of Tibetans who have lived continuously in the geographical region of the Tibetan plateau. The Tibetan language relates to many aspects of society such as culture, identity, youth, growth, and the traditional way of life. It communicates the meaning of knowledge and culture, and mediates collective activities. Language is not only a communicative tool, but also contains life experiences that reveal all aspects of social life.

The social structure of an oral society is constituted and sustained through the practice of oral literacy and customary law. Accordingly, unlike a literate society, oral society is limited to a certain place and time. Similarly, its resources are limited to a certain place and time. Thus, we learn that oral society has a limited duality of rules and resources. Passing the language from one generation to the next is key to the continuity of communication and the organization of collective activities.

Numerous collective activities take place in oral Tibetan villages: a) village theatre performances that are held twice a year; b) ritual activities in the summer that include socialization activities for girls and boys turning 15; c) wedding celebrations attended by the whole village that give young people the opportunity to learn and practice traditional folk culture; d) regular monastery activities that bring community members together, enable them to experience the elite culture, and receive religious and spiritual guidance; and, e) funerals that usually last three days or more depending on what the monk astrologist says. Funerals give youth the chance to experience the traditional rituals observed for deceased persons who will take a dark journey of 49 days and 49 nights into the next life. These rituals deeply impact young people’s attitudes to life, and psychologically affect everyone in the village. Without the same
oral language, it is impossible to have shared values.

Language is linked to both traditional knowledge and culture. It must also be dynamic in order to incorporate new vocabulary, meet the needs of youth, and remain updated and modern. Tibetans have developed language for specialized knowledge; for example, Tibetans have an intricate vocabulary related to snow and the herding of livestock. These concepts have a vocabulary special to the people's way of life. This is very different from what Giddens has conceptualized in his structuration theory based on modern and capitalistic Western society.

According to sociologists (Giddens, 1984; Thompson, 1984; William and Sewell, 1992), the social structure is constituted by agents who use social rules and resources, practice cultural schemas, and engage in social relations. These all require communication through oral or written language. Citing Giddens, Ochs (1988) notes that,

> Focus on language practices as resources for socializing social and cultural competence links language socialization research to post-structural sociological paradigms that portray social structures as outcomes of social practices (p. 408).

Social psychologists assert that the act of speaking words or writing text can mobilize the public and shape collective activities (Ong, 1977; Di-Segni, 1999). Language users disseminate their thoughts, ideological approaches, and social concerns to collectives and institutions in order to make social changes. Language empowers people’s various capacities to become agents, and there are no agents without the use of language, especially in oral society.

**5.2.2. The relation of language to agency**

From a sociological perspective, learning a language not only greatly expands the cognitive and practical capacities of individuals (Giddens, 1984), but also expands the scope of their actions. From a linguistics point of view, the use of language is a social action. The relationship between linguistic practice and social structure contributes to understanding the concept of
agency. Ochs's work treats language socialization as a lifelong activity and gives us an important insight into the micro-processes of social change and continuity (Ochs 1988, 1992, 1996; McElhinny, 1998). Ahearn suggests that researchers should distinguish between various types of agency: a) oppositional agency, b) complicit agency, c) agency of power, d) agency of intention, and e) "complex and ambiguous agency" (MacLeod, 1992).

Literacy practices refer to language in both written and spoken form. These practices can make significant contributions to our understanding of language and agency. As Street (1984) observes, literacy has social and psychological effects regardless of the society being studied. And, as Ong (1982) asserts:

> Without writing, human consciousness cannot achieve its fuller potentials, cannot produce other beautiful and powerful creations. In this sense, orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing (pp. 14-15).

Most anthropologists agree with Baynham (1995) that it is important to understand literacy as a form of social practice and to investigate the way it interacts with ideologies and institutions. Cultural meanings are constituted both through literacy practices and verbal interactions. Simultaneously, both oral and literate agencies reproduce and transform cultural meanings (Ahearn, 2001).

Anthropologists Hill and Irvine (1993) take a dialogic approach to understanding language and agency. They assert that the connection between knowledge and agency is central to the social construction of meaning. "Interpreting events, establishing facts, conveying opinion, and constituting interpretations as knowledge are all activities involving socially situated participants who are agents in the construction of knowledge when they act on what they have come to know, believe, suspect, or opine" (Hill & Irvine 1993 p 2 ; Ahearn 2001 p 130 ).
5.2.3. The relation of language to agent in Tibetan society

It is argued that speaking the same language in a public context is a form of social action. However, Giddens (1971) stresses the need to distinguish between behavior and action by referring to ‘adequacy on the level of meaning’ and ‘causal adequacy.’ Yet I would argue that these adequacies operate differently depending on whether or not the people concerned have received quality education. For example, in oral Tibetan society, agents are expected to be able to: a) use rich proverbs in various social relations and contexts of communication, b) remain trustworthy, and c) be seen as intelligent in contexts of collective co-presence and interaction.

It is clear that language is one of the principles of agency, while also being intimately connected to culture and identity. Without language there is no way for individuals and collectivities to communicate, especially in an oral society. The possibility of oral agents communicating and connecting between and within social groupings depends on the use of language. At the same time, agents who speak the same language shape their society and its social-structural character. This gives them a sense of common ground and belonging (Coatney, 2006; Choguette, 2005; Danielsen, 1994; Whittaker, 2005).

5.3. Tibetan and Chinese perspectives on social structure and education

According to Tibetan scholar Duo Shi (2010), human beings have two characteristics—‘natural’ and ‘acquired.’ For example, all people experience the natural cycle of the four periods of life—birth, aging, sickness, and death—and all people have the acquired characteristic of being socialized into the cultural knowledge of their way of life.

---

34 Duo Shi is a well-known Tibetan scholar who teaches in the department of Tibetan Language and Culture, Northwest University for Nationalities, Lanzhou. His work focuses on Tibetan epistemology, Tibetan history, and Tibetan Buddhism.
The factors that inform these characteristics are family and social life, education, profession, political environment, economic status, access to information, and social relations. These holistic social conditions shape the particular nature of different societies. Unlike 'natural' society, 'acquired' society is constituted by social classes, ideological institutions and organizations, economic systems, information and technology systems, and school systems. Schools are the key place where reflexive social agents are produced. This type of society is increasingly geared toward materialism, dynamic modernization, and globalization.

Chinese researchers Li and Qie Pai (2005) take an ethnographic and political view on Tibetan tribal social character. Their views on how tribal social structure has been historically constituted and how it is being radically changed are new in contemporary China. On the one hand, their article asserts that, as a primitive social form, the tribal social system will remain for a while in ethnic regions despite changes from the outside. On the other hand, these are just tribal societies and will soon disappear. Gannan Tibetan tribal systems\(^\text{35}\) have their own social relations of mutual support. It is crucial to stabilize these relations in an area that is both self-governed and externally governed.

Although the shell of tribal structure is being destroyed, the historically formed core of tribal social structure is deeply rooted. Li and Qie Pai recognize the challenges of tribal social structural change. Particularly, various tangible and invisible factors create strong obstacles to transplanting and changing tribal social rules. Li and Qie Pai take the view that Gannan Tibetan tribal society has differences and commonalities with rest of Tibetan society. First, it is in a remote region far from both the Tibetan government in Lhasa and the central government in Beijing. Neither of these governments has formally ruled this society for many years. Second,

\(^{35}\) Gannan is in the northeast part of the Amdo region of Tibetan society.
various types of authority, including political and spiritual authority, overlap in tribal society. Third, spiritual authority is segmented into different religious schools and also differences within the same school. These schools have never belonged to each other. Fourth, various types of caesaropapism (combinations of political and religious governing systems) co-exist. For example, the political authority system dominates the spiritual authority system, the spiritual authority system dominates the political authority system, and the independent tribal authority system dominates the spiritual authority system. The political authority system is governed by tribal organizations while the spiritual authority system is governed by a monastery. Ultimately, tribes are interlinked to both the authorities.

Gannan Tibetan tribal society has several features: a) kinship and regional connections, b) tribal and state connections, and c) politics and spirituality. The relations among these various dualities are complicated and overlapping, and are discussed more fully below.

5.3.1. The duality of kinship and region

Although the transformation from kinship relations to regional relations is a step toward social unification, the Gannan Tibetan tribes have not completed this step and remain in a halfway position. Two factors help to explain why: the lack of a common societal and cultural foundation, and the harsh natural environment that creates geographical difficulties. However, since the spread of a common language and literacy through the rise of Buddhism under the Tibetan empire, Tibetan tribes in this region have used the same Tibetan language. This gives this region a common foundation with macro Tibetan society. The historical process of Tibetan social and cultural development has produced a shared set of psychological experiences, historical testimonies, and symbols that intensify awareness of Tibetan societal totality.
5.3.2. The duality of tribe and state

Given that Gannan is such a remote region, the Tibetan government has only been able to control the religious disseminations and spiritual authorities in this region. Indeed, the central government has been unable to implement any policies, laws, or economic and military control in this region. Thus, the Gannan tribes have had the time and space to maintain and expand their tribal social system in this autonomous region.

5.3.3. The duality of polity and spirituality

Science legalized and formulated the power of the Gelupa School throughout Tibetan society. At the same time, the tribal political and spiritual authorities empowered tribal society through spiritual unification. There were two types of spiritual authority: segmented spiritual authority and variations of caesaropapism. The segmented spiritual authority was characterized by different religious schools and different authorities within the same school. Rather than reshaping the tribal social structure in Gannan, spiritual dissemination intensified it.

The Lhabrang monastery has functioned as one of the political, religious, economic, and cultural centers in Amdo Tibetan society since its establishment (Li & Qiepai, 2005). However, although Li and Qie Pai analyze the character of the Gannan Tibetan social system and structure well, they reach their limits in discussing agents’ action and, from an educational point of view, how to educate reflexive agents to take rational action in their communities. Their insights also fall short because of the inadequate framework they use for analyzing society and the inaccurate conclusions they draw as a result.

However, they do provide recommendations for the future of Gannan Tibetan social development and transformative modernization. These include: 1) prioritizing social development and stabilization; 2) dealing dialectically with relations between tradition and
modernization; 3) speeding up open reform, building new creative formulations, and striving to reduce the gap between developmental, ethnic, and regional interests; 4) exposing the insufficiencies of education, placing minority education in a strong position, and empowering compulsory education; 5) paying attention to issues of social growth and building a holistic development perspective; 6) accurately identifying and dealing with ecological and environmental issues in minority social-economic development; 7) advocating that religious reform attend to developing minority society; and 8) enhancing the local polity and raising the quality of minority cadres.

My study also provides insight into the dual structural system in Gannan Tibetan society.\textsuperscript{36} However, it could not provide the reasons why Gannan Tibetan social structure is constituted with such complexity within this dual structure. Similar to other monastic institutions in Tibet, monastic institutions in this region link all the social and cultural relations with the oral society. Before its establishment as Gannan Autonomous Prefecture, this region had its own social, political, and cultural relations and structure. After 1953, these relations became a duality of original social structures and a penetrative, embedded administrative system. The embedded systems include: a county level government system, prefecture level government system, school system, township government, and party representatives at the village level. The school system is a very significant development in Tibetan history and is expected to produce reflexive social members. However, the irrelevance and translation of curriculum has been decreasing the quality of social actors or agents in this region as well as in other regions.

\textsuperscript{36} This is the name of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, established in 1953. Since then it has been functioning administratively under Gansu Province and has seven counties: Sangqu (Xia He), Lhuqu (Luqu), Mhachu (Maqu), Adrukchu (Zhouqu), Tewo (Diebu), Jone (Zhuoni), and Waze (Lingtan). The Lhabrang monastery, the Jone monastery, and Bon monasteries operate in this area.
5.4. Outside research on Tibetan social structure

In this section, I discuss four notions on the structuration of Tibetan society from researchers outside Tibet. These notions allow us to see how Tibetan authority was structured historically through the practice of controlling time and space, how religion played a role in social development, how shared institutional structures shaped macro social structuration, and how Tibetan nomadic societies were organized.

5.4.1 The notion of controlling time and space

According to Giddens, “control of time is characteristic of bureaucracy in general, not just of capital enterprises” (1984, p. 152). Schaeffer (2003) explains that Sangye Gyatso (1653–1705), the fourth regent of the Tibetan government founded in 1642 by the Fifth Dalai Lama, sought to assert control in various areas of public religious life.

Sangye Gyatso changed both the time of the New Year's Festival in Lhasa and the pilgrimage routes around Lhasa. By controlling time and space, he sought to subsume public religious life in Lhasa under the growing power of the Ganden government, the Dalai Lama, and the Potala Palace (which symbolized this power). Thus, Sangye Gyatso ensured the continuation of social structure in Tibetan society by sustaining and re-orienting the practice of cultural schema.

5.4.2. The role of religion in social development

After the introduction of Buddhist culture and religion to Tibetan society from India and other parts of Asia, Tibetan Buddhists gradually established spiritual authority across almost entire Tibetan society. Tibetan Buddhism proved to be the primary force of social progress by

---

37 http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgiarticle=1345&context=himalaya
motivating individuals to develop spiritual qualities, sacrifice for their fellow human beings, and contribute to the betterment of their communities. These universal spiritual principles at the heart of religion—tolerance, compassion, love, justice, humility, sacrifice, trustworthiness, dedication to the well-being of others, and unity—are the foundations of a progressive civilization.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that, through the ages, the perversion of religion has also been a primary cause of social disintegration, intolerance, hatred, sexism, poverty, oppression, and warfare. Indeed, many intractable problems can be traced to the corruption and misuse of religious authorities and powers. In terms of social development, religion not only has to emphasize that fulfilling individual spirituality and well-being is tied to the collective progress of the entire society, but also that bringing about positive change requires a genuine commitment to social justice and unity.

5.4.3. Sharing the institutional structures

Nietupski (2008) explains that the Lhabrang monastery is based on the Gelug model and is one of the largest monastic universities in Tibet. It provides a full range of Tibetan academic studies including Buddhist studies and is located at the northeast corner of the Tibetan Plateau, now known as Xiahe County, Gansu Province. The monastic authorities play both spiritual and social institutional administrative roles in the enormous nomadic and peasant estate that covers most of Amdo and a part of the Kham region in southern Gansu province.

Though the monastery's political and economic functions are evaporating externally at the moment, its institutional and cultural influences in the related regions are significant. Its emphasis on identity and dynamic social, political, and economic interactions creates a societal context that enables both individual and collective agents to practise culture and thereby shape the social and spiritual system.
Interestingly, despite the fact that Amdo society is different from U-tsang society, it has similar monastic institutional structures (Nietupski, 2008). Nietupski recognized the significant sociological point that all the different Tibetan monastic institutions share a similar institutional structure. This recognition not only allows me to analyze macro Tibetan social structuration, but also to apply Giddens’s concept of ‘multi-dimensional interactions at the same time' to Tibetan literate society.

5.4.4. Nomadic Tibetan society

Ekvall (1968) takes a cultural anthropology perspective on nomadic pastoralism in Tibet. His work provides helpful insights for my study in relation to: 1) nomadic resources, 2) nomadic social structure, 3) subsidiary activities, 4) subsistence living, 5) language use, 6) social interaction, 7) social control, and 8) spirituality. Although Ekvall (1968) conducted his research many years ago, his account continues to be relevant to analyzing the social dimension of spiritual life in oral society today.

5.5. Perspectives on social change

Analyzing social structuration also involves analyzing the conditions for social change. In the context of Tibetan society, social change needs to be understood at both the ultimate and conventional levels of reality in both oral and literate society.

5.5.1. Social change at two levels of reality

In terms of both conventional and ultimate reality, societies change over time through evolution and revolution. Social changes caused by both natural and social factors affect the process of social structuration. Natural factors result in a slow change while social factors result in a radical change that affects multiple aspects of society. The latter includes revolutions, social
movements, political reforms, educational reforms, and cultural transformations.

According to Tibetan philosophy, both natural and social factors are temporal forms of existence consisting of different elements. Thus, at the conventional level, social changes have durability but at the ultimate reality they are not stable. This results in the need to re-categorize the concept of social change into 'absolute change' and 'conventional change.' The Tibetan philosophical conception of causality/causation can provide insight into developing a theory of social causality. Tibetan Buddhism has gone through a long and comprehensive philosophical development of causality/causation theories. It was this development in particular that enabled Je TsongKhapa to transform Buddhism into Tibetan Buddhism.

During that historical process, Je TsongKhapa, his followers, and many other scholars localized Buddhist culture by establishing monastic academic institutions across Tibetan society. These multifunctional institutions educated and produced spiritual agencies and monk agents in various places over the course of history. Thus, young Tibetans received local monastic education across all the time-regions of Tibetan society.  

5.5.2. Categories of social change

Smith (1976) defines change in two ways—as a succession of temporal differences between and within units, and as a succession of events that produce, over time, a modification between

38 Besides monastic education, the Chinese government established a school system throughout Tibetan society in 1953. It has been providing school education for the young secular generation. This is a significant development which brought about an end to a system whereby only monks could learn Tibetan literature and practices. However, this system of ‘compulsory education’ has been alienating young Tibetan generations from their cultural roots. Further, the biased Tibetan-Chinese bilingual model of education—Tibetan language as one subject and Chinese language as one subject—cannot produce quality social agents. The dilemmas of higher education and students' language choices, and conflicts between parents and policy makers are two sides of the iron cage that limits the cultural growth of the whole society at the macro level.
or replacement of particular patterns or units by others. He discusses the nature of change, the varieties of change, the image of change, and neo-evolutionism.

The nature of change refers to the ideal of change, change and stability, and the qualities of change. Varieties of change refers to events, processes, regions of change, and active and passive change. The image of change refers to notions of continuity and ‘flow,’ growth and social evolution, intrusion and ‘rupture,’ invasion, and cultural contact. Neo-evolutionism refers to the notions of cultural differentiation, tradition to modernity, disturbance and strain, and growth and change.

Smith's work enables me to examine various social changes occurring in Tibetan society. Most of these changes reflect the process of social structuration across both ultimate and conventional realities, particularly the materialistic turn in oral society. This turn results from a compulsory school education system that is reshaping local social relations by demarcating regions and diminishing elite cultural contact. This change directly affects micro and macro social structuration.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided perspectives on social structuration in relation to spirituality, language, social change, and research by scholars from inside and outside Tibet. Although Giddens excludes spirituality and education from his structuration theory, I argue that ignoring spirituality and education is a mistake. Spirituality grounds consciousness, and education produces agents. Based on Tibetan epistemology, it can be argued that the education system has been creating divisions between 'natural' and 'acquired' societies by teaching 'conventionalized' curriculum content. Further, language is an irreplaceable social constituent related to concepts of agent/agency, collective co-presence, interaction, and power.
Concepts from other fields of research such as controlling time and space, sharing similar institutional structures, and tribal structural characteristics are significant in terms of furthering my study of Tibetan macro social structuration. In addition, research on language, religion or spirituality, and social change are key to linking the Tibetan social context with Giddens’s structuration theory.
CHAPTER 6
THE SOCIAL STRUCTURATION OF TIBETAN SOCIETY

In 2009, the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held its large scholarly conference in Kunming, China. At that conference, I presented a paper on the famous Tibetan epic of King Gesar. This epic is based on Tibetan folk tales, legends, songs, and proverbs, and is at the core of teaching and learning in Tibetan oral society. Consisting of more than one million verses, it has been transmitted orally across generations for many centuries and is considered the highest cultural achievement of ancient Tibet. In my paper, I strongly recommended that this epic be selectively incorporated into the national school curriculum. The response? The discussant immediately said it was impossible, but that it could be considered for the 'local' curriculum.

This exchange illustrates the cultural perceptions and relations of power within which the structuration of education and society in Tibet takes place. Despite being the foundation of agency and learning in Tibetan oral society, the epic is seen as unsuitable for state schooling. In this chapter, I discuss this epic as one of the elements that structure social life in Tibet at the micro level and examine how these elements interact with the macro level effects of monastic education. Both of these aspects of structuration are shaped by the history of Tibet and by the concept of agency. As Giddens (1984) says: “History is the structuration of events in time and space through the continual interplay of agency and structure” (p. 362). This chapter thus begins with a brief history of the different periods of Tibetan social structure and education. In the second part, I discuss the concept of agent and agency in Tibetan society based on Giddens’s theory. In the third part, I focus on the institutional relationships that define Tibetan macro social
structuration. In the final part, I identify the village and tribal relationships that organize Tibetan structuration at the micro level.

6.1. A brief history of Tibetan social structure and education

Tibetan society has gone through three different periods of societal history with four different social structural shifts. The three periods are: the emperor period (650-820), fragmentation (797-977), and revitalized social status (978-1204) (Hortsang Jime, 2009; Laird, 2006; Stein, 1972). The four structural shifts consist of: i) a unified class-divided emperor social structure, ii) a fragmented micro social structure, iii) a restructured macro social structure, and, iv) since 1950, a traditional primary social structure with an embedded secondary social structure. In the following sections, I discuss these shifts in more detail.

6.1.1. Historical analysis of Tibetan social structural changes

In terms of Tibetan literate society and macro social structuration, it is important to understand how a new social class of Tibetan Buddhist groups appeared in Tibetan society and gradually established spiritual authority. In his book Tibetan Civilization (1972), Stein asserts that this shift occurred during the eighth century with the arrival of Buddhism. When the emperor Tri Song-de-tsen (khri srong sde btsan, 742-798 A.C.) adopted Buddhism, he established the Samye monastery—the first major Tibetan government-funded institution. He provided support for monks in various ways, including establishing their political rights as an upper social class and offering them a new ministry position for Buddhist affairs that stood above other ministries and had more power in empire decision making. This new Buddhist class functioned well in dealing with social conflicts and negotiating with foreigners, and enjoyed a higher status than aristocrats. The emperor also promoted financial privilege for this new social
class. He allocated one hundred families to each monastery, and seven families including their land to each monk. During the empire, these monasteries, monks, and families were not required to pay taxes. He also provided this class with judicial privilege and enshrined this privilege in law. At the same time, he mandated that the empire and all social members respect monks and obey the law everywhere in society.

**a) Tibetan social structure and education during the emperor period**

During its long history, Tibetan social structure has been shaped and reshaped many times by the dialectical and interactive influences of internal and external factors. Many cultural, religious, economic and political changes affected Tibet in its early history. This included the borrowing of certain aspects of foreign culture such as Buddhism from India, and elements of astronomy and medicine from Han culture, both of which contributed to the initial expansion of the Tibetan empire (Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 2002).

Over time, at the macro level of authority, Tibetan institutions and organizations became very fragmented—a situation that persisted for almost four centuries. At that point, Sakgya Pentida, a high Lama, attempted to reconstruct the macro-political structure of Tibetan society with the support of the Mongolian dynasty that ruled Tibet and China. In this period, the Tibetan government shifted from a strictly political power structure to a duality of religious and political structure (Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 1981). Regionalization was based on different sectors. The religious sector of each district retained its social connections with tribes and villages through spiritual functions. There was no central religious and political authority at that time (Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 1981).

The establishment of the empire’s cultural center and the first state school of Tibet in the Samye monastery led to the development of advanced monk scholars who were positioned in the
upper social class and dominant cultural institution in Tibetan society (Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 1981). This class not only developed the great Tibetan spiritual civilization, but also became the major stakeholder in literate society. As a multifunctional social institution, the Samye monastery had a greater influence on society than the government. With the establishment of this monastery as the first institution of higher learning, Tibetans started to produce many great thinkers who would push the history of Tibetan civilization forward and contribute to the stabilization of the macro social structure (Hortsang Jigme, 2009; Chabe Tseden Pentso, 2008; Zhou, 2007; Zhang, 2003; Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 2002; Yang & Shang, 1994; Samuel, 1993; Thurman, 1990; Dhondup Gyal, 1983; Stein, 1972; Jennings, 1927).

Dorje Tseden (1991) outlines three developmental aspects of the Tibetan empire’s structure of education: a) monastic education which served only monks, built the monastery as a place of teaching and learning, and had a curriculum of teaching and learning Buddhist texts; b) official education where students studied abroad in neighboring countries such as India and the Tang empire, and c) private education which mainly educated students majoring in medicine.

During the empire, the macro social structure consisted of elements combining indigenous Bon and Buddhist cultures. Indeed, one of the explanations for the collapse of the empire in A.D. 846 was the failure to resolve the cultural conflicts between supporters of Bon and Buddhism (Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 2002). Interestingly, although the Tibetan empire fell apart after almost four centuries, Tibetans not only obeyed the law with respect to monks, but also, starting in Amdo province, revitalized Buddhism and reestablished previous monastic institutions while constructing new monastic institutions even more widely. During the period of revitalization, culture was transmitted through oral and private education. Private education was conducted by
individual monks who taught Buddhist texts for religious purposes, while oral education functioned in different local societies.

**b) Tibetan social structure and education in the fragmentation period**

During the time of structural fragmentation, no common acceptable schools or institutionalized education system existed. There was no central authority, and private teaching/learning activities were lacking (Hortsng Jigme, 2009; Laird, 2006; Dreyfus, 2003; Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 1980). The different social units—clans, villages, tribes, and local chiefs—continued their limited scope of collective activities and interactions. They maintained their local social structure by using the same oral language, practising the same oral culture, and sharing the same geographical environment. This produced a feeling of unity and stability. However, there were also tensions between Bön and Buddhism.

The revitalization of Buddhism (religion) in the society resulted in the establishment of different Buddhist schools one after the other. These schools each had their own uniforms, ways of conducting activities, local names, approaches to meditation, and understandings of Buddhist philosophy. In terms of social power relations, these schools struggled for the support of the local communities, which eventually created a civil war that had a very harmful effect on social solidarity and caused even further fragmentation of social unities and the micro social structure. These schools functioned as monastic institutions but were limited within their regions, and the monks did not obey the institutional rules very strictly. Given this context, the entire Tibetan society became thirsty for a figure who could reformulate monastic institutional rules, turn monks’ interests back to the practice of Buddhism, resolve societal fragmentation, reestablish a societal cohesive cultural ethos, and restructure the society at both the micro and macro levels.
During this period, oral education and private education were the main pipelines through which people gained knowledge and became social agents. Oral education took place within the family and village, and the content was based on experiences of farming, herding, and indigenous oral culture. Thus, the capacity and interaction of oral agents was limited to the place where they gained their knowledge. The majority of the illiterate population could only inform the local social structure and was not able to contribute to the societal level of macro social structuration. Meantime, private education produced a small number of elites who transmitted knowledge to one another. These elites were mainly medical students and meditation practitioners.

c) Tibetan social structure and education after Je TsongKhapa’s reform

Je TsongKhapa’s successful religious reform resulted not only in religious development but also in restructuring the fragmented Tibetan society through the centralization of spirituality as an element of social change. The great socio-cultural and political consequences of this reform turned Tibet into a renewed nation oriented towards the future with philosophically grounded roots. This common ground became the foundation for central organization and authority at the societal level.

The different social groups such as schools of Buddhism, regional chiefs, and other institutions made subtle reconnections with each other by sharing the same spirituality and multidimensional institution. However, monk scholars and local chiefs who came from various regions in U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo also established and developed a new central structure of government in Lhasa. Figure 2 shows how the monastery structured its social relations between major monasteries, local monasteries, and the central government.
A number of fragmented regional social structures existed simultaneously in different places. These regions used the same language, shared the same spirituality, and practised the same culture. Meantime, the monasteries were producing a moral order by establishing values and cultural standards, which in turn formed a legitimate social institution structure. However, there was no central authority structure at that time. Tibetan people practised Bön rituals as folk customs in their daily life and also recited Je TsongKhapa’s writings in their daily prayers.

![Diagram of Traditional Social Structure of Tibet](image)

*Figure 2. Traditional Social Structure of Tibet*

d) *Chinese sociologists’ analysis of China’s social structure*

Many Chinese sociologists present very complicated accounts of China’s society. For instance, of relevance to this study are Lu’s (2001) account of social class division, Sun’s (2009) studies of dual social structure, and anthropologist Fei’s (1991) notion of China's multiethnic
unity. However, both Lu (2001) and Sun (2009) have ignored or have paid no attention to rural minority societies, including Tibet.

Other Chinese sociologists have focused on the Han migration from rural villages to urban centres or from one city to another. Interestingly, various Chinese sociologists have been applying Giddens’s structuration theories to the analysis of China’s Han society (Huamin & Xiangxiu, 2006; Youmei, 2007, 2008; Yuan, 2007; Jianmin, 2008). At the same time, no one, not even Tibetan scholars, has tried to use Je TsongKhapa’s dialectical philosophy to analyze contemporary Tibetan social problems. As a sub-marginalized society, Tibetan social class structure is very different from eastern urban Chinese society. Evidence of this can be found in Lu's ten social class divisions (2001) which ignores or excludes the social class structure of minorities. Further, neither his classification of the whole state of China nor his application of sociological theories includes spiritual societies, nor this has generated many critical arguments.

Interestingly, Sun (2009) has taken not only a critical and reflexive perspective on the dual social structure created by China, but has also criticized the process of producing and reproducing new social conflicts. However, he has confined his critique to rural Han society. In terms of Tibetan society, given that most of the population lives in rural areas, there is no such clear social class to categorize. There are some small differences between Tibetan cadres with their material status, and also among monastic scholars with their spiritual status. According to insiders, Tibetan society is constituted by a spiritual system and a tribe net-structure that has not yet evolved in the economic market.

*e) Dual social structure of Tibetan society in China (1951-present)*

---

39 These cadres have been working in embedded administrative systems or institutions.
Since the Seventeen Point Agreement\textsuperscript{40} between China and Tibet on 23 May 1951, the Chinese government has gradually established various hierarchies of autonomous government throughout the entire Tibetan society (see fig. 3). As a result of the agreement, Tibetan society encounters internal and external challenges. These include social re-fragmentation, a new embedded authority system (from the perspective of Tibet), and a modern school education system. Tibet has gone through the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976); the Revitalization Period (1980–1988); and the Resistance Period (1987–present).

\textit{Figure 3. Tibetan Societies in China as of 1950}

\textsuperscript{40} (1) Tibet is returned to China; (2) Tibet permits the Chinese military to enter Tibet; (3) Tibet is autonomous within China; (4) The Tibetan political system and the role of the Dalai Lama remain as before; (5, 6,) Maintain the Panchen Lama's status and reform his role; (7) Protect Tibet's religion; (8) Reorganize the Tibetan army into the Chinese army; (9) Develop Tibetan education; (10) Improve Tibetans' lives; (11) China will not push Tibet to conduct social reform immediately; (12) Former officials may continue to hold office irrespective of their past; (13) The People's Liberation Army entering Tibet will abide by all the above-mentioned policies; (14) China will handle the external affairs of Tibet; (15) China will set up a military and administrative committee in Tibet; (16) Financial support for PRC organizations will be provided by the Central People's Government; (17) This agreement will come into force immediately (Wang, 1998, p.152).
The areas inhabited by Tibetans are traditionally divided into three regions: U-tsang, Kham, and Amdo. U-tsang borders India and has about the same territory as today’s Tibetan Autonomous Region in China. Kham is the western part of today’s Sichuan (Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and Muli Tibetan Autonomous County) and the north-western part of today’s Yunnan provinces in China (Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture). Amdo includes most of today’s Qinghai province (Yushu, Huangnan, Hainan, Haixi, Haibai and Guoluo Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures), southwest Gansu provinces (which include Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Tianzhou Tibetan Autonomous County), and the northwestern part of Sichuan (Aba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture) (Ma & Pan, 1994).

While U-tsang has received provincial autonomous authority, Kham and Amdo have been divided into ten autonomous prefectures and two autonomous county level authorities. Interestingly, these autonomous societies have control over economic and political functions, as well as school education, while still maintaining the same basic culture and spirituality-informed social structure as they had before. In terms of analysis, the relationship between the original social structure and the newly embedded organizational structure is very complex.

In this dual structure, two contradictory approaches are apparent across both oral and literate Tibetan society. The original structure centers on the meaning of spirituality while the embedded structure emphasizes social material development. Interactions between these two parallel structures have resulted both in conflict and benefits. Further, both structures have been encountering challenges. The original social structure faces challenges of replacement, constraint, and authority while the embedded structure faces resistance, loss of interactive relations, and ideological conflict.

Chinese authority figures typically see these challenges as political problems instead of
social structural and philosophical contradictions. And yet, maintaining this dual structure and rejecting spirituality in Tibetan society has been at the root of these problems for generations. While the embedded structure intentionally diminishes the original structure by replacing the content of daily practice, the rejection of spirituality incurs conflict at the societal level that affects the macro social structure. Without mutual dialogue and participatory democracy in the various autonomous regions, the embedded local authorities will face many more difficulties in administering the society. Revisiting the various historical changes that have taken place in Tibet allows us to gain holistic insight into the analysis of the social structuration of Tibetan society.

6.2. Defining the notion of agent/agency in Tibetan society

This section attempts to define the two key notions of agent and agency before commencing analysis of macro and micro Tibetan social structuration. First, I apply Giddens’s notion of agent and agency; second, I review critiques of the definition of agent and agency; and third, I synthesize and adapt these arguments in order to conceptualize Tibetan agency.

6.2.1. Giddens’s notion of agent and agency

Giddens (1984) focuses on the intrinsic link between structure and agency. He argues that they are two sides of the same coin and cannot be considered separately. Structuration theory relies on the duality of structure and agency; that is, there is no agency without structures that shape motives into practices and there are no structures without practices of agency. Giddens describes agents as knowledgeable individual actors who engage in continual social action. He describes agency as the capacity of individuals to act independently of social structures in making their own decisions and choices (1979; 1984). According to Giddens (1984) and William and Sewell (July, 1992), autonomy and control are the traits of agency. Unlike scholars who treat agency as a synonym for free will or resistance, Giddens consistently links agency to structure.
through his discussion of rules and resources. “To be an agent,” he argues, "is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. Action depends on the capability of the individual to 'make a difference', that is, to exercise some sort of power…Power is logically prior to subjectivity” (1984, pp. 14-15).

Giddens’s notion of the agent as knowledgeable individual actor applies to both Tibetan oral and literate society. However, in literate society, agency is most often empowered by the spiritual institution rather than the structure. Within oral society, the clan, tribe, and subtribe representatives have agency by exercising power in organizing collective activities and implementing collective decisions.

6.2.2. Non-sociological notions of agent and agency

Unlike Giddens, scholars in disciplines outside sociology focus on the variations of agent/agency. These variations are discussed in the next two sections.

a) The concept of agent

Karp (1986) poses the question of what distinguishes an "actor" from an "agent." In Karp's view, “an actor refers to a person whose action is rule-governed or rule-oriented whereas an agent refers to a person engaged in the exercise of power in the sense of the ability to bring about effects and to (re)constitute the world” (1986, p. 137). Actor and agent should be considered as two different aspects of the same person or two different perspectives on the actions of any given individual (Ahearn 2001).

Anthropologists Hill and Irvine (1993) take a dialogic approach to understanding language and agency, and responsibility and evidence in oral discourse. They assert that “the connection between knowledge and agency is the key to an approach that emphasizes dialogicality and the
social construction of meaning” (p.3). Ahearn (2001) states that “interpreting events, establishing facts, conveying opinion, and constituting interpretations as knowledge are all activities involving socially situated participants, who are agents in the construction of knowledge and agents when they act on what they have come to know, believe, suspect, or opine” (p. 130).

Boyne (1991) criticizes Giddens’s limited insight on Weber’s notion of agents’ knowledge. However, it is important to clarify that Giddens uses this insight to further his notion of agents’ capacity, and that he has also differentiated it from Weber’s notion. This is key to understanding Giddens’s notion of agent. Different from Weber’s concept of knowledge as a capacity that agents already have and practice, Giddens asserts that knowledge is a renewable and learnable ability that enables agents to sustain and extend their capacity where it is needed. This critique provides an important insight in defining Tibetan oral and spiritual agents.

b) The concept of agency

The concept of agency has been defined variously by sociologists (Giddens, 1984), psychologists, historians, cultural researchers (Pickering, 1995), linguistic anthropologists (Ahearn, 2001), educators (Pennycook, 2001), feminists (Mahmood, 2005) and philosophers (Desjarlais, 1997). The literature reveals different types of agency: individual agency, collective agency, place as agency (Bakhtin, 1981), and temporal agency. Ahearn (2001) asserts that “the concept of agency refers to the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act” (p. 112). Questions arise such as: a) Must all agencies be human? b) Can nonhuman objects (Small 1993), machines (Pickering 1995), technologies (Dobres 2000), spirits (Keane 1997, pp. 64-66), or signs (Colapietro, 1989, pp. 95-97; Peirce, 1955) exercise agency? and c) Can agency also be families, faculties, or labor unions?
With regard to education, Pennycook (2001) argues that the effects of social structure and individual agency lead to reproduction and personal transformation respectively. Desjarlais (1997) takes a philosophical view on the notion of agency, asserting the need to consider the social-cultural and political context in a certain place and time. Frank (2006) contends that liberal perspectives dislocate or misinterpret the notion of agency, and asserts that the concept of agency often refers to a psychological base. He takes a feminist, anthropological, and sociological perspective on religious practice and women’s agency. The concept of agency requires a basis in psychology, and the foundation of psychology consists of culture and cultural ethos that motivate people to take action. What I take from this for my study is that cultural differences and particularities of location produce different meanings of agency.

Ahearn (2001) emphasizes that researchers need to classify agency into types such as oppositional agency, complicit agency, agency of power, agency of intention, and as MacLeod (1992) argues, complex and ambiguous agency. Sztompka (1994) argues that “unlike scholars who treat agency as a synonym for free will or resistance, Giddens consistently links agency to structure through his discussion of rules and resources” (p. 117) and also identifies the relationship between agency and praxis as being “two sides of the incessant social functioning; agency actualizes in praxis, and praxis reshapes agency, which actualizes itself in changed praxis” (p. 276).

Unlike Sztompka (1994) and Ahearn (2001) who insist on hinging agency with practices, Giddens (1984) asserts that agency coincides with social structure and that structure both enables and constrains agency. Pickering (1995) suggests that "within different cultures human beings and the material world might exhibit capacities for action quite different from those who customarily attribute to them” (p. 245). Sewell (1992) noticed that few scholars contend that only
certain individuals "have agency" while others have little or none, and some scholars have been moving away from approaches that treat agency as a synonym for free will as exercised by completely autonomous individuals (Pieters 2000; Cooper & Stoler, 1997; Pomper, 1996; Cooper, 1994; Scott, 1988).

In my study, I draw on various notions of agency in order to not only comprehensively analyze and interpret Tibetan society and social structure, but also to elaborate a rural and spiritual sociology or conventional sociology and ultimate sociology in general. These notions of agency are: 1) individual agency, 2) collective agency, 3) temporal agency, 4) nonhuman agency, 5) place agency, 6) oppositional agency, 7) complicit agency, and 8) complex and ambiguous agency.

6.2.3. Relating the concept of agent/agency to interdisciplinary fields

Who can be an agent? According to William and Sewell (1992), is based on who has the capacity to transpose and extend cultural schemas into new social contexts. My study not only draws on the various definitions of agent and agency from Giddens’s theory of structuration and from social and cultural anthropology, but also attentions to synthesizes these notions. This synthesis results in defining the notion of Tibetan oral individual/collective agent and agency, and spiritual individual/collective agent and agency. In this section, I discuss the relationship between agent/agency and language, culture, education, and spirituality.

a) Agency/agent and language

There are multidimensional relationships between language and agency/agent. Language relates to literacy practices, individual and collective social interaction, expressing ideas, expressing emotions, communicating for the purposes of work, and also orienting people to influence individual and collective activities. Ahearn (2001) argues that “language and action
serve as excellent models for the development of a more sophisticated understanding of agency” (p. 131). Thus, language not only orients but also extends the scope of agents’ social power (Brun, 1984; Miller, 2003), and people struggle for power through language (Miller, 2003).

Flowerdew and Miller (2008) examine the issue of individual agency and social structure in language learning. They argue that language is an important form of cultural capital that plays an undeniable role in producing social structure and individual agency. In addition, they argue that social structure and individual agency are relatively important in language education in a post-colonial society, and that this includes “invested” and “creative discursive agent” roles. There would be no communication, interactions, activities, power relations, and capacity without language. More significantly, education cannot produce and reproduce agent/agency without language.

b) Agency and culture

As a constituent of agency, culture is not only related to consciousness, knowledge and knowledgeability, but also informs society and social structure. According to Giddens (1984), social structure enables and constrains agency; thus, the relationship between agency and culture is a complex field. Archer (1943) argues that it is useful for social scientists to comprehend structure and agency as interdependent. He critiques Giddens for ignoring the relations of culture to both structure and agency, and asserts that the connections between culture and agency have been neglected. Agents have the ability either to reinforce or resist the influence of the cultural system.

c) Agent and adult education

There is no agent without learning/education. Identifying the relation of agent to learning/education requires taking various forms of learning in different contexts into
consideration. Specifically, there are three forms of learning/education: formal learning, non-formal learning, and informal learning (Miroslav, 2013; Le Clus, 2011; Sawchuk, 2003, 2008; Tambigi & Meghani & Modi, 2008). It is true that each of these forms produces agents. Particularly, Sawchuk (2003) discusses the notion of speech exchange as a form of informal learning that is characterized by formal communication and everyday conversation. This notion helps us to analyze how actors become agents within the context of a speech community or oral society see the table 9 below.

Table 9

*Comparison of Informal Learning/Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Characteristic of Informal Learning/Education</strong></td>
<td>Context: occurs outside of formal educational settings; Cognisance: intentional/incidental learning; Experiential: practice and judgement; Relationship: learning through mentoring and team working.</td>
<td>A speech-exchange system; represents the natural and integral part of everyday life. Contrary to formal and non-formal learning, learners are neither aware nor recognize how it contributes to their knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>It integrates with daily routines; triggered by an internal/external jolt; not highly conscious; haphazard and influenced by chance; an inductive process of reflection and action; linked to learning of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tibetan Oral Education as Informal Learning/Education</strong></td>
<td>Oral literacy as the content of learning; self-directed learning; assessments through practices; learning through mentoring and teamwork.</td>
<td>Speech-exchange carries out oral actors’ various interactions and learning. Very different from formal schooling and non-formal monastic learning/education.</td>
<td>Perfectly fits this characteristic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Marsick & Watkins (1997); Krystoň (2013); Sawchuk (2008); Manuti et al. (2015).
In Tibetan society, there are three forms of education: oral education or informal learning/education, monastic education or non-formal education, and school education or formal education. Like other informal learners, Tibetan speech actors gain practical knowledge and capacity through formal communication and everyday conversation in oral society. Interestingly, monastic education as a non-formal learning process produces non-formal agents who have two types of capacities: they exercise both religious and formal social science knowledge (table 10).

Table 10

**Defining the Multi-aspects of Monastic Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Education</th>
<th>Types of Learning/Education</th>
<th>Insider’s Perspective</th>
<th>Outsider’s Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-aspects of Tibetan Monastic Education</td>
<td>Formal Learning/Education</td>
<td>Formal Learning/Education for both mental and physical satisfactions</td>
<td>Buddhist centric learning and practice without seeing formal Tibetan academic functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-formal Learning/Education</td>
<td>Occurring with main streams of Tibetan education &amp; cultural practice; Carried out by the monastic institutions and organizations that were established to complement the formal systems of Tibetan education.</td>
<td>Not accompanied with granting official certificates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal Learning/ Education</td>
<td>Permeating the religious knowledge into every part of Tibetan culture and society.</td>
<td>Teaching and practicing religious ritual and knowledge including Education not for social development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Krystoň (2013); Dungkar Losang Khrinley (2002), Jia Luo (2009).*
Meanwhile, school education as a formal learning/education process produces alienated agents who can function in external society, but have no function in their home society. These three forms of learning/education increase learners’ capacity, empower their ability, ripen their insights, and broaden their worldviews. These aspects of education are the key elements of agency. Thus, future social structuration depends on how the present learning/education system produces agents.

The three forms of education in Tibetan society have been producing three types of agents: oral agents, spiritual agents, and externalized agents. Oral society confines an oral agent’s social interactions to the micro level or local social structure. Literate society confines a spiritual agent’s interactions to the macro level or societal social structure. From a sociology of education perspective, the notion of agent can bridge education and structuration theory into a new area of research that explores the critical relationship between education and agent production and reproduction. The relationship between the three forms of education and agents in Tibetan society is a complex one. At the same time, it gives us insight into the implications of social structuration in Tibetan society.

Dorje Tse'de's (1991) critical analysis of education in Tibetan society states that “monastic education keeps the majority of the Tibetan population as illiterates; 95% of the population remained as illiterates before 1951, and even in recent years, 60-70% population still remain as illiterates” (p.43). This analysis indicates that before 1951 the majority of the Tibetan population relied on oral education and that 5-15 % received monastic education. Since 1951, the majority of the Tibetan population is still relying on and receiving oral education, 5-10 % receive monastic education, and 20-25% of young Tibetans receive school education.

---

41 This refers to oral education, monastic (traditional) education, and school education. Chapter 8 analyzes how these three forms relate to social structuration.
As a result of these three forms of education in Tibetan society, the majority of Tibetans individually and collectively act or interact with lower capacity as oral actors and agents due to the focus on folk material and a religious approach. Less than 20% of the population act and interact individually and collectively with higher intellectual capacity as literate actors or agents with a foundation in spiritual learning. Interestingly, with the establishment of school education after 1951, the percentage of secular literate actors and agents has reached 20 to 25%, but the modern authority system has situated these actors and agents outside of both the micro and macro social structure of Tibetan society. Thus, education can alternately increase or decrease the quality of agents.

**d) Agent and spirituality**

Spirituality is a form of intrinsic existence and differs fundamentally from religion in several ways. First, spirituality is a mental capacity that every individual needs and has. Second, religion is based on people’s beliefs and people can survive without it. Third, people commit suicide when their mental capacity or spirituality has been seriously damaged. Fourth, spirituality exists as a mental capacity while religion is a conceived belief system. And fifth, modern education can empower mental capacity through scientific evidence, but reduces religious beliefs. Further, in the same way that physical capacity has various levels, so does mental capacity or spirituality. For instance, a person with weak mental capacity or spirituality easily gives up on engaging in challenging work, activities, or interactions. However, a person with strong mental capacity or spirituality is able to persist with these activities. Thus, identifying the relation of spirituality to agency is a potentially significant sociological area.

---

42 These students who have graduated from the school education system call themselves Métis because they are neither pure Tibetan nor pure Han Chinese. This dilemma of cultural identity is related to issues in the curriculum content, which will be analyzed in a subsequent study.
Defining the relationship between the notions of agent and spirituality is not a simple exploration, and relates to ontological comprehension. As a form of mental capacity, spirituality motivates agents to take ‘rejective’ or ‘acceptive’ action in any form of social context. Analyzing the interaction and co-presence of agents’ day-to-day life is key to understanding the relationship of spirituality to social structuration. On the other hand, spiritual contradiction causes people to reject rules and resources, particularly authoritative resources, and also fails to engage collective interaction and co-presence.

In terms of relating spirituality to power (Smith, 1995), consciousness (Hogan, 2009), capacity (MacDonald, 2004), and knowledgeability as a capacity (Giddens, 1984), it is clear that without power and capacity there is no agent. This indicates that there is a connection between agents and spirituality. According to MacDonald (2004) spirituality includes one’s capacity for creativity, growth, and the development of a value system.

**6.2.4. The notion of Tibetan agent and agency**

Defining the notion of agent and agency is complex in relation to ultimate and conventional realities. My study tries to define a notion of agent and agency that can suitably describe oral and spiritual agents, and also spiritual agents and agency within both oral and literate Tibetan society. Given the two forms of Tibetan society, the different types of agents and agencies are oral agent and oral collective agency, and spiritual agent and agency. Each of the two forms of society informs its particular agent and agency. Within oral society, there are oral agents and agency, and within literate society, there are not only spiritual agents and agency but also formal intellectual agents and agency shaped by majoring in philosophy, logic, medical studies and astrology.

Becoming an agent is a slow but sustainable process in both oral and literate Tibetan
society. Being an agent in the oral social context means being a respected and effective communicator or capable person, and this requires several factors such as parents, family, social relations, friends, and the cultural atmosphere in the community. These factors have been producing and reproducing oral agents throughout the history of oral societies and local contexts. Given the relationship between these factors, the usage of proverbs in social communication is highly valued. Defining oral individual and collective agents in a premodern rural society requires understanding issues of language, culture, education and spirituality.

Interestingly, becoming a spiritual agent in the Tibetan monastic context involves a significant number of contextual causes and conditions. Being widely respected requires the participation of influential monk scholars or lama, spiritual guides, academic advisors, classmates, individual effort, qualified monastic academic institutions, and personal potential. These factors help to groom young monks into achieving the highest or top Tibetan academic degree—the Gold Chair degree of the Gandan monastic institution in Lhasa.

Interestingly, the Bön tradition has adapted Buddhist logical reasoning debate to its pedagogy while at the same time maintaining its practice of learning texts from ancient Tibetan culture. The monastic institutions not only share the same channel of producing reincarnated scholars

---

43 China's policy of implementing compulsory education has resulted in an increase in school attendance by Tibetan youth, but also in the learning of irrelevant national curriculum content and in low quality teaching in minority areas including Tibetan regions. As I observed and experienced, the majority of Tibetan students who return to their villages from school have weak communicative capacity in their local social context. School education means that students become agents neither in the villages nor in urban places. As a result, the school system is reducing the number of local oral agents or social actors who act by the social rules, use and mobilize public resources, and practise cultural schemas. Ultimately, the implication of continuing to use a national curriculum that undermines micro-level Tibetan social structuration is that there will be no local agents in the future (Bass, 2008).

44 Over the past six centuries—from the founding of the Gandan monastic institution by Je Tsongkhapa in 1409 until today—a total of 136 top scholars have obtained the Gold Chair degree. Those degree holders started their academic journey in local areas, then moved on to district monasteries, and then to Lhasa.
spiritual agencies and monastic agents, but also the interactive pedagogy of logical debate that empowers monks' intelligibility and knowledgeability.

Monks who have received certain degrees or a Gold Chair degree achieve the capacity for political and spiritual agency. At the institutional level, these agents return to their native places to establish new monastic institutions and develop monastic academic studies by formulating rules, receiving young people whose financial status cannot support their studies, and travelling to Lhasa. They become spiritual agencies and institutions not only because of their knowledge/knowledgeability but also because of the respect they receive from monastic and local populations. This display of respect allows them to function in both oral society and monastic institutions as leaders of spiritual institutions and managers of secular social relations. Most of these monks were reincarnated in the same lineage of spiritual agencies that have grounded spiritual and social power relations in Tibetan society for more than five centuries.

At the same time, spiritual agencies have spread and reproduced throughout sub-monastic institutions. This gives them opportunities to extend the scope of their social relations and political power with village oral agents. Further, this spiritual agency enriches the mental health of the local people, nourishes collective community activities, and manages the social context of agents’ co-present interactions. After the Gandan monastic institution was founded, Je TsongKhapa’s followers and the spiritual-political leaders Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama established five other major monasteries with the same structure and 90 extended monastic institutions in different places in Tibet (Hortsang Jigme, 2009; Thomas, 2006; Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 2002; Thurman, 1990; Goldstein, 1989b).

This was the institutional production and reproduction achieved through the efforts of these widely respected spiritual agencies, agents, and formal intellectuals. The newly produced and
reproduced district monastic institutions reshaped local social relations and extended institutional support to local societies. Thus, social life in oral Tibetan society has two dimensions—a folk Buddhist spiritual dimension and a secular spiritual dimension.

**a) Agents and agency in Tibetan oral society**

Becoming an agent in Tibetan oral society involves several requirements—effective communication skills, knowledge of local history, capability in the three principles of intelligence, trustworthiness, and rich proverb usage. However, due to the low efficiency of oral education, few agents and agencies have existed in oral society. Unlike school education which requires teachers and students to be present at a fixed time and place, oral education may not be as consistent. Oral literacy practice in the family sphere is an important pre-learning condition, but its effectiveness depends on parents. Similarly, the opportunity to become an oral agent/agency is not equal for everyone in the community.

Thus, only a few are able to meet the requirements for agency in Tibetan speech communities. Those who do become oral agents/agencies have the authority of customary law and earn the respect and trust of their community. However, they need continuity of empowerment in order to function in new social contexts. The limited number of oral agents/agencies with their limited scope of social interaction is constraining system integration in oral society.

**b) Agents and agency in Tibetan literate society**

Agents and agencies in Tibetan literate society consist of several types: reincarnate lamas, individual monk scholars, deities, and collective monks. These are analyzed in chapter seven.

---

45 The villages need to organize regular meetings between children and oral agents/agencies in order to ensure equal opportunity for every child in the village. Role-play is a good example of a teaching technique for this purpose.
which examines spiritual structuration. The reincarnate lama plays the role of both agency and agent at the same time. The lama functions as agent, but represents the incarnation of the institution as agency. These two simultaneous dimensions of agent and agency reflect the relationship of ultimate to conventional reality.

Several factors differentiate the reincarnate lama’s two dimensions of being. As a representative of spiritual agency, the reincarnate lama ultimately represents the institution of reincarnation. As a spiritual agent, the reincarnate lama relies on his/her capacity through the development of knowledgeability and ceremonial skills. As an individual agent, the reincarnate lama must commit to lifelong learning in order to maintain his/her capacity as agent. And, as a representative of institutional agency, the reincarnate lama has prominence in the sense that no one can replace him or her.

6.3. The macro level elements of social structuration in Tibetan society

Defining Tibetan macro social structuration requires defining the four macro social elements—environment, population, language, and culture—and also addressing how these elements constitute the social totality. Environment, population, language and culture are irreplaceable components of Tibetan society that interdependently constitute and sustain each other over the course of history (Jia Luo, 1999). They also constitute the macro frame of the Tibetan social pattern that has continued through various ultimate and conventional conditions.

The nation was formed through a historical interaction in the high altitude environment of the Tibetan plateau, which continues to play a role in Tibetan development as global warming, lack of rainfall, and desertification make the plateau even more unforgiving. The harsh conditions of life may have influenced Tibetan culture’s historical and continued tendency to emphasize spiritual phenomena over materialism. In this section, I discuss the four macro
elements of environment, population, culture, and language that affect Tibetan social structure. The most significant element—the environment—can be divided into two forms: the cultural and the natural environment.

6.3.1. Tibetan cultural and natural environment

As a geographical condition, the natural environment of the Tibetan plateau not only provides a base and space for Tibetan society, but also nourishes and sustains the Tibetan cultural environment. As indigenous people of the Tibetan plateau, Tibetans have genetically adapted to their high-altitude environment (Beall et al., 1994).

At the same time, the Tibetan plateau both informs and is informed by the traits of Tibetan lifestyle, social relations, and collective practices of making products, food, housing, and clothing. George and Spindler (in Ekvall, 1968) describe this as follows:

The determinant influence of the high-altitude environment and its resources is apparent everywhere in the material culture, from the black tent to the manufacture of fuel from cowdung; the environment shapes as well the characteristic features of personality, the social structure, and the allocation of roles. The influence of Buddhism, countering the survival of folk belief in its emphasis, is significant. Those broad aspects of social system, culture, and personality shared by the high-pasturage nomads with other pastoral nomads, and probably reflecting certain broad adaptations to the ecological arrangements of pastoral nomadism, are yet another level of influence. The adaptation of man to animal and animal to man is an added dimension of great importance (p. vi).

Scientific studies on the relation of human bodies to the natural environment also show how Tibetans have biologically adapted to the high-altitude environment of the Tibetan plateau. Beall et al. (1994) state:

Genetic differences inferred from biological kinship relationships among individuals contribute to individual variation in percentage of oxygen saturation of arterial hemoglobin in a high-altitude native population. Heritable characteristic enhancing arterial hemoglobin (Niemeyer, 1995). This confirms findings in another Tibetan sample and extends the known geographic distribution of the major gene.
These results suggest the hypothesis that individuals with the dominant allele for higher Sao2 have a selective advantage in their high-altitude hypoxic environment (p. 597).

These biological and genetic studies gave me an insightful comprehensive understanding of the complex relations of the Tibetan plateau to native Tibetan populations. The geographical conditions of the plateau inform the Tibetan cultural environment by shaping a way of life and rooting its culture. Thus, it is clear that the geographical environment is the major element of social constitution.

6.3.2. Population

The sustainability of populations is directly related to production and to the supply of food, housing, and clothing. In the context of Tibet, Childs (2001) maintains that research on the Tibetan population is little known in literature in English, Chinese, and even in Tibetan. More importantly, little is known about the history of Tibetans' productive actions and interactions with the physical and social environment. However, there is a tremendous cultural impact on social structuration relating to the ultimate need for food, clothing, and housing. In terms of food supply, Wane (2000) asserts:

Food plays a central role in many family occasions and is important to the social reproduction of the family in both nuclear and extended families. Present research reveals that food items can be seen as symbolizing important social relations of power and subordination within the family (Cashman, 1991). Within the family, food functions to maintain and reproduce a specific aspect of social order as well as the age and gender divisions that characterize it (Charles & Kerr, 1988) (p.63).

He also maintains that “food-processing practices help maintain and reinforce a coherent ideology of the family throughout the social structure” (p.64). As in the above quotation, food can differentiate social groupings and intensify the traits of a society. Thus, food influences social structure and structuration.
Housing is an ultimate need of individuals and families, and is informed by cultural and geographical conditions. Indeed, housing affects the social fabric, family structure, religion, and individual/collective absence and presence of interactions. Rapoport (2001) argues that it is impossible to relate culture to housing or society due to the overly broad, general, and abstract nature of concepts such as “culture” and “environmental quality.” However, if cultural variations are connected to housing choices and different social groupings, then housing relates to “ideals, images, schemata and meanings” and "norms, standards, expectations and rules are involved in choice and design” (Rapoport, 2001 p. 145).

Ozaki (2001) makes the argument that increased privatized living leads to increased demarcation of private living space, and that this is one of the ways in which culture affects forms of housing. Wu, Yau, and Lu (2012) report that housing choice in Chinese societies significantly follows the principles of Feng Shui\footnote{This is an astrological tradition that brings luck to residences by ensuring that the five universal elements are harmoniously balanced.} based on reasoned action and perceived risks. Similarly, Perkins and Thorns (1999) assert that houses and homes not only shape social agents' cultural understandings, but also constitute significant elements of everyday life. As such, houses as material objects and homes as symbolic entities shape and reshape the family structure in relation to individual and social context.

These studies allude to the idea that consumers tend to favor housing with convenient access, with naturally wealthy aspects, and with a location that is harmonious with human life. Ultimately, given that there are certain specific cultural aspects that relate to housing, and that housing is based on certain principles enacted through agents’ cultural practices, one can assert that culture is directly related to housing in Asia but not in Western society.
*Clothing* is part of the conventional needs of individuals and families, and is designed according to cultural traits and geographical conditions. Eichberg (2008/2009) suggests that clothing as a body culture is related to philosophy, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, psychology, education, linguistics, theology, politics, and assumptions about democracy. In relation to Tibet, Yang (2003) conducted a rich study on the history of Tibetan clothing and categorized eight types: 1) official clothing, 2) upper class clothing, 3) military clothing, 4) daily life clothing, 5) religious ceremonial clothing, 6) dietary clothing, 7) drama clothing, and 8) monastic clothing. He explains that during the period of the Tibetan empire, clothing was made of animal skin, sheep or Yak fur, and silk. In the fragmentation period, Tibetans started adding new material from China such as cotton. In the 19th century, new clothing materials came from other countries: England, the U.S, Japan, Russia, Iran, Italy, and India. Further, Tibetan clothing differs in the regions of U-Tsong, Kham, and Amdo due to different geographical conditions. Understanding that clothing is a symbolic dimension of society and that it results from individual and collective human interactions helps me to further my social structural analysis.

*Production* is a form of conventionalized social need, and reveals skills, ideas, aesthetic views, usability, and functionality. Production is also the result of various focused collective interactions that involve organizations, institutions, and business in order to produce the things that people need.

Thus, the level and quality of production alludes to social capacity and the scope of social relations and interactions. With social developments and evolutionary changes, people have become increasingly addicted to improving their quality of life in both conventional and ultimate terms. At the same time, greed is motivating people to engage in nonstop actions and interactions...
that conventionally produce more and more products. Ultimately, it seems that greed is indirectly functioning as the ax of social structuration.

**6.3.3. Language**

Language mediates all other elements of social structure. Particularly in oral society, it is impossible to carry out social and system integration without language. According to William and Sewell (1992), language is intimately tied to the structural dimensions of depth and resources, and mediates all of the social power relations within the same language speaking context.

There are several ways that language connects with social structure. First, language mediates the construction of social structure and culture. It enables cooperative interdependence and cross-group friendships that connect different people as collectivities. It empowers agency through educational attainment. Second, language not only strengthens and extends the scope of macro social structuration, but also shrinks both levels of macro and micro social structuration. Genre analysis examines regular patterns of language at three levels of language use: interaction, discourse, and grammar. Collectively, these patterns exhibit both similarities and differences across literate social groupings and have been influential in creating a spiritual class in Tibetan culture. Gould (2001) asserts that language is not only a tool of communication tool at the level of the action system, but also interpenetrates socially and culturally mediates interaction.

Flowerdew and Millersocial (2008) argue that language learning issues are related to individual agency and social structure. As an important form of cultural capital, language is a product of social structure and “creative discursive agency.” These authors maintain that social structure and individual agency are important in language education in a post-colonial society.
6.3.4. Culture

As a macro social structuration element, culture generally has a wide meaning. In my study, I confine the scope to those aspects of culture related to social structure and structuration through practices of agent/agency in both oral and literate Tibetan society. In terms of oral society, these aspects take various forms such as the King Gesar epic, proverbs, lyrics, oral Bön phrases, oral Buddhist texts, customary law,\textsuperscript{47} and dramas. These cultural forms are the practices that support micro social structuration. In terms of literate society, these aspects consist of nine common cultures and one unique culture. The nine common cultures are architecture, medicine, linguistic studies, epistemology, rhetoric, drama, astrology, flowery language terminology studies, and phonology. The one unique culture is Tibetan Buddhism. These cultural forms are the social practices that support macro social structuration.

a) Religion—Buddhism and Bön

Two religions—Tibetan Buddhism and Bon—have historically existed in Tibetan society and function as a cohesive culture that informs the value system. Ekvall (1968) describes Tibetan Buddhism as:

\begin{quote}
\textit{a composite of abstruse philosophy, formalized doctrine, and an extensive pantheon. It is profoundly concerned with the nature of existence and the nature of knowledge. Such consideration as the relation of ‘being’ to the void’, and such concepts as that all existence is on three levels, the absolute, the relative, and the illusory, have developed. Doctrine defines the focus of worship and enunciates moral principles, monastic rules, and guidance in tantric exploration of, and experimentation with, the psyche (p. 80).}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{47} Chen (2004) states that mixture, simplicity, localization, and arbitrariness are the traits of Yushu Tibetan tribal customary law. A tribe is a form of organization combining aspects of "politics and religion" and also military traits. Customary law deeply influences the social-psychological foundation of tribal people and also constitutes the concept of Tibetan law.
My study examines the relationship between these two religions and Tibetan social structure by applying relevant frameworks from various studies. McIntosh (1997) provides such a framework by stating that religion acts both as a source of moral authority and, via its practices and rituals, a source of social solidarity. He reminds us that, in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Durkheim conceptualized the relationship between religion and society on the basis of a clan-based society of Australian Aborigines. This case has some similarity to the clan-based oral society of Tibet.

Riis (1989) argues that “religion is one basis for the legitimation of a social structuration, which splits up social life between formal institutions on the one hand and a private sphere on the other, where the problems of identity and value-determination are affiliated with the intimate sphere” (p. 137). Like McIntosh, he claims that “religious ceremonies and acts of worship can serve the purpose of increasing and reaffirming collective sentiments and social solidarity as well as the moral authority of ‘society’” (p. 232). Riis (1989) furthers his argument on “religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of acting which take rise in the midst of the assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain or recreate certain mental state in those groups” (p. 234). Tibetan Buddhism and Bön are the only value systems that have been fully engaging people's mental states in Tibetan oral society. Sharing a common faith or mental state increases social solidarity and adherence to moral authority (McIntosh, 1997; Riis, 1989).

Williams' (1996) empirical study revealed that religion acts as a political resource. His analytical distinctions between "religion as culture" and "religion as ideology" are useful in analyzing the functions of Buddhism and Bön in Tibetan society. Williams (1996) also argues
that it is impossible to completely separate religion from culture and ideology given their interactive and correlative natures. This distinction is a useful analytical insight.

Due to the lack of formal education, oral Tibetan populations have never been able to reflexively and analytically differentiate between religion as culture and religion as ideology. In literate society, stakeholders assert that both Buddhism and Bon function as culture and as ideology; in oral society, Buddhism and Bon function only as ideology. Indeed, both Buddhism and Bön have ideal and secular cultural aspects. Buddhist philosophy, epistemology, psychological texts, and medical studies, and Bön’s concepts of universal constitutive elements and ecology are significant but were never popularized and developed in pan Tibetan society.

The tension between secular and non-secular education in Tibet has historically caused problems by limiting the distribution of intellectual knowledge and maintaining the boundary between oral society and literate society. Lin (2011) describes how the Tibetan community caters to divinities and conducts sacrificial activities in the pursuit of psychological comfort, mental balance, release from the tragedy and sadness of modern life, and dealing with the relationship between nature and humanity.

b) The ethos of Tibetan folk culture

Tibetan folk culture is communicated verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication occurs through: 1) myths, 2) folk songs, 3) proverbs, 4) oracles, 5) folklore, 6) popular legends, 7) reciting the King Gesar epic, and 8) riddles. Non-verbal communication occurs through: 1) auditory communication, 2) visual communication, 3) ceremonial communication, 4) cultural object communication, and 5) body language. The characteristic forms of cultural communication are ceremonies and customary law (Zhou, 2009). Oral literacy is achieved through daily activities, supports villagers' understanding of their social context, and sustains the
social structure. More importantly, oral literacy is one of the only resources for children’s primary psychological development and acquisition of cultural values.

Tibetan oral literacy features a broad range of practices such as songs, proverbs, stories, dramas, customary laws, games, ethical principles, clan rules, and village law. These practices are the major elements that nurture people into becoming local agents. Every villager equally shares the same foundation and co-presence within the village. Thus, it is very difficult to define levels of quality among agents in Tibetan society. In this sense, I argue with Giddens’s notion that knowledgeable agents are defined in relation to specific social contexts. If knowledge is only limited to the village, then these oral villagers can easily lose their capacity as agents when they are positioned in other languages and literate social contexts.

Oral agents encounter limitations in terms of the scope of education they receive and the ability to transmit their knowledge, both of which are major elements of social constraint. Thus, culturally-relevant education for the whole Tibetan population has never happened. This is a key dilemma of monastic education in Tibetan society. Many scholars from East and West point to the positive aspects of Tibetan monastic education, yet no one has taken a critical perspective on the constraints it puts into place. This being said, critiques already exist in many local communities.

The four elements of social structuration discussed in the previous section constrain and support each other in any form of society. The natural environment constrains the socio-cultural environment; therefore, citizens have to adapt to the natural environment by producing cultural products. People act within a variety of interactive social contexts where they produce not only social members, but also institutions based on both the natural and cultural environment. The population can shape and reshape society by educating the next generation. On the other hand, a
certain type of education can also have a negative impact on social development. Similarly, language can be linked with both micro and macro levels of social context and structuration. At the micro level, each of the three elements of language—grammar, lexicon, and phonology—can restructure itself over time. And at the macro level, language structuration is derived from daily language uses that arise in the social practices of a community. Culture too is transmitted and transformed at the micro level by people’s everyday practice. At the macro level, culture informs the whole process of social structuration. Awareness of the accumulated cultural practices of the past and present also constrains people’s cultural behavior by acting as a conservative influence on cultural change.

Thus, these elements are common to any society. The Tibetan question with China is not only a political problem but also a social problem caused by the unbalanced internal and external social interaction of these four elements. This imbalance in turn results from excessive political constraint on social interaction that could lead to spontaneous changes in structuration. In Je TsongKhap’s terms, the major problem for Tibetans is how to find a suitable balance for functioning in conventional reality while trying to practice ultimate truth.

6.4. The constituents of micro level Tibetan social structuration

As previously discussed, Tibetan micro social structuration is based on oral society. Several major constituents arise interdependently within this context: the King Gesar epic, formal and critical proverbs, village dramas, summer collective ritual activities, religious ceremonies, lyrics, and family storytelling.

6.4.1. The local cultural contexts of the Tibetan micro social structuration
**a) The oral literacy contexts of the King Gesar epic**

Harvilathi (1996) asserts that the epic of King Gesar is among the best known and most widespread epic traditions in the world. The Tibetan Epic of King Gesar is based on Tibetan folk tales, legends, folk songs and proverbs, and represents the highest cultural achievement of ancient Tibet. It has been circulating for many centuries and its production is ongoing. In the epic, Gesar is described as half god and half human, and born as a three-year-old child. The epic of King Gesar has a unique characteristic: it has been transmitted orally from one generation to the next until today, and has been spreading among the Tibetan farmers and herdsmen. It has more than one million verses in 20 million words and perhaps fills 120-plus volumes. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated 2002 and 2003 as the years to celebrate the millennial anniversary of the Epic of King Gesar. As a part of Tibetan oral literacy and the world’s longest epic, the epic of King Gesar reveals aspects of Tibetan social development and the history of Tibetan social relations, class relations, moral concepts, folk customs, and oral culture. Generally, the epic reflects the history of ancient Tibetan society and can be thought of as a work of social power. The epic addresses justice and reflects Tibetan societal development and basic social structure. It has been transmitted through oral education and communication.

The epic provides the conditions for young generations to learn the history of Tibetan society and strengthen their oral mother-tongue capacities through listening and discussion. It expresses the lives of both ordinary Tibetans and historical figures. These figures are impressive characters who model social agents. The language and metaphors in the epic refer to aspects of conventional and ultimate reality that incite listeners to learn how to communicate in their social context and develop descriptive abilities, as in this lyric from a traditional Tibetan song:
If seeds are not sown in spring,
No corn will be harvested in autumn.
If cows are not fed in winter,
There will be no milk in the spring. *(Shows ultimate causal relation)*
If fine horses are not well bred,
They will not gallop into the face of your enemies. *(Shows conventional causal relation)*

The Epic of King Gesar informs Tibetan ideology, religion, and customary law. As a folk cultural collection, it uses various forms to express the complex process of historical social change. These forms are folk songs, narrative poems, lyrical stories, proverbs and drama, and they constitute the most influential and significant rules and forms of Tibetan language capacity. The imagery and story-telling capabilities of the epic are immortalized in cultural artifacts such as woodcuts, carvings, paintings, murals, embroideries, songs, dances, and plays. However, both monastic education and school education have excluded the epic from their curriculum. From the monastic academic point of view, promoting oral folk culture such as the Epic of King Gesar undermines the monastic value system. From the school education point of view, allowing the epic into the curriculum reduces “national curriculum” time.

*b) The oral literacy contexts of the formal and critical proverbs*

Proverbs and proverbial speech are considered a social strategy. Proverbs can ‘turn the situation into a joke,’ and make negotiations go smoothly. Proverbs also support and develop critical thinking skills *(Asimeng-Boahene, 2009)*. The concreteness of the nouns contained in proverbs plays an important role in making expressions easily understood *(Nippold, Hegel, Uhden, & Bustamante, 1998)*.

Proverbs contain political wisdom that can inform today’s political leaders, particularly in oral societies. Proverbs originate from the accumulated observations, experiences, and
knowledge of those in authority whether at a societal or family level. Proverbs convey wisdom to help people, both positively and negatively, reframe life’s difficulties (Tracy, Greco, Felix & Kilburg, 2002/2003). Using a proverb in an appropriate situation is an outlet for reducing an individual’s emotional tension, reducing tension between strangers, and increasing cohesion between group members. Using proverbs reveal how it is possible to deviate from conventions and to turn to a familiar and acceptable expression. Proverbs make people feel safe to break the rules of convention (Lauhakangas, 2009, 2007). Psychologists believe that understanding the figurative meanings of proverbs requires various kinds of higher order cognitive abilities. Proverbs reveal metaphorical schemes that are pervasive in everyday thought (Gibbs & Beitel, 1995).

The use of proverbs helps with selective memory, reconstruction of experiences, explaining and reasoning about the past, giving instructions and warnings for the future, and mutual encouragement. The speech used in proverbs differs from logical and scientific argumentation. Proverbs have narrative strength in social contexts and are multifunctional and flexible instruments of everyday reasoning (Lauhakangas, 2007). As a form of "blunt statement," proverbs are ways to summarize or comment on an action (Woods, 1969). In terms of ethical teaching, proverbs convey and describe social evils that must be countered by human justice and mercy, and are assertions of consequences (Fox, 2007).

As a constituent of social context, proverbs support oral language users in expressing their thoughts on village decisions, social relations, and collective and individual activities. Oral language users who are limited in using proverbs have limited opportunities to access collective resources and are unable to mobilize and organize collective activities. Proficient use of proverbs is key to empowerment. Oral communities often agree with and support those who have rich
proverbs for proposing ideas, reconciling conflicts, and communicating with other larger communities. Thus, critical proverbs are an important part of the conditions and resources needed for being an agent in oral society.

There are two types of proverbs: written and oral. The written proverbs are produced by monastic agents who use objects of nature and metaphors as social phenomena to criticize politics, religious ideology, and social relations. Interestingly, the written proverbs circulate widely as text while oral proverbs are limited to their original social context. Thus, monastic spiritual agents have influence on the societal macro level of social structure while oral agents only have power within their local micro social structure.

c) The oral literacy context of village dramas

Tibetan villagers participate twice a year in traditional drama performances. The dramas embody the six perfections, and all teenagers select a character to perform. These characters represent a broad range of personality and behavior types that can be found in their own village, some of whom act in negative ways. By experiencing the inner life of a character and the effects this character's behavior has on themselves and others, they can reflect on the character's motivations and actions. This helps young people move toward greater compassion and wisdom without any direct instruction.

d) The oral literacy context of collective ritual activities

Every summer in Tibetan society there is a special two-week historical festival called “Hang Long.” This is a popular social event where everyone—children, elders, men, and women—comes together. The young people learn practical knowledge by practicing how to

---

48 The six perfections: 1) generosity, 2) morality, 3) patience, 4) energy, 5) meditation, and 6) wisdom (focuses more on spiritual practice).
make temporary cooking stoves and preparing the things they need. They participate in different collective activities such as coming-of-age rites and traditional games. It is a way of reproducing social agents. Teenagers who are 15 years old must perform practical skills in order to be a member of their village. The boys have to participate in horse racing and in the Lha Tse—a ritual for bringing benefit to the community. The girls have to plait their hair. After these socialization activities, an elder announces: “From today, these teenagers are members of our society and have responsibility for our village.” Then their family and friends are given presents in greeting and congratulation.

Traditional games such as chess, tug-of-war, and riding a running horse to pick up objects from the ground are also played at this festival. These collective activities constitute a cultural context for young people to learn the skills related to all aspects of social life. Interestingly, being a community leader is not based on voting but on the respect and expectations of all members. The leader manages the social relations and organizes the collective activities by practicing local customary laws. During the festival, people have the opportunity to practice critical proverbs that show their communication skills. They also have a chance to catch up on news, produce new lyrics for songs, and exchange work experiences. Preteens and teenagers observe and experience cultural activities. As there is no preschool in the village, the festival is a forum for learning practical knowledge and customs. Therefore, the Hang Long is the most popular collective festival in Tibetan society.

**e) The oral literacy context of religious ceremonies**

As a cultural practice, all community members voluntarily visit a family's house to pray for persons who have passed away. The monks lead this collective activity from beginning to end through spiritual guidance. Children and preteens start to engage in and learn the various rituals.
In terms of wedding ceremonies, the whole village is invited, including relatives from other regions and villages. Once the family has announced to the clan that a son or daughter is getting married on a certain date, then members of the clan—not the relatives or family—take care of the related decisions and responsibilities. A monk opens the ceremony and chooses the date based on astrological considerations.

Both events follow the proverbial principle “go visit the sad family without invitation and go visit the happy party by invitation.” This principle has been observed throughout time and place in Tibetan society. It is clear that the spiritual dimension of Tibetan social life is constituted by monks’ activities and people’s beliefs.

**f) The oral literacy context of lyrics**

As a form of oral literacy and collective gathering, lyrics affect social relationships and strengthen community solidarity. There are various types of lyrics for different songs. Sometimes the lyrics teach members the opening and closing of activities; sometimes they express the rules of customary law; sometimes they reconcile conflicts by conveying emotional messages. The lyrics support Tibetans in expressing their emotions, making spiritual connections with nature, expressing critical perspectives, and revisiting past experiences. They constitute the content of oral Tibetans’ inner life. There are also critical lyrics that criticize people who follow and rely too heavily on Buddhism.

Childs (2005) argues that ideal culture does not always fit perfectly with the realities of everyday existence in Tibetan oral society. Although Tibetan villagers’ daily practice is guided by literate or folk Buddhism or Bön, their thoughts and actions are not only based on these cultural ideals. As illustrated in the lyrics of a love song: "in the past my family was not devoted to Buddha, my family still had rich prosperity.”
g) The oral literacy context of family storytelling

Family storytelling is the most important foundation of childhood psychological development in Tibetan oral society. There is no day care or preschool in oral Tibetan communities. The majority of Tibetan children are cared for by their grandparents who tell them various stories throughout the day. Grandparents pray all the time and children hear these moral words throughout their childhood. They also tell of their life experiences at certain times and in different places.

For the most part, the stories are about not making enemies, not harming others, dealing with problems, using your own thinking ability, proverbs, and the principle that human beings are just one of the various creatures alive in this world. Sometimes grandparents teach these things indirectly—they have the children sit beside them and allow them to just watch what they do and how they do it. Learning through watching is an effective pedagogy. Most stories are about practical knowledge from life experiences that can be remembered as the children grow. Thus, all these forms of early childhood education are done through oral teaching, watching, and listening to stories. Young generations who grow up in this way have no psychological problems that hinder them from functioning in the process of micro social structuration.

6.4.2. The relationship between different components of Tibetan society

Relationships between the components of Tibetan society consist of relationships between and within regions, organizations, and institutions. Giddens’s (1984) two concepts of constraint and contradiction are helpful in analyzing these relationships. He categorizes constraints into: a) material constraints, b) constraints associated with negative sanctions, and c) structural constraints. Material constraints refer to people's physical capacities and physical environment. In terms of the human body, they refer to lifespan and to people’s survival in certain locations at
certain periods of time. Sanctions are characterized by power; sanctions can stop or approve agents’ actions through force or violence.

These three types of constraint can be applied to both oral and literate Tibetan society. Material constraint occurs not only in oral society but also in literate society. Literate society exercises negative sanctions by stopping or approving oral agents’ actions through spiritual power relations. Oral society experiences structural constraint in the form of limited communicative capacity and negative sanctions from the monastic institutions in engaging too far exercises in materialism. The limitation on communicative capacity is a constraint that can be removed through education; however, this has never been tried and the current school education system continues to produce alienation. The second structural constraint is related to ideological conflicts between the extremes of materialism and spiritualism.

Giddens’s two types of contradiction—existential and structural—also apply to Tibetan social reality. Existential contradiction is manifested in the harsh relation between Tibetan populations and the Tibetan plateau. Structural contradiction is manifested in conflict between regions, internal and external social relations, different Buddhist schools, and religions. Contradictions between modernity and tradition, and materialism and spiritualism, both result from and generate these primary contradictions.

Relationships between and within regions were affected by differences in structures of governance. In U-Tsang, there was no township or prefecture level government; local government was based on counties and on heads of counties who took political, social, and

---

49 Desi Sangye Gyamtso (1653-1703), a regent of Tibet, is a good example of the social conflict that arose in the constitution of Tibet. He was killed by internal and external conflict.

50 Lang Darma (797-977), an early Tibetan emperor and follower of Bon, is a good example of the effects of religious conflict during the constitution of Tibet. He was killed by a monk named Lhalung Palgyi Dorje. Lang Darma’s death caused the collapse of the Tibetan empire and the beginning of the era of Chaos (Laird, 2006).
economic responsibilities directly to the central government. In Kham, tax collectors shared responsibility with local chiefs in representing the central government (Fa Zun, 1987; Dargyay, 1982). In Amdo, the local chiefs and the monasteries’ Lhadrang took responsibility to administer their society with no direct contact with the central government.

Relationships between and within organizations were affected by the different levels and sizes of Tibetan tribal and sub-tribal organization that constituted local and district authoritative systems across U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. U-Tsang province was administrated directly by a central government structure because of its proximity to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Kham and Amdo provinces were geographically remote from the central government and so were administered by a network of monastic institutions exercising spiritual authority. The relationship between monasteries and Tibetan society is dialectical. Customary law organizes families into clans that support a local monastery. Several clans constitute a sub-tribe, which supports a district monastery organized by Lhadrang and tribal chiefs. The tribal chiefs and district monasteries receive social, cultural, and political responsibilities from the central government through their spiritual function. Although monasteries constrain social change, their role is based on Tibetan society.

Giddens’s (1984) two principles of opening-closing and turn-taking helps me to analyze the interactive relations between tribal organizations and monastic institutions in Tibetan society. The principle of opening-closing is an ultimate one that occurs in any social sphere including religious activities, play, classrooms, teaching and learning, workplaces, and cultural ceremonies. The processes involved in opening and closing collective or individual activities or interactions are related to social structure.

Particularly, the notion of seriality allows me to appreciate the interactive relations
between oral and literate Tibetan societies. Monk agents often lead the seriality of opening-closing and turning-taking in collective and individual activities in oral society. However, at the same time, oral agents often shape and reshape literate society’s political and economic relations of power by fluctuating the support they provide these institutions through their tribe. This fluctuation manifests in several ways: a) reducing the number of boys sent to be monks; b) reducing the amount of financial and material support; and c) shifting tribal connections to another monastic institution. Interestingly, monastic institutions use spiritual power and intellectual activity to interact with tribal organizations, while the tribal organizations use material power to interact with monastic institutions.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on situating education in relation to wider practices of social structuration in Tibetan society. Particularly, attention has been focused on analyzing the structuring effects of monastic and oral education in Tibetan literate and oral societies, and how oral agents are constrained and kept illiterate. It also identified how the three forms of education produce different types of social agency and agents. The implication is that Tibetan society is lacking a culturally-relevant form of education.

In this chapter I also defined Tibetan agent/agency by applying Giddens’s concept of agent and agency, and critiques of his concept. I discussed environment, population, language, and culture as the four elements of macro structuration in Tibetan society and explored constituents of Tibetan micro social structure such as the Epic of King Gesar, proverbs, and festivals.
CHAPTER 7

SETTING GIDDENS AND JE TSONGKHAPA IN DIALOGUE:
STRUCTURATION IN SPIRITUAL SOCIETY

In this chapter, I attempt to bring structuration theory together with Je TsongKhapa's dialectical philosophy in order to present a combined sociological analysis of Tibetan society. I begin by discussing Giddens’s concepts of social and system integration and argue that spiritual integration needs to be added to his conceptual framework. In the second part of the chapter, I apply Je TsongKhapa's methodology of analyzing the constitutive elements of an entity or phenomenon to Giddens’s theory. I do this by extending the process of structuration into several subdivisions: personal life structuration, institutional structuration, educational structuration, and spiritual structuration. This not only helps us to understand the limitations of applying structuration theory to a spiritual society, but also the possibility of reconciling it through a dialogical approach. It allows us to see how different philosophical worldviews inform the process of education and the production and reproduction of social capacities. In the third part, I address the different types of authority in Tibetan oral and literate societies. As a form of social leadership, authority can influence the structure of education by providing and controlling rules and resources in society.

7.1. The elements of structuration in Tibetan society

According to Giddens (1984), analyzing social integration and system integration is central to analyzing any form of social structuration. However, in relation to Tibetan society, we also need to consider spiritual integration. The question then becomes how to interconnect these three elements. Archer (1996) argues that “system integration conditions social integration” (p.16). In
this chapter, I argue similarly that spiritual integration conditions both social and system integration. In the following sections, I examine how these three forms of integration occur in Tibetan oral and literate society.

In relation to tribal societies, Giddens (1984) explains that:

In tribal society or small oral cultures the dominant structural principle operates along an axis relating tradition and kinship, embedding themselves in time and space. In these societies the media of social and system integration are the same, depending overwhelmingly upon interaction in the settings of locales of high presence availability. …Oral cultures should not be understood as societies in which system integration has ‘not yet’ become disentangled from social integration (p. 182).

Drawing on this quotation, we can see that what characterizes social integration for Giddens is the degree of face-to-face interaction and reciprocity between actors within contexts of co-presence. Interestingly, the degree of face-to-face interaction is very low in Tibetan oral society, but very high in the monastic communities of Tibetan literate society. In oral society, the distances involved in herding and farming make face-to-face interactions very low. However, in literate society these interactions are very high due to teaching and learning activities and other collective institutional activities that take place in various localities. As a result, compared to oral society, there is a high degree of social integration in literate society. Given that two different levels of social and system integration exist in Tibetan society, it is important to do a dialectical analysis.

Social and system integration are informed by the principle, sets, and elements of structuration. In Tibet, these three components apply to both oral and literate society. In terms of the principle of structuration, Ekvall (1968) identified that clans, subtribes, and tribes form the main organization of Tibetan society. In terms of structural sets, we find that: a) customary laws function as the rules, b) oral culture and natural materials are the resources in Tibetan oral
society, and c) two types of rules—spiritual rules and monastic institutional rules—relate to authority resources, allocative resources, and spiritual resources in literate society.

In terms of the elements of structuration, we need to attend to the two different social systems in Tibetan society. In oral society, communities consist of families, clans, villages, tribes, and subtribes. These elements are the institutionalized features of the oral social system in time and space. In literate society, the elements consist of monasteries, Kangtsan\(^{51}\) (diverse representatives), Dratsang\(^{52}\) (colleagues), reincarnate Lamas, and general committees. These are the institutionalized features of the spiritual system extending across history and place.

7.1.1. Social integration

The notion of social integration, according to Giddens, means “systemness on the level of face-to-face interaction, and reciprocity between actors in context of co-presence” (1984, p. 28). At the same time, Giddens consistently highlights that interaction in contexts of co-presence is the core feature of social integration, and that regionalization mediates the connections between social and system integration through the time-space paths that actors follow during their daily activities. Giddens (1984) asserts that “tribal societies tend to have a heavily segmented form, the village community being overwhelmingly the most important locale within which encounters are constituted and reconstituted in time-space. In these societies relations of co-presence tend to dominate influences of a more remote kind. [...] There is something of a fusion of social and system integration” (p. 143).

Clearly, the traits of social integration are face-to-face interaction and actors’ reciprocal co-

\(^{51}\) Kangtsan are comprised of regional representatives, a chief representative, a government authority representative, a local representative, and a personal representative.

\(^{52}\) Each dratsang has a head monk in charge of administration, academic activities, and the monastic general committee. These heads are appointed by government. The dratsang administrators are appointed by the heads of the dratsang.
presence in specific contexts. This is the definition I use in my study to examine social integration in Tibetan society. In addition, Giddens’s (1984) notion of unfocused and focused interactions, and Gould’s (2001) culturally mediated and socially mediated interactions are equally important in analyzing the Tibetan interactive context. Ultimately, focused interaction and culturally mediated interaction characterize social and system integration in literate society, while unfocused interaction and socially mediated interaction characterize social and system integration in oral society.

7.1.1.1. Social integration in Tibetan oral society

The majority of Tibetan people have been practising oral language and culture from ancient times to the present. The long history of face-to-face interaction and collective co-presence has produced rich experiences of social integration that condition the contextual possibility of micro social structuration in Tibetan oral society. The character of oral Tibetan society is collective solidarity and locality, and its social structure consists of agents’ co-presence and collective face-to-face interaction.

Villages constitute the contexts of co-presence and interaction in different regions and localities by practising the same oral cultural schema, obeying the same customary law, and using the same resources. The day-to-day practices of customary law are unfocused interactions on the one hand and socially mediated interactions on the other. Villagers' daily life routines are quite flexible in terms of conventional events but strict in terms of ultimate events. Contexts of co-presence and face-to-face interactions consist of speaking the same language, being at the same daily workplace, and participating in collective activities, religious activities, spirituality, village dramas, and regular folklore activities. However, Childs (2005) believes there is a
conflict between the cultural ideals and realities of everyday existence in Tibetan society, and a contradiction between individuals' thoughts and actions.

7.1.1.2. Social integration in Tibetan literate society

Tibetan literate society primarily refers to monastic communities. In this society, the interactive context of co-presence consists of reciprocal teaching and learning, collective ritual activities, and collective performances of monastic dramas. Social integration requires the co-presence of all monk agents or actors at a certain place and time. This is the microcosm of social integration in literate society.

At the macro level of social integration, as Nietupski (2008) has observed, Tibetan monastic institutions share a similar institutional structure with other monasteries in the wider distant society, and provide the whole scope of Tibetan academic studies. Nietupski also observed that monastic authorities play both spiritual and social institutional administrative roles. Thus, sharing institutional structures allows monastic institutions in different places to produce and reproduce the same traits of social integration with many other regions and communities. This social integration is intrinsically linked to spiritual integration.

The relationship between the monastic institutions and tribal society is predominantly managed by the different levels of institutional reincarnation. Unlike individual monks’ connections with local tribal society through individual families, Lhabrang have multiple institutionalized connections with both oral and literate society. This is the only way we can see the mediation between micro and macro social structuration in Tibetan society. These institutional connections are based on negotiation and dialogue between institutional representatives and the village collective in face-to-face interaction.
7.1.2. System integration in Tibetan society

The notion of system integration, according to Giddens, refers to "connections with those who are physically absent in time or space, and reciprocity between actors or collectivities across extended time-space" (1984, p. 28). Through the spiritual agents/agencies’ mediation and interaction with distant communities, spiritual integration in oral society functions as system integration. This ensures that distant societies practise the same moral and cultural rules.

The connections and interactive influences between the speech community and spiritual agents/agencies has resulted in two forms of structuration: materially-based social structuration and spirituality-based social structuration. Unlike materially-based social structuration, spirituality-based Tibetan social structuration is sustained by obeying and exercising monastic institutional rules, practising Buddhist cultural schema and folk culture, and interacting collectively in spiritual activities.

7.1.2.1. System integration in Tibetan oral society

According to Giddens’s definition of system integration, there is no system integration in oral society. However, as defined in my study, spiritual integration conditions both social and system integration. There are no reciprocal connections between actors or collectivities physically absent in time or space across society without spiritual integration in Tibetan society. Defining system integration in Tibetan oral society requires the notion of spiritual integration.

The limited sphere of oral communication and transportation confines the scope of connection to certain localities. However, spiritual integration creates connections between different organizations and institutions in distant communities; for instance, villagers travel long distances on pilgrimages, and monk scholars travel to conduct studies. Very often, these ‘places
as agencies’ (Bakhtin, 1981) allow for collective and individual mediations between different villagers and monk scholars.

Within the limited scope of communication in oral society, only knowledgeable people can be oral agents who lead collective interactions with larger tribal social contexts. Not everyone in the Tibetan speech community has the knowledge and capability to be an oral agent. The lack of oral agents affects the quality and level of collective interaction and system integration. This is the reason for the low level of system integration in oral society. There is no foundation for any type of secular institution for social development. It is the monastic institutions that mediate both with individuals and collectivities to be the co-presence of the larger social interaction.

7.1.2.2. System integration in Tibetan literate society

System integration in literate society is very different from oral society. Tibetan literate society has reciprocal connections with the greater society by having the same writing system, sharing similar institutional structures and rules, having similar spiritual approaches, being under a similar spiritual authority, and engaging in educational activities.

Using the same writing system allows the literate society to administer and have a wider connection with distant institutions and organizations by sending rules and regulations. More importantly, sharing rules and a similar institutional structure characterizes all monastic institutions in the same way. By using writing and printing as supportive conditions for interacting with the wider social context of Tibetan society, monastic institutions link key networks of social relations to the Tibetan societal level of social structuration. Further, having

---

53 These 'places as agency' here refer to historical places, cultural places, and the places where monasteries are located.
the same spiritual approach and authority also produces and reproduces reciprocal connections by recognizing reincarnation in different localities.

### 7.1.3. Spiritual integration in Tibetan society

It is important to identify how Giddens’s notion of social and system integration fits the analysis of Tibetan social structuration, but it is also important to identify how it does not fit. Particularly, spiritual integration does not fit well into his notion due to his ignorance of spirituality. However, there is no system integration in Tibetan society without spiritual integration. As a result, understanding social structuration in Tibetan society is incomplete without the linkage of system integration with spiritual integration.

#### 7.1.3.1. Spiritual integration in Tibetan oral society

As a form of mental capacity, spirituality motivates agents to take rejective action or acceptive action in any form of social context. This is the key that allows us to comprehend the relationship between spirituality and social structuration in day-to-day life. On the other hand, spiritual contradiction can also cause social members to reject following the rules and engaging in collective interaction. Spiritual contradiction fragments a social context by causing political conflicts.

In oral Tibetan society, social members strongly believe in and trust the Tibetan Buddhist religion and Bön religion. Tibetan history shows harmonious interactions among organizations, social groupings, social members, and agents/agencies through gathering for religious activities over time and at different locations. Thus, sharing a similar spiritual approach can increase the level of social and system integration, and at the same time increase the quality of spiritual integration.
7.1.3.2. Spiritual integration in Tibetan literate society

Commonality of the Buddhist worldview at an ontological level is the axis of spiritual integration in Tibetan literate society. Je TsongKhapa succeeded in reconciling philosophical conflicts between different Tibetan Buddhist schools at this level. His reform consisted of an inner mental shift from individual/collective to the acceptance of a unified spirituality and whole societal obedience. This reform was not only effective in stabilizing the monastic institutions or literate society, but also in changing the worldview of the entire oral society (Hortsng Jigme, 2009).

The notion of spiritual integration refers to convergences with Tibetans who are physically distant in time and place and who mutually benefit from continuously sharing the same mental approach and values. The notion of spiritual integration relates to psychological states, mental approaches, value systems, and aesthetic principles. Accordingly, Je TsongKhapa's multiple contributions of a well-balanced tetra and sutra approach, orientation to rebirth, reformulations of monastic education, and restrictions on monk behavior allowed the reestablishment, at the societal level, of macro social structuration through spiritual integration. Thus, spiritual integration brought about Tibetan macro social structuration.

Spiritual integration operates across both social and system integration in Tibetan literate society. It functions as system integration within oral society, and as social integration in literate society. Based on Giddens’s (1984) understanding of integration as the reciprocity of practices between actors or collectivities, it is clear that spirituality is the key mediator of collective face-to-face interaction and physically absent collective connections over time and space in Tibetan society.
7.1.4. Rules and resources in Tibetan society

Giddens (1984) asserts that the structure of rules and resources reproduces institutions and social relations. However, there are several arguments concerning rules and resources.

Both Giddens (1984, 1979) and Schatzki (1997) maintain that there are two types of resources—authoritative and allocative. Authoritative resources include: 1) aptitudes; 2) capabilities; 3) the organization of activities; and 4) the coordination of actors. Allocative resources include: 1) wealth; 2) technologies; 3) raw materials; and 4) land. However, Thompson (1984) argues with Giddens’s account. He argues that the term ‘rule’ is vague and that Giddens is unable to clarify what types of rules are related to social structure.

At the same time, William and Sewell (1992) suggest five principles in terms of resources: “the multiplicity of structures; the trans-possibility of schemas; the unpredictability of resource accumulation; the polysemy of resources; and the intersection of structures” (p. 16). The multiplicity of structures consists of several substructures: kinship structures, religious structures, productive structures, aesthetic structures, and educational structures. Clearly, William and Sewell provide principles that are related to both resources and substructure. The principles of the trans-possibility of schemas, the multiplicity of structures, and the intersection of structures are directly related to sub social structure, and the principles of the unpredictability of resource accumulation and the polysemy of resources are directly related to stability of the social structure.

William and Sewell also assert that being an agent requires the capacity to transpose and extend cultural schemas into new social contexts. I would argue that this is possible in a society where citizens have college or high school education, but not in an oral society. Relying on oral communication has advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage is that oral communication
constrains the scope of transposing knowledge and makes it difficult to recall all knowledge. The advantage of oral communication is that it is easier to communicate in collective activities that include the transposition of knowledge about oral Tibetan society.

In raising the unpredictability of resource accumulation, William and Sewell (1992) make a major argument with Giddens’s notion of rules and resources. Understanding that resource accumulation is not predictable means examining what types of resource accumulation have predictability and stability, and what types do not.

7.1.4.1. Rules in Tibetan society

In the Tibetan social context, monastic institutional rules and collective moral rules are related to macro Tibetan social structure, and oral collective moral rules are related to the micro social structure.

According to Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy, no object can exist without change across conventional and ultimate realities. Both rules and resources exist through the process of changing over time. It is often observed that Tibetans in oral society obey the rules that pertain to ultimate realities more than those relating to conventional reality. Ultimate rules and natural resources inform Tibetan social structure at the micro level, while spiritual rules and non-material resources such as spiritual authority and intellectual production inform social structure at the macro level.

7.1.4.2. Resources in Tibetan society

As mentioned above, Giddens and Schatzki agree on two types of resources—authoritative and allocative. In Tibetan society, there is a third type of resource—spiritual—which functions authoritatively and allocatively in Tibetan society.
In describing resources in Tibetan nomadic society, Ekvall (1968) paid attention to a number of material components, including: a) the geographical conditions that determinate what to germinate and grow for survival; b) whether resources can be used quantitatively and valued for quality; c) how to exploit resources that influence the pattern of social structure; d) the kinds of resources that are exploited; and, e) how to control the users of resources who function in units of individuals, families, and groups. He also described two other types of resources: bovine (yak, sheep, common cattle, and horses) and ovine (the two types of sheep). Accordingly, Ekvall (1968) asserted that Tibetan herdspeople have sufficient natural resources, primarily grassland resources.

These resource analyses help me to understand why Tibetan sub-social structure is strong from a spiritual aspect and weaker from a material aspect. In terms of the spiritual aspect, the monastic institutions of Buddhist and Bon spirituality mediate between regions, communities, and institutions, and also culturally stake out the scope of the social context. In terms of the material aspect, herdspeople interact with their family members during daily life more often than they interact with others during short periods of collective interactions. Clearly, there are resources within Tibetan nomadic society that are not the same as Giddens’s emphasis on authoritative and allocative resources.

Table 11 shows the three types of allocative resources in Tibetan society: 1) nomadic material, peasant material, natural material; 2) hand-made material and premodern instruments of production; and 3) produced goods. It also shows the three types of authoritative resources in Tibetan society: 1) spiritual constitution of paths and local regions; 2) production and reproduction of the clan and tribe mutually associated with the monastic institution; and 3) organization of life chances at the local level. In addition, reincarnation is a major institutional
and spiritual authoritative resource. At the level of structural sets, customary laws function as the rules, and oral culture and natural materials are the resources. In literate society, two types of rules—spiritual and monastic—function as authoritative, allocative, and spiritual resources.

Table 11

**Types of Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Allocative Resources</th>
<th>Authoritative Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Tibetan Resources</td>
<td>Material features of the environment (raw materials, material power source)</td>
<td>Organization of social time space (temporal-spatial constitution of paths and region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nomadic material; pleasant material; natural material.</td>
<td>Spiritual constitution of paths and local region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Tibetan Resources</td>
<td>Means of material production/ reproduction.</td>
<td>Production/ reproduction of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hand making material production and reproduction, premodern instruments of production.</td>
<td>Production and reproduction of the clan and tribe of human beings in mutually associated with monastic relation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Tibetan Resources</td>
<td>Produced goods (artifacts created by the interaction of 1 &amp; 2)</td>
<td>Organization of life chances (constitution of chances of self-development &amp; self-expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Produced goods: There are no artificial creations through 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Organization of life chance only exist at local level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Adapted from Giddens (1984, p.258).

### 7.2. Sub-divisions of structuration

According to Je TsongKhapa, any constituted entity or existential object is composed of many sub-elements that can be analyzed individually. Thus, the concept of structuration can be similarly extended into a number of subdivisions. Several forms of sub-structuration ultimately exist in all types of societies. Table 12 shows the division of structuration into personal life structuration, institutional structuration, political structuration, economic structuration, social structuration, spiritual structuration, and educational structuration.
Table 12

Types of Sub-Structuration in Tibetan Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements Types</th>
<th>Elements of Structuration</th>
<th>Elements of Structuration in Tibetan society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal life structuration</td>
<td>Parents, education, intelligence, personality, relation to the social opportunity, jobs.</td>
<td>Herdsmen and peasant parents, monastery education, intelligence, personality, relation to the chance, faming, herding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional structuration</td>
<td>Leaders, staffs, regulations, plans, Productions, social condition, quality of staff, inter-institutional relationship.</td>
<td>Local chief, Lama, nuns, monk staffs, regulations, plans for spirituality; Cultural productions, illiterates’ population, inter-institutional relationship between monasteries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political structuration</td>
<td>Ideology, democracy, social justice, State power relation, Legitimacy, quality of population,</td>
<td>Buddhist ideology, patrimonialism, non-democracy, individual justice, weak state power relation, individual legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic structuration</td>
<td>Natural and human recourse, Geographical condition, quality of population, ability of productions and reproductions,</td>
<td>Rich natural resource, poor human resource, High-land geographical condition, low-quality of educated secular population, weak ability of productions and reproductions, rural society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social structuration</td>
<td>Geographical environment, language, culture, quality of population.</td>
<td>Tibetan plateau, less oxygen, grassland and forest, Tibetan language, Tibetan culture, oral populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual structuration</td>
<td>Spiritual authority, spiritual institution, spiritual ideology, mass’ approach to spirituality, quality of population.</td>
<td>Spiritual authority structures, spiritual institution of monasteries, Buddhism as spiritual ideology, majority of Tibetan population obey and practice the spiritual custom in their everyday life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Structuration</td>
<td>Cultural environment, language, teacher, students, school setting, teaching/learning place, administrative stuff and culture.</td>
<td>Educational authority structure; collective authority of teaching/learning; educational institution of school; Buddhist spiritual ideology for monastic education; survival approach for oral education; national rebuilding policy for school education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.1. Personal life structuration

According to Giddens, the concept of structuration “refers abstractly to the dynamic process whereby structures come into being” (1976, p. 121). Ultimately, any object or existence
can be analyzed as a frame-patterned entity and conceived of as constituted relationships between components. All types of structures are identified by breaking an object down into relationships between constituents. Different types of structuration consist of different components that compose and reproduce the structure. Personal life structuration refers to the process of patterning and re-patterning a person’s whole lifestyle, and this has its own components.

7.2.1.1. Defining the elements of personal life structuration

As a form of micro sub-structuration, personal life can be analyzed, according to Je TsongKhapa, by considering a number of conventional and ultimate elements. The ultimate elements are derived from parents, intelligence, and personality. The conventional elements are derived from education, social opportunity, time-space, and jobs. However, in Tibetan society, very different elements constitute personal life structuration, including the workplaces of farming and herding. According to Je TsongKhapa’s philosophy, ultimate reality stands in dialectical relationship with conventional reality. Ultimate and conventional elements influence and condition each other. For instance, personality is an ultimate phenomenon while personal social relationships are conventional phenomena. It is important to find a balance between the two elements.

Analyzing personal life structuration requires a synthesis of Je TsongKhapa’s concept of two realities and Giddens’s concept of structuration. Both ultimate and conventional elements of rules and resources constitute personal life structuration in addition to other influences such as social, cultural, and economic status.

A) The ultimate elements of personal life structuration
The ultimate elements of personal life structuration are parents, intelligence, and personality. These elements are durable and irreplaceable.

*Parents*

As an ultimate element of personal life structuration, parents provide various resources for their children and these resources affect children’s growth until they are socialized. Parents also make rules to manage their families and these rules influence their children’s behaviours and personalities. As rule-makers and providers of resources, parents are the stationary nests where every person’s life structuration begins. Thus, parents are the key conditional and temporary element that supports personal life structuration.

Two major elements can reposition personal life structuration—parents and self. Parents can transition or reposition personal life structuration before their son or daughter is socialized. For instance, by immigrating from one society to another, parents can make the transition from working class to middle class. A person can change her or his life structuration given the right conditions and elements. As Brannen and Nilsen (2005) assert, sociological analysis of individualization needs to emphasize the concepts of choice and autonomy, and understand the connection between history and biography.

*Aptitude and intelligence*

Giddens (1984, 1979) sees aptitude as a resource of personal life structuration. It is the ultimate personal resource that determines the level of capacity achieved through education. In addition, as a high mental capacity, intelligence determines the scope of interaction and social relationships. Aptitude and intelligence, as ultimate elements of personal life structuration, determine the level and scope of social interaction, educational attainment, and language capability. In oral society, language capability is key to effective interactions in contexts of
collective presence and co-presence. Further, aptitude and intelligence ensure that one can deal effectively with constraints.

**Personality**

Personality influences one’s social relationships and interactions (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998). As a secondary element of personal life structuration, personality is often associated with all aspects of one’s personal life. By influencing both social relationships and interactions, personality is an important component of social structure.

**B) The conventional elements of personal life structuration**

The conventional elements of personal life structuration are education, time-space, social opportunity, and work. These elements are temporal and replaceable.

**Education**

As a conventional element of personal life structuration, education consists of several components such as school, teacher^54^, classmates, and subject of study. Together these components inform the level and quality of education, and interdependently constitute the conventional reality of students’ lives. Thus, the conventional elements of education build upon the foundations of personal life structuration and influence the rest of one’s life.

**The notion of time-space**

Applying the notion of time-space to the context of personal life structuration requires a differentiation between Giddens’s general notion of time-space and particular contexts of time-space in daily activities in a spiritual society. According to Giddens (1984), the notion of time-space refers to “the shrinking of distance in terms of the time needed to move between different

---

^54^ A Tibetan proverb says: "There is no enlightenment without teacher."
locations” (1984, p.114). However, Urry argues that every single person’s presence and absence of action and interaction is carried out within time and space, and time is ultimately an irreversible resource. In terms of ascertaining the notion of time-space within the context of action and interaction, Urry (1991) examines a number of related notions: a) locale; b) regionalization; c) presence-availability; d) front regions and back regions; e) time-space distanciation; f) time-space edges; and g) power containers. The biggest problem that Urry observes with Giddens’s structuration theory is that it systematically avoids analyzing any place and that it lacks an analysis of time zones.

In terms of the temporality of agents’ space and time, the following four notions of knowledge must be considered: a) knowledge that cannot be understood by the social groups’ position in time and space; b) knowledge that is not familiar to the social group; c) knowledge that cannot be discussed because the social context prohibits it; d) knowledge that is underestimated because it is different from dominant understandings. These four notions provide crucial insights for my study in analyzing the relationship between Tibetan oral agents and spiritual agents, and the relationship between the different levels of social structure in Tibetan society.

Two types of constraints limit and inform the routine of daily life activities and interactions (Giddens, 1984). Capability constraints limit the structuration of daily activities, and compelling constraints condition everyday activities (Giddens, 1984). At the same time, Giddens’s notion of domains provides an insightful frame for analyzing the personal life regionalization of time-space, and the zoning of time-space in relation to routinized social practices. Personal life regionalization refers to the zoning of time-space in relation to routinized social practices (Giddens, 1984, p.119) or to the life paths through which people move in
contexts of interaction.

**Social opportunity** is an unstable resource and is not equally accessible to everyone in society. It is differentiated by factors such as social class or status, capability, and levels of education or work skills.

**Employment** as a social relation is the most effective conventional element in terms of supporting and sustaining personal life structuration. It consists of several factors such as the workplace, institutional rules and resources, personal effort, and skills. The workplace is not only the context of day-to-day interactions with colleagues but also of workers’ presence and co-presence. Institutional rules and resources are continuously structuring and restructuring workers’ jobs. Circumstances such as losing a job or having to make do with a job because it is all that one's skills make possible are also factors. In short, all these factors interdependently constitute a job. Interestingly, in a spiritual centric society such as Tibet, there is no job pressure affecting farmers and herders in oral society, and no job pressure affecting monks in monastic institutions in literate society. Thus, jobs and employment cannot be considered as a conventional element of personal life structuration in premodern Tibetan society.

**7.2.2. Institutional structuration**

According to Giddens, “the structuration of institutions can be understood in terms of how it comes about that social activities become ’stretched’ across wide spans of time-space” (1984, p. xxi). In addition, he states that:

The monastery, after all, was one of the first places in which the day was temporally regulated in a precise and ordered fashion. The religious orders were the masters of the methodical control of time, and their influence, diffuse or more direct, was felt everywhere (p. 147).
However, he does not provide any further insights on how to analyze and develop the sub-
divisional notion of institutional structuration. Nevertheless, I found a way of filling the gap by
applying Je TsongKhap’a’s dialectical philosophy. I discuss this in the next section.

7.2.2.1. Defining the elements of institutional structuration

Drawing on Je TsongKhap, Thupten Jinpa (2002) asserts that “existence consists of both
conventional and ultimate realities” (p.152), and that as a form of existence, institutions also
have these two aspects of conventional and ultimate reality. However, according to Giddens
(1984), the elements of institutions are leaders, staff, regulations, plans, production, and social
conditions, as well as inter-institutional relationships. These elements seem to represent only the
conventional aspect of reality. The question then becomes how to define the ultimate elements of
institutional structuration.

A) The ultimate elements of institutional structuration

Giddens focuses on finance capital, the power of the city, and large-scale industry in
analyzing institutional stability and change; this is irrelevant and has no applicability to the
Tibetan monastic institution. However, the monastic institution exercises a great deal of power
such as authority, places of higher teaching and learning, and spiritual rules and resources. As
Ekvall (1968) explains:

The monastic rules are basically valid for all members of communities as the
spiritual guideline and are directing people to conduct the every individual’s
progress toward final liberation in nirvana, as life and death take them all through
the cycles of rebirth, and rebirths are determined by what you have done and what
you will do, another word-karma, of previous existence (p. 80).

The monastic institution is the only institution that has been historically and culturally
constituted by Tibetans. Its network allows the central organization to exercise both traditional
and spiritual authority in the entire Tibetan society. The monasteries traditionally take political
responsibility but focus more on the development of wisdom and compassion, which provides more social cohesion. Nietupski (2008) argues that the role of monastery "resulted in both assertions of Tibetan identity and dynamic social, political, and economic interaction" (p.513). Thurman (2008) explains that the monastery also educated “the scientific practitioner and philosopher, especially concerned with the discovery of the nature of reality and the fostering of the human ability to evolve through education, to develop, change, and grow" (p. 37).

Based on the above, it is important to conduct sociological studies of monastic institutional stability and change. Although Giddens does not provide much insight into this area, there are other sociologists who have done some research. Lindner (2003), for example, explores the dialectic relationship between institutional stability and change, and identifies four reproduction mechanisms that stabilize institutional settings. I use his work in order to remedy Giddens’s lack of attention to institutional stability and change in a spiritual social context.

Lindner (2003) identifies two types of institutional change—formal and informal. Informal change has three aspects: unilateral interpretation, joint interpretation, and third-party interpretation. Formal institutional change refers to explicit rule change and to on-path and off-path changes. Lindner (2003) explains that: “On-path changes can be described as small institutional adaptations of the existing path that are in line with the current mechanism of reproduction; off-path changes refer to replacing the existing mechanism of reproduction and introducing a new one. It is a major institutional change” (p. 916). He identifies the four reproduction mechanisms in stable institutional settings as: 1) power of the dominant actor coalition; 2) the interdependence within an institutional matrix; 3) large switching costs; 4) small on-path changes. These mechanisms are useful for analysis of monastic institutional structuration and change.
B) The conventional elements of institutional structuration

Following Giddens’s logic, my study can only define the conventional elements of institutional structuration. In the Tibetan context, I define local chiefs as agency and agents; spiritual authorities and texts as spiritual resources; nuns and monks as collective agents; monastic regulations as rules, and spiritual schema; and cultural production, population, and inter-institutional relationships between monasteries as the resources. Barley and Tolbert (1997) argue that there are commonalities between institutionalization and structuration. Therefore, the conventional elements can be categorized in the same way as in structuration: agency/agent, spiritual rules, and resources.

Giddens (1984) presents the notion of presence-availability as an adjunct to co-presence. He sees this as one of the characteristics of regionalization. Applying this to the Tibetan context, most of the institutional practices of collective interaction at the monastery involve face-to-face teaching and debate. Sharing the same institutional structure, wearing the same uniform, obeying the same rules, and accessing the same resources helps to sustain the same quality of institutional structuration over time and locality.

Although Giddens’s notion of "at the same time multi-dimensional interactions" can be another feature of my analysis, it can only be applied to literate Tibetan society, not to oral society. First, oral society lacks the communication to carry out multi-dimensional social interactions with distant social groups at the same time; and second, the lower capacity of oral social actors and agents is a material constraint.

Macro institutional structuration can be a means of re-establishing Tibet as one and the same nation. I am not suggesting that everyone in indigenous society needs to be monks and nuns, but that indigenous people can share the same institutional structure and obey the same
rules as all tribal communities with the same process of macro structuration. It is also important that indigenous scholars and educators conduct research on the synthesis of common knowledge through the process of curriculum development.

7.2.3. Educational structuration

Despite Giddens’s neglect of education in structuration theory, my study attempts to apply the notion of structuration to education. Situating the duality of structure in the educational context is the key that allows me to formulate the foundation of educational structuration. At the same time, educational structuration requires that both conventional and ultimate aspects of acquired and natural human beings be considered.

According to Duo Shi (2010), education differentiates acquired human beings from natural human beings through teaching and learning the standardized culture. The different levels of education are based on the quality of teaching and educational resources. Again, Giddens’s two elements of structuration—social and system integration—along with Je TsongKhapa’s two analytical frameworks of conventional and ultimate analysis provide support for defining the notion of educational structuration. These educational constituents have been interdependently producing and reproducing educational systems over time and place.

7.2.3.1. Defining the elements of educational structuration

Like any form of existential entity that has two dimensions of reality, educational structuration also has its conventional and ultimate aspects, and each aspect has its constituents. It is important to define both elements in order to comprehend the dialectical relationships between them.

Giddens (1984) asserts that social integration means systemness on the level of face-to-face reciprocal interaction in the context of collectivities. He asserts that system integration
refers to the co-presence and reciprocal connections of collectivities with those who are physically distant in time or place. These two traits exist at any level of the education sphere.

Various elements constitute the educational context of social and system integration. These include teachers, students, teaching and learning environments, education policy, law, school regulations, curriculum, and society. Among these elements, the teacher and school leader are considered as agent/agency, the education policy/law/school regulations as the rules, and the content of teaching and learning and society as the resources also as rules.

**A) The ultimate elements of educational structuration**

Criteria are needed to identify and define the ultimate elements of educational structuration. I propose that the traits of durability and essentiality be used for these criteria. Among the constituents of education—teacher, learning and teaching place, curriculum, education policy, leadership, students, and social-cultural context—some meet the criteria and some do not. According to Giddens (1984), “the teacher’s maintenance of directive control depends upon ensuring that the children assume the routines involved in the classroom setting” (p.137), and “the control which teachers seek to exercise over their pupils is immediate, involving the teacher’s continuous face-to-face presence with the children” (p. 138). Therefore, the teacher, the curriculum, and the students are the essential and durable notions that make up the context of education. The learning and teaching place is the condition, education policy is the educational rules, leadership is the authoritative resource, and socio-cultural context is a curriculum resource.

Knowledgeable and skilled teachers as agents obey the educational rules and use the educational resources to interact with students in a place of teaching and learning. This is the foundation of educational structure. At the same time, education policy ensures the routinization
of teacher’s day-to-day practices and face-to-face interactions with students that produces and reproduces the system of education over time and place. Thus, the social integration of teachers' and students’ face-to-face interactions at a place of teaching and learning is the ultimate element of educational structuration that exists across any form of education. The three types of education in Tibetan society—oral education, monastic education, and school education—all require these ultimate elements. However, the durability and essentiality of the conventional elements may differ among these types. This is discussed in next section.

**B) The conventional elements of educational structuration**

As a strengthening of people’s conventional need for institution and organization, the notion of educational structuration is a significant field to analyze and develop. Giddens (1984) observes that modern schools are disciplinary organizations where knowledge, power, and discipline are generated. He also applies the notion of time, space, and context to the educational sphere as follows:

> The school timetable is fundamental to the mobilization of space as coordinated time-space paths. The disciplinary context of the classroom is not just a ‘backdrop’ to what goes on in the school class; it is mobilized within the dialectic of control. A school class is a face engagement which has to be reflexively managed, like any other. (p.136)

In my study, I understand education policy as the rules; curriculum, students, and sociocultural context as the resources; teachers and students as agents; and the teaching and learning place as the condition of education. The character of system integration—connections between social members who are physically absent in time or place, and reciprocity between actors or collectivities over extended time-space—contradicts with the character of education as interactive face-to-face teaching and learning, and the co-presence of teachers and students. At the same time, the curriculum content functions as a cultural authority rule and as a resource of
knowledge. Teachers/personnel/students are resources as well as agents.

At the same time, Giddens (1984) asserts that “integration may be understood as involving reciprocity of practices (of autonomy and dependence) between actors or collectivities” (p.28). The notion of reciprocal practices between teachers and students reflects the conventional aspect of educational system integration. Thus, system integration functions as the conventional element of educational structuration. In Tibetan society, social integration commonly occurs in all three forms of education—oral education, monastic education, and school education. Although system integration occurs in oral and monastic education, it does not occur in school education because of the non-reciprocal interactions between teachers and students. The school education system has been producing a new structure of domination.

Students affect social structuration. As Laursen (1993) explains, students make individual choices with regard to higher education, and psychologists have been trying to interpret the reasons for these choices. The "flow" of young people into different courses of education and different parts of the labor market can also be viewed as a social process which can be studied sociologically. Laursen tries to reconcile psychological and sociological theories on postsecondary students’ decision making by applying structuration theory. In short, there is a structurational relationship between education, students, and society. Society informs education, education produces new agents, and new agents shape and reshape the society and social structure.

7.2.4. Spiritual structuration

As an ultimate phenomenon intimately associated with human beings, spirituality is a powerful inner approach that motivates people to take serious actions, such as rejective and accective action. These inner approaches are associated with religion, culture, ethics, and human
inner values.

In diverse societies, spirituality is interpreted and understood in various ways that inform different values and aesthetics. My aim here is to pull spiritual integration forward and to examine how it differs from social and system integration. As a form of structuration, spiritual structuration and particularly the notion of spiritual integration, requires its elements, conditions and context. Spiritual integration carried out through the two components of face-to-face interaction and connection with social members who are physically absent in time or space is a reciprocal relationship between actors and the collective context (Giddens, 1984).

7.2.4.1. Defining the elements of spiritual structuration

Spiritual structuration has both ultimate and conventional elements. As previously discussed, spiritual integration conditions both social and system integration in Tibetan society. In this sense, it requires a number of causes, effects and conditions. According to Je TsongKhapa, the relationship between cause, effect, and condition is dialectically interdependent in both conventional and ultimate reality, and is produced and reproduced within the conventional and ultimate context of time and space. Any entity can situate itself as cause, effect, or condition in different levels of context, but no entity can be cause and effect at the same time. Therefore, the aim is to analyze how cause, effect, and condition affect spiritual agency/agent, spiritual rules and resources, the context of spiritual interaction, spiritual institutions, and spiritual authority across both oral and literate Tibetan society.

A) The ultimate elements of spiritual structuration

The ultimate elements of spiritual structuration are: spiritual (reincarnate) agency, place as agency, spiritual rules and resources, and context of spiritual interaction.
**Spiritual agency**

The reincarnate lama exercises ultimate spiritual agency throughout Tibetan society. Samuel (1993) provides an insightful interpretation of the reincarnate lama from an anthropological perspective:

The development and proliferation of the reincarnate lama system is itself a striking indication of the importance Tibetans have attached to continuity of institutions. The reincarnate lama system is also, especially where it is explicitly combined with the concept of the emanation of a Tantric deity, a linkage to the underlying timeless level of reality symbolized by those deities (p. 151).

However, my study takes a sociological perspective on the notion of the reincarnate lama system. As an institutionalized agency, the reincarnate lama functions as an authoritative resource by producing and reproducing rules in literate society, and by recognizing and promoting young incarnate lamas as spiritual agents in both oral and literate society. In this context, Giddens’s notion of agency refers to the capacity to take independent action and to make decisions. However, the incarnate lama not only has individual capacity, but also collective capacity in terms of representing the collectivities. He makes both individual and collective decisions.

The reincarnate lama system governs the continuity of the monastic network and also manages the reproduction of the literate social system. To follow Giddens’s concept of structuration as “the conditions governing the continuity or transmutation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of social systems” (1984, p.25), the reincarnate lama system clearly functions as the axis in Tibetan literate social structuration. There are various hierarchical levels of the reincarnate lama as a spiritual authority system rooted in different local, district, and central monastic communities. The system shares the same institutional structure by obeying the same rules.
Agency of individual monk scholars

Individual monk scholars (Geshe) function as agency through their intellectual power and interactive communication across literate society. But they do not represent oral communities and have no regular interaction with local society except for the occasional religious teaching in the community. However, the collective monk scholars constitute the committee that recognizes and educates young incarnate lama. In addition, multiple forms of deities function as spiritual agency across both oral and literate societies.

The deities as spiritual agency

The deity as spiritual agency, often associated with lama and mountain, mediates the pilgrimages of people who come to the same lama and mountain from different regions, and constitutes the context of collective co-presence and interactions. Thus, the social function of the deities is to mediate and contextualize the individual's as well as the collective's co-presence and interactions over time. According to William and Sewell (July, 1992), there are two types of agency—individual and collective. In this context, the reincarnate lama represents not only individual, but also collective agency.

Place as agency

Bakhtin (1981) maintains that place can be a form of agency, particularly where time and space have fused to create culturally and historically charged locations. Ahearn (2001) agrees with the notion of place as agency, asserting that the landscape itself exercises agency. Historically and morally significant places serve to remind people of the stories associated with them. Basso (1996) also has a similar point of view, affirming that “historical tales themselves have agency and shape moral judgments through telling stories associated with particular places,
and that the agents or collective co-construct a spatial, temporal, and cultural world that serves to shape their future conduct” (p. 130).

The term place in this context refers to the historical locality (reflecting remembrance), the monastery (reflecting the residence of spiritual authority), and the deity mountain (reflecting the protective deity). The remembrance of historical localities unifies people’s historical perspective and makes the same cultural sense to different social members who journey from various distant regions. The residence of spiritual authority helps social members to make spiritual connections and both sustains and reinforces their mental state over time and region. Similarly, the protective deity gives meaning to the place where social members from various distances convergent in pilgrimage and contextualizes their co-presence and face-to-face interactions. Thus, place as agency in Tibetan society plays an important role in supporting both social and system integration.

*Spiritual rules and resources*

According to Giddens (1984), authoritative resources constitute: “1) aptitudes; 2) capabilities; 3) the organization of activities; and 4) the coordination of actors” (p. 258, 260-1). Aptitudes and capabilities can be defined as ultimate resources while the organization of activities and the coordination of actors serve as conventional resources. Giddens asserts that the rules are practised through performances of agents’ daily life activities. Interestingly, Schatzki (1997) agrees with Giddens’s analysis that rules precede action, but argues that Giddens is not certain about how he himself understands this. He also argues that playing by the rules and using resources enables agents to conduct activities.

Thompson (1984) agrees with Giddens’s notion that structure consists of rules and resources which, in turn, constitute three dimensions: power, facility, and domination. These
dimensions involve mediating interaction and structure, and also articulate that rules can be understood in various ways and at different levels of structure. For example, using power in the context of interaction requires supplying the resources that empower agents to achieve certain results. Interestingly, Thompson stands with Giddens’s assertion that playing by the rules and using resources are practices of production and reproduction. At the same time, he feels that there is a problem with Giddens’s notion of rule in terms of seeing a variety of rules that are played by all kinds of different agents within any society, such as teachers’ rules, moral rules, and sports rules.

However, Giddens avoids making the notion of rules specific—as in Wittgenstein’s exemplary rules of school, teacher, students and class. This gives his notion of structure as rules and resources flexibility and greater applicability to any society including spiritual and premodern Tibetan society. I argue that Giddens’s notion of rules is flexible enough to allow us to apply it to any form of society. Thompson, in confining rules to particular contexts, misinterprets the degree of commonality of the notion of rules. Using this flexible notion allows me to apply the notion of structure as rules and resources to the context of spiritual structuration in Tibetan society.

**B) The conventional elements of spiritual structuration**

Je TsongKhapa’s formulation of monastic institutions and spiritual resources, as well as the work of his followers, enabled the establishment of spiritual structure throughout Tibetan society (Hortsang Jigme, 2009). The key conventional elements that constitute spiritual integration are: spiritual collectivities, spiritual agents, institutional rules, and local organizations.
**Spiritual collectivities**

In terms of spiritual collectivities, monks from diverse regions and families wear the same style of uniform, obey the same monastic rules, and have equal opportunity to enroll in classes and participate in institutional activities. Most importantly, all monks and nuns receive financial support from local secular organizations and their families throughout their lives but are prohibited from getting married. Thus, these celibate collectivities have no economic pressure except when individual members travel to other larger monastic institutions for advanced studies. These collectivities have various connections with oral society. They regularly organize local community meetings and lead the seriality of spiritual activities in both oral and literate society. They are responsible not only for the opening and closing of spiritual activities, but also for turn-taking. Giddens (1984) provides the following explanation:

> Turn–taking is rooted in the most general properties of the human body and hence expresses fundamental aspects of the nature of interaction. Moreover, turn-taking is one major feature of the serial character of social life, hence connecting with the overall character of social reproduction. Turn-taking is one form of ‘coupling constraint’, deriving from the simple but elemental fact that the main communicative medium human beings in situations of co-presence-talk is a ‘single-order’ medium (p.77).

This practice of seriality in spiritual activities has been informing and sustaining spiritual structuration in Tibetan society throughout time. Although seriality is used in both religious and non-religious interactions, secular persons are not allowed to engage or interfere with monastic affairs or activities.

**Spiritual agent**

Spiritual agents in Tibetan literate society or in monastic communities not only require a number of primary conditions (including intelligence and knowledge), but also spiritual resources. In the same way that agents in society produce and reproduce social relations by
playing by the rules and using resources (Giddens, 1984; Thompson, 1984), spiritual agents obey the spiritual rules and access resources such as spiritual texts and connecting to deities. Two types of actors can be considered spiritual agents: the reincarnate lama, and monks/nuns.

The reincarnate lama reflects two aspects of capability: institutionally as agency and individually as agent. The reincarnate lama plays the dual role of agency and agent at the same time. As spiritual agent, the reincarnate lama exercises spiritual authority in managing and administering social relations across both Tibetan oral and literate society. Given that there are no conventional limitations on age or loss of status, the reincarnate lama agent is a form of stable actor in Tibetan society.

As spiritual agents, monks and nuns constitute the context of spiritual authority and reciprocal interactive learning and teaching. They produce and reproduce spiritual resources and institutions through their lifelong learning and practices. Unlike the reincarnate lama agents who interact with both oral and literate society individually and collectively, the monk agents interact individually with oral communities and collectively with distant monastic institutions.

Spiritual agents of the reincarnate lama exercise spiritual power, thereby facilitating spiritual empowerment and dominating the literate society. However, monk and nun spiritual agents only facilitate spiritual connection with and empowerment of individuals. Thus, spiritual rules and authoritative resources are the key constituents of spiritual structure in Tibetan society. Giddens’s notion of structure as ‘rules and resources’ provides a perfectly suitable frame for analyzing Tibetan literate social structure.

*Institutional rules*
As the only institutions established, managed, and reproduced by Tibetans, monastic institutions have religious, moral, administrative, and academic rules. However, these specific rules mostly consist of institutional rules relating to spiritual structuration.

Monastic institutional rules not only restrict the boundary between oral and literate society in terms of teaching and learning, but also support a life philosophy. The monastic approach is to reach ultimate happiness by centering on spirituality rather than on materialism. Thus, monastic institutional rules and spiritual resources shape a social structure that differentiates the Tibetan literate society from the material centered modern society, even within oral society. Therefore, institutional rules can differentiate social totality.

Monastic institutions have two unique practices in implementing their rules: all monastic institutions share the same structure and follow the same rules in different locations at the same time, and they interact with local society under the same rules. Further, monastic institutions take a collective spiritual approach to education, teaching/learning the same curriculum content to ensure that all monks have the same value system and the same perspective on cultural practices. Monastic institutions are also in charge of leading both oral and literate collective activities through the two principles of opening-closing and turn-taking. Interestingly, Giddens frames this as multi-dimensional interactions at the same time, and he also suggests that seriality can be a framework for analyzing and portraying day-to-day social encounters. I will explore this more in the future.

**Local organizations**

Several types of social and political organization such as clans, sub-tribes, and tribes exist in oral Tibetan society. According to Ekvall’s (1968) analysis, the tribe is historically the basic
organization of Tibetan oral society. In Amdo and Kham, the subtribe/tribe is the principal power entity. These tribes are the strongest organizations in Tibetan society.

The local organization engages in spiritual structuration in several ways. First, the local organization provides material resources and people. Second, it empowers the political aspect of the reincarnate lama who functions as agency and agent, and serves as the axis of spiritual structuration in Tibetan society. Third, it mediates the institutionalized, collective interactions between literate and oral society.

7.3. Authority types

Different fields define the notion of authority in various ways based on the particularities of civilization and social conditions. Giddens sees authority as a type of resource. Weber categorized authority into three forms: a) legal-rational authority, b) traditional authority, and c) charismatic authority. The first category fits the embedded authority of modern government in Tibetan society in China (1951-present). The second category—traditional authority—perfectly fits the authority of the Tibetan government before 1951. The third category fits spiritual authority in Tibetan society. Unlike legal and charismatic authority, traditional authority was automatically re-formed by the embedded modern authority which eliminated the Tibetan native government from Tibetan society.

Peter (1968) asserts that “the concept of ‘authority’ is necessary to pinpoint ways in which behavior is regulated without recourse to power—to force, propaganda, and threats” (p. 21). He suggests that different levels of authority exist in societies; for example, “in the family the father was a real sort of authority” (1968, p. 25). Two types of authority exist in Tibetan society: political and spiritual authority. Political authority functions only in secular material circumstances, not in literate society. Spiritual authority functions in both oral and literate
societies. It generally has more power in the process of spiritual structuration as macro social structuration than political authority has in the process of micro structuration in oral society. While political authority functions in single aspects of society, spiritual authority functions in multiple aspects and its administrative scope covers the entire Tibetan region of U-tsong, Kham, and Amdo (not just U-tsong).

Interestingly, Ekvall (1968) argues that two levels of social and political authority exist in Tibetan oral society. The first and lowest level of authority represents the encampment and village. The second represents sub-tribes and tribes. However, Ekvall ignored clan authority, which is the primary constituent of encampment and village in Tibetan oral society. The clan exercises authority in family decision making; for instance, in decisions relating to family extension, land issues, funerals, and weddings. Thus, in a spiritual centric society, spiritual authority has the power to play multiple roles and to drive society directly and indirectly. Significant evidence justifies the spiritual authority of the monastic institutional networks across pan Tibetan society (Neylan (2007).

According to Giddens, “domination depends upon the mobilization of two distinguished types of resource, a) allocative resources—refers to material phenomena such as raw materials, land, etc. and b) authoritative resources—refers to types of transformative capacity generating command over persons or actors” (1984, p .33). I argue that there is another type of resource in Tibetan society: spirituality as a nonvisible power resource that informs spiritual institutions, agents/agencies, social class, and organizations.
Table 13

Types of Authority in Tibetan Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Political authority</th>
<th>Spiritual authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional reality circumstances</td>
<td>Both conventional and ultimate reality circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Controlling and directing economical workplace benefits</td>
<td>Irrelevant to physical workplace activity (have no idea about economic system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Decentralize the cultural administration without understanding the culture</td>
<td>Affecting mental life, holding value system Fully driving cultural tendency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 13 shows, political and spiritual authority play different roles in Tibetan society. While political authority plays a social role in circumstances of conventional reality, spiritual authority plays a role in both conventional and ultimate circumstances. In the economic sphere, unlike political authority, spiritual authority is irrelevant to physical workplace activity (and has no idea about the economic system). In the cultural sphere, political authority decentralizes cultural administration (and has no idea about culture); however, spiritual authority affects mental life, upholds the value system, and fully drives the culture.

7.3.1. Political authority

Analyzing authority types in Tibetan society requires a suitable framework. I use the approach Cassinelli outlines in his book Political authority: its exercise and possession (1961) for several reasons. First, it has multiple applications to the Tibetan context; second, it supports analysis of spiritual authority throughout Tibetan society; and third, it allows me to comprehend how the two authorities function in Tibetan society.
Cassinelli (1961) provides two important notions—the exercise of political authority and the possession of political authority—and distinguishes the presence and absence of authority through the key terms of obedience, coercion, and popular attitudes. The exercise of political authority is based on citizens’ uncritical obedience without coercion, while the possession of political authority is based on citizens’ critical acceptance of the use of coercion and occasional disobedience. Cassinelli (1961) explains that:

The concept of authority is central to the study of politics, since descriptions of governmental institutions, public policy, and patterns of political power must assume at least a distinction between the presence and absence of authority, while broader issues like the nature of the state, the law, and political obedience require a clear definition of authority for their satisfactory treatment (p. 635).

Table 14 shows that spiritual authority is present as possession and exercise of authority in pan Tibetan society through popular attitudes and uncritical obedience, and that it is absent as possession of authority in the Tibetan societies of U-tsong, Kham and Amdo. At the same time, the possession and exercise of political authority in Tibetan society seems more complex than spiritual authority. It is variously present as possession and exercise in three regions—in U-tsong as uncritical obedience, but in Kham and Amdo as occasional disobedience. There is no absence of possession of political authority in U-tsong, but the table reveals that there is uncritical obedience in Kham and Amdo. However, the table also illustrates that exercise of political authority in U-tsong is present as uncritical obedience and absent as critical acceptance, but the exercise of political authority in the Kham and Amdo regions is neither present nor absent.
Table 14

*Presence and Absence of Authority Types in Tibetan Society*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority types</th>
<th>Presence &amp; Absence of Authority types</th>
<th>Spiritual Authority (until present)</th>
<th>Political Authority(before 1951)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U-tsong</td>
<td>Kham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td>popular attitudes</td>
<td>popular attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence</td>
<td></td>
<td>critical acceptance</td>
<td>critical acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise of Authority</td>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>uncritical obedience</td>
<td>uncritical obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absence</td>
<td>occasional disobedience</td>
<td>occasional disobedience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Cassinelli (1961), pp. 635-646.*

### 7.3.2. Spiritual authority

Spiritual authority is associated with both Bön and Buddhism in Tibetan society, and takes several forms: spiritual authority associated with politics, pure spiritual authority, and symbolic spiritual authority. When mentioned in the media or other agencies internally or internationally, the reference is typically to spiritual authority associated with politics.

Spiritual authority associated with politics plays social and cultural roles in Tibetan society, but is irrelevant to the workplace because it makes no mention of the economic system. In the social sphere, it plays a role in both conventional and ultimate reality circumstances. In the cultural sphere, it affects mental life, upholds the value system, and drives the cultural aspects of Tibetan society.

The second type of spiritual authority—pure spiritual authority—refers to the religious aspect of power. Pure spiritual authority mediates the other two forms of spiritual authority and
is exercised through the seriality of opening-closing and turn-taking in individual and collective decision-making activities.

Symbolic spiritual authority refers to various deities, texts, Thangkas, holy places, and oracles that have originated from both Bön and Buddhism. The indigenous deities are associated mainly with holy mountains and places, and Buddhist deities are associated with material objects such as texts, Thangkas, and oracles. The mountain deities regulate, produce, and reproduce the context of collective interactive activities in oral society. Buddhist objects and deities produce and reproduce the context of ceremonial activities over time and place in literate society.

Thus, these three forms of spiritual authority not only support social integration, but also the social decision making of the individual and the collective. Particularly, the first type of spiritual authority receives much more support than political authority. Due to the lack of formal education, the majority of Tibetans non-reflexively and irrationally follow the religious aspect of Bön and Buddhism more than political authority. Although the Chinese government has established schools in almost every township with a view to educating all school age children, there is no relevant formal education for Tibetans. The curriculum is standardized and, from a Tibetan perspective, reflects an assimilation perspective. It seems that the curriculum in the school education system represents the rule of cultural authority. I will analyze the national curriculum for Tibetan students in the next chapter.

7.3.3. The structure of the governing systems in Tibetan society

The Tibetan government structure was based on Tibetan society, which was constituted by many conditions and factors, and was organized by certain institutions and organizations. As shown in figure 5, the head of the central government was the Dalai Lama and, under his
leadership, the Tibetan government made adaptations to a modern government structure from Britain.

Little comprehensive research has been done on the structure of the Tibetan government before 1950, though several major Tibetan figures have contributed books on the topic. These include Shakabpa, author of *Political History of Tibet* (1976); Dungkar Losang Khrinley, author of a book in Tibetan called the *Analytical Discourse of Tibetan Caesaropapism* (1981); and Gyalmo Drukpa, who has written a history of Tibet and gives the general features of the Tibetan governing system. These books provide an insider historical overview of the factors relevant to the structure of Tibetan government, but without applying any form of political science theory. Besides these accounts, many Chinese scholars conduct research as outsiders attempting to re-justify the political status of Tibetan history. However, they do not provide much analysis of the structure of the Tibetan government before 1950.

The major Western scholar on Tibetan studies is Goldstein (1989; 1996; 2004). Whose work includes considerable primary research based on interviews with Tibetan officials in Lhasa and Tibetan exiles in India. He focuses mainly on the political process and state actors, and on government structures and officials. He does not provide evidence of the cultural institutions or actors from civil society. Further, perhaps because of the political focus in his research, his work refers mostly to Lhasa, the administrative center of U-tsang or, to use contemporary state terminology, the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China (T.A.R.). However, his work must be supplemented by research on civil society and other Tibetan regions.

Goldstein (1971a) asserts that Tibetan political macro-structure balances centralization and decentralization. He argues with Ekvall’s mistaken analytical assertion of three equal authorities in U-tsong. Goldstein believes that Tibet contained hundreds of politico-economic subunits and
that these units were constituted by two types of social groupings: 1) religious corporations, and 2) aristocratic familial corporations. The first type—religious corporations—included monasteries, monastery colleges, and religious reincarnations. As he explains:

The size of these units varied tremendously, the smallest ones consisting of only one estate and the larger ones possessing numerous non-contiguous estates scattered across the polity. Sakya and Tashilhunpo, as well as other units such as Drepung, Sera, Ganden, and Riting would be classified among the largest of the religious sub-units (p. 172).

He analyzes the structure of one Tibetan village, then generalizes it as an important aspect of social and political organization. By doing so, he contends with anthropologists Cassinelli and Ekvall who painted a distorted and erroneous picture in talking about ‘subjects’ and ‘allegiance.' He also asserts that these terms are misleading and oversimplify the complexity of social structure in traditional Tibetan society. According to Goldstein: “The political and techno-economic factors have shaped the village social structure” (p. 1).

This is a significant finding for my study in terms of defining the two types of authority structure in Tibetan society (see table 15). As Goldstein mentions, two different social groupings informed the two types of Tibetan authority—spiritual and political. He observes that the political macro structure of Tibetan government in U-tsong is slightly different from that of Kham and Amdo based on historical conditions. Interestingly, the three regions of U-tsong, Kham, and Amdo share a similar spiritual authoritative system but different political authoritative systems.

In U-tsong, according to Goldstein’s analysis:

The central government did not generally interfere in the internal administration of these sub-units and within the parameters of existing written documents and tradition, the lords had the authority and power to exercise rule… The central government regularly implements its authority over the sub-units and unilaterally initiated and implemented new policies which held not only for the serfs and
territories it controlled directly, but for all the sub-units, including Sakya (1971, p. 175).

Goldstein realizes that at the village level, the government was relatively autonomous, following the same pattern as in the social groupings and spiritual sub-units in U-tsong. Interestingly, he notes that the “aristocratic segment can infiltrate the monk segment of the bureaucracy and controlled important positions disproportionate with their numbers in U-tsong. The position of ruler itself came to be intimately connected with the possession of estates” (p. 180). As I show in table 15 there are two types of authority structure—traditional and modern. Each structure exists at different levels, plays different roles, has different functions, relates differently with society, and has different effects.

Table 15

*Types of Authority Structure in Tibetan Society*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types Relations</th>
<th>Original authority structure</th>
<th>Embedded authority structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Levels</strong></td>
<td>From day-to-day families life to clans, and sub-tribe, to tribes and districts (Kham and Amdo).</td>
<td>From township to county, to autonomous prefectures government (in Kham &amp; Amdo). No provincial to central government from these Tibetan areas. In U-tsang has up to provincial government level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roles</strong></td>
<td>Playing both spiritual and local authority roles.</td>
<td>Only playing political authority role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functions</strong></td>
<td>Originally rooted structure in both spiritual and everyday life such cultural activities, workplace activities.</td>
<td>As an inlaid authority structure;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relation to society</strong></td>
<td>Voluntarily taking collective responsibility; democratically participating and engaging social activities.</td>
<td>Taking conditional responsibilities; Attracting people to participate irrelevant activities; disengaging spiritual activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>affectation</strong></td>
<td>Positively</td>
<td>In both positive and negatives with this structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The traditional authority structure is rooted in day-to-day family life and extends to clans, chiefs, sub-tribes, tribes and districts (except in Kham and Amdo) with various levels of monastic administration. The traditional authority structure plays both spiritual and local authority roles, and functions as the original structure in both spiritual and everyday life. Its relationship to society involves voluntarily taking collective responsibility, participating democratically, and engaging and leading social activities. The effect of this authority structure on the society was positive.

The modern authority structure, which includes different levels of social organization, is organized from township to county to autonomous prefecture (in Kham and Amdo). There is no structure of provincial to central government in these Tibetan areas. In U-tsang, the authority structure goes up to the provincial government level. It plays a role in political authority and functions as an embedded authority structure. Its relationship to society involves taking conditional responsibility and disengaging spiritual activities. Finally, the effect of this modern authority structure is both positive and negative.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to bring Giddens’s structuration theory together with Je TsongKhapa’s dialectical philosophy in order to present a combined sociological analysis of Tibetan society. I argue that setting the two approaches in dialogue involves two major adaptations and reconceptualization. First, I maintain that there is no social and system integration without spiritual integration in Tibetan society, and that it is necessary to add spiritual integration to Giddens’s framework of social and system integration. Second, I argue that these three elements of structuration need to be applied to both oral and literate Tibetan society. The chapter also defined and contextualized the notions of rules and resources in oral and literate
Tibetan society, as well as the different types of authority. The types of authority are directly related to social structuration by managing schooling, learning/education, and social relations.

In this chapter, I also discussed the need to address spiritual authority, spiritual rules, and spiritual resources in analyzing a spiritual society. Further, following Je TsongKhapa's theory, I sought to synthesize both Je TsongKhapa’s and Giddens’s approaches by analyzing the interdependent relationships among the constituents of social structuration. In this respect, I amplified structuration into several subdivisions that enable us to comprehend how social and educational practices are carried out in Tibetan society.

My argument in this chapter is twofold. First, modern sociology needs to take a dialogical approach when analyzing a certain society because of the ways in which that society is informed by its practices of education, philosophy, and culture. In relation to Tibetan society, this means attending to three forms of education, dialectical philosophy and spirituality, and the concept of ultimate reality. Second, the notion of authority really matters in society; particularly, spiritual authority matters more in a spiritual centric society than does political authority. Spiritual authority shapes and permeates institutional structures, personal life, politics, culture, and social relations in Tibetan society. It deeply influences people's worldview and their approaches to education. In the next chapter, I look more closely at the three forms of education in Tibetan society, how they relate to social structuration, and the challenges they pose for the future.
CHAPTER 8

TIBETAN SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

It is often assumed that Tibetan society and education refer to literate society and monastic education. However, this assumption is misleading because it neglects the existence and realities of Tibetan oral society and education. It is a misrepresentation that confines the attention of both international and Tibetan scholars to a biased cultural context of Tibetan society. To date, no study has taken an interrelated approach to analyzing the three forms of education and two types of society in Tibet through a sociology of education perspective. As a result, multiple social, educational, political, structural, and cultural problems have accumulated with no methodological insight for providing a solution. Particularly, the diverse purposes of the three forms of education in Tibetan society is inter-penetrating in relation to each other.

This chapter aims to provide insight into addressing these problems and contradictions. In the first half of the chapter I classify the two types of society in Tibet and, in the second half, the three forms of education. My focus is on relating these classifications to social structuration. I analyze Tibetan monastic education, oral education, and formal school education in terms of their relationships to social structure and also provide an exploratory critique of these three forms of education and their purpose.

8.1. Classifying Tibetan Society

There is no basic agreement in sociology about classifying Tibetan society (Hamilton, 1986). Parsons asserts that “the concept of social system is not ultimately a definition of society,

55 Formal school education was established by the Chinese government in all townships and Tibetan regions. Most school age Tibetan children receive it as a modern education. It has two models: Tibetan as one subject and Chinese as another subject. However, both models have the same curriculum based on 99% Chinese cultural content.
but a concept of the connectedness of social relations at every level, from the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro’” (in Hamilton, 1986, p.8). However, Frisby and Sayer (1986) argue that addressing “how to comprehend facticity and structure, agency, intentionality and meaning, and historicity in the study of social phenomena” (p. 12) provides a way to classify Tibetan society. Conceptualizing a society is a complex comprehensive process that requires a combination of philosophical understanding of the society, sociological theory, and realistic experience with the society. The fact that neither insiders nor outsiders have studied Tibetan society from this grounded perspective presents a huge sociological challenge for this study. The challenge originates in the ontological contrast between materialist and spiritualist approaches.

Due to ideological conflict between Buddhists and the indigenous culture of Tibetan Bön practitioners, and precipitated by the assassination of emperor Lang-darma, the Tibetan empire began to collapse in 842 A.D. Thus, the unified country that had established its formal social order and structure became several fragmented states and remained as a disintegrated nation for almost four centuries. While people practiced rich indigenous customary culture and folklore at the local societal level, the empire decided to allow for two different spiritual approaches: the original Bön culture and Buddhist culture. These two approaches seeded a conflict at the bottom of society that eventually caused the upper authority of the empire to collapse into fragmentation. Interestingly, this is an example of how micro level actions and interactions are impacted by macro level social structure.

The Buddhist class asserted that reality at its most fundamental is pure, and that suffering is the result of fleeting delusions. This epistemological understanding of life turned Tibetan history in a completely different direction—from a material approach to a spiritual or ideal Buddhist approach. This turn resulted in the formation of two types of Tibetan society—oral and
literate. There is a range of opinions on the classification of societies into oral and literate types. Rosenberg (1987) states that oral society is a complex notion that is not easy to identify. Finnegan (1977) agrees that societies can be differentiated into Weberian oral and literate ideals, but also asserts that they are not always completely separate from one another. Moreover, he sees a particular relationship between oral and literate societies:

They shade into each other both in the present and over many centuries of historical development, and there are innumerable cases of poetry which has both “oral” and “written” elements. The idea of pure and uncontaminated ‘oral culture’ as the primary reference point for the discussion of oral poetry is a myth (p. 24).

In examining language practices in Tibet, I first of all classify Tibetan society as both oral and literate (Rosenberg, 1987; Samuel, 1993). In addition, it is useful to classify Tibetan society according to other conceptual distinctions. As table 16 shows, Giddens (1984) provides an insightful sociological categorization of three types of society: 1) tribal society; 2) class-divided society; and 3) class society. Type 1 (tribal society) is very applicable to Tibetan oral society. However, type 2 (class-divided society) and type 3 (class society) have no application to either Tibetan oral or literate society. Tibetan oral society is a segmented form (see table 16). The village community is a locale that is constituted and reconstituted in time-space as members roam vast tracts of land and migrate from one area to another. As for Tibetan literate society, the features of this society have no applicability to Giddens’s type 1 and type 3 societies, but do reflect type 2—class-divided society.
Table 16

*Giddens's Three Types of Society Compared with Tibetan Society*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Type 1: tribal society</th>
<th>Type 2: class-divided society</th>
<th>Type 3: class society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan Oral society</td>
<td>A heavily segmental form, the village community being the most important locale that is constituted and reconstituted in time-space. A fusion of social and system integration. Members roam across vast tracts of land. Population migration is common.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan Literate society</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Formed around connections of interdependence and antagonism between city and countryside.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Adapted from Giddens (1984), pp.181-182

Looking at Tibetan society through the two lenses of social organization and language practice provides a tool for a nuanced sociological description and analysis. Giddens’s type 1 and 2 societies help us to categorize Tibetan society in terms of historical periods, but type 3 does not describe any form of Tibetan society. Interestingly, Ekvall (1968) uses a cultural anthropology perspective to describe and analyze nomadic pastoralism as a form of Tibetan sub-society. However, his account cannot cover pan Tibetan society.

Contemporary sociologists Wallace and Wolf (1998) take a critical view on Giddens’s three types of society. First, they observe that within tribal society, tradition and kinship are dominant structural principles based on large numbers of actual interactions between agents. Second, in a class-divided society, political and economic institutions are predominantly maintained by tradition and kinship. Third, the third type of society is the ‘city’ which has no
application to Tibetan society. Both the first and second types of society are governed by
tradition through agents’ routinized daily life activities. Wallace and Wolf’s approach enables me
to categorize Tibetan society historically.

8.1.1. General structure of Tibetan society

Porpora (1989) has synthesized and critiqued four concepts of social structure: “1. patterns
of aggregate behavior that are stable over time; 2. law-like regularities that govern the behavior
of social facts; 3. systems of human relationships among social positions; 4. collective rules and
resources that structure behavior” (p.195). In terms of the first concept, Porpora argues that it is
too weak to fundamentally interpret the larger scope of society and that it mistakenly reduces
social structure to the secondary phenomenon of individual behavior. The second concept in his
opinion represents Structuralist approaches and is an ineffective notion because individual actors’
behavior does not coincide with law and the relationship between different social components is
not governed by law. As for the third concept, goals cannot be accomplished by only
emphasizing social factors. And the fourth concept, although it includes the notion of rules,
cannot conceptualize social structure.

Giddens (1984) asserts that motivation is related to goals rather than to everyday routine
actions. In my study, I argue that, in terms of reproducing the system, Giddens’s social actors
seem to take action without motivation. Johnson (1990) argues that Giddens is not specific or
systematic in his treatment of motivation in relation to agent/agency. He maintains that the
notion of agency in structuration theory alludes to human motivation and suggests that although
routines are indirectly motivated or motivating, they can be linked with the process of motivation.
In terms of reproducing the system, Porpora (1989) recognizes that there is a serious problem in
Giddens’s theory, namely that many social systems are not reproducible. Rather, like capitalism,
they are constantly changing through actors’ actions. Meanwhile, Giddens’s notion of the duality of structure does not attempt to answer what motivates actors to act the way they do (Porpora, 1989).

Due to the long historical influence of religion in Tibetan affairs, the boundary between the secular and religious spheres overlap. Thus, the monasteries play a significant role in political and cultural affairs alongside the central government of Tibet, and an even greater role than the government in overall social cohesion through their pervasive institutional network that reaches every Tibetan village. As a result, when purely secular disputes arise between villages (for example, about grazing rights on land between villages), villagers seek mediation through the monastic system rather than through the secular government due to the greater penetration of religious structures (see fig. 2 on traditional Tibetan social structure).

8.1.1.1. Oral society and its social structure

Dictionaries define oral society\(^{56}\) as a society that has not developed literacy.\(^{57}\) Oral culture is a form of civilization without writing. Hanson (2009) asserts that First Nations in Canada rely on oral traditions and practical knowledge to maintain their cultures and identities. Oral culture is the context of speech communities, mediates the participation of members in common experiences, and links their history and reality through memory.

As a collective enterprise, oral tradition also articulates the collective, interactive process of cultural practices and co-presences. Drawing on Giglioli’s (1972) assertion that “literacy is an historical fact” (p. 14), I define oral literacy as the rich cultural knowledge that sediments into language in an oral society which has no formal, culturally relevant, or institutionalized

\(^{56}\) http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/oral+societys=t

\(^{57}\) www.oxforddictionaries.com/; dictionary.cambridge.org/
education. As a form of knowledge and identity text (Cummins & Early, 2011; Ryan & Anstey, 2003), oral literacy has been producing and reproducing oral agents and agency through oral education over time and place. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966):

Language objectivates the shared experiences and makes them available to all within the linguistic community, thus becoming both the basis and the instrument of the collective stock of knowledge. Furthermore, language provides the means for objectifying new experiences, allowing their incorporation into the already existing stock of knowledge, and it is the most important means by which the objectivated and objectified sedimentations are transmitted in the tradition of the collectivity in question (p. 68).

Tibetan historical experiences of farming, herding and other production processes are sedimented into memory and tradition. They have never been written down in monastic texts. As a result, Tibetan history has accumulated rich practical oral knowledge in terms of material social conditions. However, with the limited transformative capacity of orality, these forms of knowledge gradually became outdated. Meantime, Tibetan literate society was focused on Buddhist philosophy and religion, and in the process accelerated social material development. According to sociologists (Giddens, 1984; Thompson, 1984; Swell, 1992), the social structure constituted by agents who follow the social rules, use resources, practice cultural schemas, and sustain social relations all require communication through oral or written language. Social psychologists (Ong, 1977; Di-Segni, 1999) assert that both speaking and writing are actions that can mobilize the public. Language users disseminate their thoughts, ideological approaches, and social concerns to collectives and institutions in order to make social change. Language empowers people’s capacities to become agents, and there are no agents without language use, especially in oral society.

The majority of Tibetans have been practicing oral language and culture from ancient times to the present. The character of oral Tibetan society is collective solidarity and locality, and
its social structure consists of oral agents’ co-presence and oral collective social interactions. These co-presences and interactions are carried out at the same time in different places by obeying customary law as social rules and resources. This threefold structure of oral cultural schema, rules of customary law, and resources reproduces social relations between oral actors and oral collectivities, and regulates social practices. Accordingly, reproducing social relations and regulating social practices constitute the conditions that govern the continuity of the social structure. Thus, the Tibetan social structuration process is based on the structural continuation of the reproduction of the social system.

Language expresses not only the structures of the community but also its rites, myths and beliefs. Social communication also fills a basic function at the psychosocial and psychopathological level. Certain costumed rituals contain many expressions of conflicts associated with integrating into these groups in which the social order is not questioned. If language is an obvious sign of belonging to a group, this characteristic has a bearing not only on large groups but also on groups that wish to exclude strangers (Ekvall, 1968). Oral societies center their social communications on the group and it is the strong organization of the tribes rather than a particular institution that constitutes the frame of the Tibetan social pattern (Ekvall, 1968).

The relationship between language and society includes language planning, education, dialects and variation, language and identity, and gender (Gottlieb, 2006). Language choice is determined by several factors: speaker’s characteristics, interpersonal characteristics, inter-group factors, power, status, and situational norm. Language is used as social action; for example, prayer flags and prayer wheels have the same meaning throughout the Tibetan linguistic and cultural regions. These objects are valued in the same way and unify the nation through speaking the same language.
According to Ahearn, “the majority of linguistic anthropologists consider language as a type of social action, a cultural resource, and a set of sociocultural practices” (cited in Schieffelin 1990, p. 16). Further, they consider language "whether spoken or written, to be inextricably embedded in networks of sociocultural relations” (2001, p. 110). When language, culture, and society are seen as mutually constituted, then the responsibility, as Urban (1991) comments, is to study how discourse both shapes and is shaped by sociocultural factors and power dynamics. Accordingly, Tibetan oral agents and culture are constituted by the local collective interactions and activities within the limited scope of communication and knowledge transformation of the village or tribal domains. It is true, as Bruce (1987) observes, that while no one wants to be illiterate, oral cultures produce creativity beyond the scope of literate culture. As a result, the micro structuration of Tibetan oral society is determined by the limited communicative capacity and domain of day-to-day interactions.

8.1.1.2. Social structure of oral society

In his micro analysis of Tibetan social structure, Ekvall (1968) found that the oldest male represents the family at home and in the community and makes the decisions related to work, workplace relationships, and workplace seasonal changes. However, all family members have the right to adjust these decisions, and other members of the tent-hold may challenge others’ decisions. Li and Qie Pai (2005) conducted a macro level analysis of the structure of oral society and found that several unique structural features have remained in Tibetan society. These features are: a) the duality of kinship and region; b) the duality of tribe and state; and c) the duality of polity and spirituality.

Ekvall (1968) also found that the host-guest relationship plays an important role in extending social relations to a larger social scope based on trustworthiness and mutual benefit.
This relationship has three levels: a) the inner-most circle of community and friends; b) the second circle of invited guests; and 3) the outer circle of strangers.

8.1.1.3. Social control in oral society

There is no particular law for ensuring social order in Tibetan oral society. The concepts of Tibetan law are folk law, royal law, and canon law. The elements of these laws are derived from early indigenous folk culture, early empire rules, and Buddhist ethics. Unlike the weakened royal law, folk law is practised frequently in day-to-day activities; customary law has more power than the codes, and canon law functions as moral rule within both oral and literate societies.

As Ekvall notes, reinforcing the community and exercising social control requires taking several types of action: “a) sealing off reprisal and violence by securing a pause or cooling-off period; b) mediating and securing agreement on the giving and accepting of indemnification as a substitute for reprisal; c) securing agreement on the amount of the indemnity; d) binding the parties to keeping whatever agreement is reached; and e) supervising and validating the payment of indemnity” (1968, p.77). As a form of social rules, Tibetan customary law organizes, controls, and regulates the combination of "politics and religion," and achieves vertical and horizontal control through grassland management and the paying of "blood money." Customary law deeply influences the social-psychological foundation of Tibetan people (Dor Je & Liu, 2015; Ma, 2013; Wang, 2013; Sun, 2011; Mong, 2009; Yan & Liao, 2005; Niu, 2004; Chen, 2004; Dor Je, 1989).

Other individuals such as chiefs, famous reincarnate lamas, and other noted agents play the roles of ‘reconciler’ and ‘straightforward witness.’ However, if conflicts occur between communities, then the only option is to invite a significant agent from another level of authority system. This situation indicates that everyday social order is ensured by trustworthiness, and that
8.1.1.4. **The structure of the clan**

The clan’s basic unit is the families in the village. It does not extend to other villages. The size of the clan depends on the number of families it has; for instance, in my village, one clan has seven families and the other three clans have a different number of families. A certain number of families constitutes a clan, the number of clans make up a tribe, and the tribes constitute a regional authority. The clan is the fundamental unit that ensures the fabric of the village or encampment and the daily practice of customary law. Clans offer livestock to local and district monastic institutions; they cannot interfere with another clans’ decision making or organize collective interactions with other tribes or local and district monastic institutions.

8.1.1.5. **The structure of the village**

The village's basic unit is the clan. Being a member of a clan has several responsibilities and benefits. The responsibilities include attending meetings about the clan's decision making on a wide variety of serious matters such as wedding parties and funeral events. Economically, each clan family contributes toward wedding parties and funerary events so the families concerned have no financial pressure. In addition, when a family is offering food and money to the local monastery to hold a religious ceremony, the other families from the same clan are invited as distinguished guests. Each family hosts a celebration once a year at the monastery.

Clan families celebrate New Year’s together, but the relatives do not join other clans’ parties. Members of different clans gather around a fire in the center of the village and listen to a talkative person who dresses up and makes jokes about the typical mistakes people have made during the year. Thus, the villagers are always careful about making cultural mistakes and are
laughed at by the joker. Religious mistakes are the most shameful experiences heard at the village gathering. This cultural activity has become a custom and regulates peoples’ behaviors.

Every Tibetan village has several different clans that constitute the village structure and that, together, form the fundamental unit of social institution. Clearly, the structure of the village is based on family and clan governance. This primary social foundation shapes and reshapes the wider structure of sub-tribes and tribes across time and place.

8.1.1.6. The structure of the tribe and sub-tribe

The villages, sub-tribes, and local monasteries are socially, spiritually, and culturally interconnected. This interactive relationship constitutes the sub-tribe structure. Within this relationship, the local monastery plays multifunctional institutional roles. Eight or nine villages constitute a tribe through local monastery connections. The monastery is managed by one or several monks who have inherited their position from the last Lama. Each Lama has a house called “Lhabrang” in which he and his staff live and communicate with the local villages, sub-tribes, and the district monastery/tribe committee. Sometimes the village and sub-tribe committees meet with the district Lhabrang/tribe committees directly to discuss issues such as grassland conflicts with other regions. The tribes’ structural connections and gatherings are always mediated through the monasteries and these relations are subtly but tightly linked by spirituality.

Although the sub-tribe/Lhabrang relationship is strong, relationships among tribes are not always well coordinated. This level of structure is very weak in Tibet, and the social structure easily breaks at this level. The combination of sub-tribes into regional tribes mediated through district monasteries forms a secondary macro level of social structure. This level of structure exists in a multidimensional way at the same time and in many different places. There are many
equal regional chiefs who coordinate regularly with district monasteries to attend to cultural, social and political concerns. At this level of social structure, the three provinces have different connections with the central government of Tibet. The chiefs from U-tang are in direct contact with the central government so there is no need to go through the monasteries to communicate with the government. However, tribal chiefs from Kham and Amdo cannot easily communicate with the central government and therefore have to take more internal responsibility for their regions.

These two provinces face both internal and external challenges. Their internal challenge is weak communication with the central government despite strong cultural, political and spiritual ties. The external challenge is the constant threat of military domination. Indeed, the people of Amdo and Kham never declared that they had collectively accepted any external domination at any time in the past. This dilemma shows the nature of the relationship between political and spiritual authority, institutional factors, and various other elements of social structural relations.

8.1.2. Literate society and its social structure

Literate Tibetan society is mainly based on monastic communities. It refers to monasteries, monks, nuns, Lamas, and the regulations or rules that constitute the community. Each of these components is very different from the oral society in which the monastic institution is located. Becoming a monk or nun is not a simple practice. The process ranges from clothing to social status, and some elements are radically different even among siblings. According to monastic regulations, there is no marriage, no alcohol or smoking, no labour work, and no family responsibility. The aspiring monk needs only to concentrate on the development of compassion and wisdom. As Dreyfus (2003) states, monastic education satisfies intellectual needs and does not deal directly with people’s everyday life.
The purpose of the 'Three Ways of Reform' was to reduce the power of both the original Bon religion and the old upper class, and to raise the status of Buddhists as a privileged social class. Ultimately, Buddhist groups became the tool of social control or domination. Meanwhile, Buddhist monks became part of the dominant group and increased their monk membership, which in turn created more reliance on the people. With the revitalization of Buddhism in Tibet in 973 A.D., these reforms were re-obeyed particularly in terms of financially supporting monasteries and feeding monks. This has never stopped over history and across the plateaus.

8.1.2.1. Monastic network based macro level of social structure

The complexity of the dialectical relations between monasteries and Tibetan society has existed for more than 1,100 years. As the representative of elite Tibetan cultural and spiritual institutions, the monastic institutions receive support and gain social power from the society. At the same time, monastic institutions have constrained Tibetan population growth and material social development. The lack of the provision of formal education for all is the key factor that constrains Tibetan material social development. Another factor is the institutional rule that only those with monk status can learn written culture. Thus, the majority of the population remains as oral individual or collective agents in the society. These two major factors have been producing and reproducing reflexive oral agents on the one hand, and spiritual agents on the other throughout time and place. As a result, there is no monastic institution without Tibetan populations, and no macro social structuration without monastic networks linking the micro local level to the macro societal levels. This is the spiritual dimension of Tibetan social structuration.

---

58 This refers to the era before 1950. Later, although China implemented the One Child policy, minorities were/are allowed to have two children. Both the One Child Policy and increasing the number of monks continue to constrain Tibetan population growth.

59 No one has critiqued this before, but it's important to analyze how it could potentially affect the future of Tibetan society.
Giddens identifies several factors that reproduce the conditions of a system: “a) the means of access actors have to knowledge in virtue of their social location; b) the modes of articulation of knowledge; c) the circumstances relating to the validity of the belief-claims taken as knowledge; d) the factors to do with the means of dissemination of available knowledge—the relations, historically and specially, between oral culture and the media of writing, printing and electronic communication” (1984, p.91). These factors are very relevant in analyzing the reproduction of the monastic system. The relations of the local monasteries to district monasteries and the relations of district monasteries to the three central monasteries are very complex. As multifunctional, hierarchically developed institutions across Tibet, the monasteries play key social, cultural and economic roles in the social network through spirituality and the power of spiritual authority.

The head of a monastery is a Lama who was the initial founder of the monastery, and can make administrative regulations. Every monk in the monastery is equally eligible to elect or vote for the Lama. Most Tibetan families have a son who is a monk in the local/district monasteries who represents the family in monastic institutions and makes strong connections between the village and the monastery (Pirie, 2006). Families not only gain much-needed spiritual advice and cultural benefits, but are also helped in making serious decisions—for instance, when to move or rebuild the house, when is the best time to get married, and so on.

Similar to Western universities, larger monasteries have five or six colleges specializing in different subjects and offering all levels of learning. The pedagogy is based on an interactive learning method that requires all monk students to study logical reasoning as a foundation of the monastic curriculum. The curriculum is based on debates which are formally organized between different classes by each monastery twice a year not only as an intellectual exercise but also as a
competitive performance that determines promotion to different levels of degrees. Within the monastery, there are academic and administrative regulations that all monks have to obey. Because the debates center on religious questions and not on social issues, this system produces monk scholars with intellectual standards that have little effect on overall societal development.

Clearly, the monastic institutions have constituted their spiritual structuration as the macro level social structuration and have been producing and reproducing the spiritual institution, which is another form of structuration. In my opinion, this shows the existence of a dual social and spiritual structuration in Tibetan society. The social functions of the monastery are related to Tibetan societal character, social life, the social hierarchical system, and social identity (Zhou, 2012). This is another societal landscape for sociologists to explore in the future.

8.1.2.2. Monastic institutional relations and interactions

The elements that constitute the institutional structure of monasteries are spiritual authorities, administrative agents, spiritual and knowledge resources, monastic rules, Lhabrang (as the mediating institution between local society and the monastic institution), subunits of regional committees, and colleges. As a multi-functional institution, the monastery plays multiple roles in Tibetan society in terms of economy, religion, knowledge, health, and culture. As one of its functions, the monastery mediates folk-religious and cultural knowledge in the society (Phuntsok Namgyel, 2010).

According to Dungkar Losang Khrinley (2004), there are three types of monastic education. The first type focuses on learning and teaching Buddhist religious content and restricts monk scholars from attending to other subjects until they have completed their religious studies. The second type concentrates on common subjects and Buddhist religion at the same time. The third type has monks focusing on the five major cultural subjects, medicine, astronomy, and astrology.
The third type is the result of monastic education reform by Amdo Jamyang Shêpas, who established Kalachakra College where monks study astronomy, astrology, and mathematics as well as other linguistic subjects at Lhabrang monastic university.

Hillman (2005) explains that when monks enter the monastery "they live within a residential unit called a Khangtsen." These units, he goes on to say, are organized along geographical lines; sometimes large villages have their own Khangtsen at the monastery, but more often than not a Khangtsen represents a township-sized area. […] The Khangtsen fund themselves through donations from pilgrims and benefactors from their home regions, but they also compete over access to the larger monastery’s resources by seeking to place lama in the monastery management committee and in the coveted position of abbot, chief of the monastery’s administrative affairs and director of the monastery management committee. The abbot serves a maximum six-year term, and his office functions like an executive, with three minister-like advisors independent of monastery management committee: these are the Gego (head of discipline), the Umdze (head of prayer session), and the Lama Shunglenba (head of studies) (pp. 35-36).

8.2. Education and Social Structuration in Tibetan Society

Understanding the relation of education to social structuration is a new field. The relationship between education and social structuration in Tibetan society is particularly complex given the three completely different forms of monastic, oral, and school education. These forms of education relate to social structuration at different levels and aspects of Tibetan society.

8.2.1. The three forms of education and their relation to social structure

Tibetan education has experienced various changes in relation to sociocultural and political developments. These changes have resulted in three types of education: oral, private, and monastic. Oral and monastic education constitute the two original forms that have been functioning directly and indirectly at different levels of the social and spiritual structure. In terms of social structure, these forms of education correspond to different levels of this structure: the first type of education develop the individual as a fully-fledged member of society, the second type as a member of a particular group, and the third as a member of a particular community. The second type of education, oral education, is especially complex because it is a process of individualization and a process of socialization, but also the relationship between the individual and the group. Oral education is thus a process of socialization that is based on the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, but also a process of individualization that is based on the individual's ability to interpret and adapt this knowledge to his own needs. The third type of education, monastic education, is a process of individualization that is based on the individual's ability to interpret and adapt this knowledge to his own needs. The third type of education, monastic education, is a process of individualization that is based on the individual's ability to interpret and adapt this knowledge to his own needs.
of education, the relation between social structure and individual agency leads to reproduction and personal transformation respectively (Cook, 2001). This is how social reproduction becomes social transformation through education. Oral education has been producing and reproducing oral social members and agents throughout history. The earlier Tibetan oral education was based on indigenous Bon oral culture and religion.

Private education was started before Tibetan monastic education in order to attend to medical studies. At that time, there were no organizations or institutions to support private education. Given that private education is not centrally related to social structuration, my study analyzes the three forms of oral, monastic, and school education⁶¹ that have been affecting the social and spiritual structuration process in Tibetan society. According to Johnson and Chhetri (2002), the two goals of public school education are: a) to transmit culture and socialize new generations, and b) to promote societal unity and economic development. They also assert that minority education policy is often accompanied by political, educational, economic and social complexities.

8.2.2. Tibetan monastic education and its relation to social structure

Monastic education has been a form of well-organized and institutionalized formal education in Tibetan society for more than a thousand years (Lhamo Tso, 2010; Hortsng Jigme, 2009, Chabe Tseden Pentso, 2008; Liberman, 2006; Dreyfus, 2003; Dungkar Losang Khrinley, 2002). It has been sustained by the requirement that almost every family send one of their sons to receive a monastic education (Johnson & Chhetri, 2002; Dorje Tseden, 1991). Western scholars

⁶¹ Before 1953 no (public) school education system existed in the entire Tibetan society.
refer to monastic education in various ways, mostly as scholastic education (Dreryfus, 2003).

Dreryfus (2003) explains that Tibetan 'scholastic' education:

trains its students to develop their interpretive abilities….Truth is reached not through an individual quest but through well-defined and strictly regulated practices. The Tibetan tradition focuses on two principal intellectual practices: the explanation of texts through commentary and the investigation of their meaning through dialectical debate (pp.88-89).

He goes on to say that the general normative model of learning in this form of education is:

a scheme of five major and five minor branches of learning. – the five major branches of learning are internal science (i.e., Buddhism, རང་རིག་པ། nang rig pa), logic and epistemology (ཤེན་ཚིག་རིག་པ། gtan tshig rig pa), grammar (སྒྲ་རིག་པ། sgra rig pa), medicine (གསོ་བ་རིག་པ། gso ba’i rig pa), and art and crafts (བཟོ་རིག་པ། bzo rig pa) (2003, p.101).

Tibetan monastic education has several important features: a) it gives memorization an important role; b) it relies on commentary through transmitting, interpreting, and enshrining tradition; c) it involves dialectical debate in providing room for inquiry; d) it focuses on pedagogy, and e) it highlights critical thinking (Haskett, 2005; Dreyfus, 2003). Coghlan (2005) believes that Dreryfus “provides a detailed and well-argued assessment of Tibetan monastic education. The monastic education establishes a framework for penetrating more deeply into the systems that have produced the critical acumen of traditional Tibetan scholars. Equally important is its call for a more in-depth examination of the idea of scholasticism in general, its view that the west would benefit from broadening its scope by examining Asian system of thought and praxis, and its espousal of dialectic as a mode of investigation” (p.3).

The foundation of the curriculum is logical reasoning. The last 15 years have shown a

---

62 The research conducted by Dreryfus (2003) is based on exile monastic education. Some aspects of his analysis are accurate in exile society in India, but not in Tibetan society in China. For example, he argues that social integration is a difficulty in the exile Tibetan monastic community due to the triangular relationship between different monk groups—differences in educational background, locations inside and outside of Tibet, as well as differing worldviews between young and elder monks.
tendency to apply a logical reasoning curriculum to school education as a new pedagogical approach in Tibetan society in China. In local secular schools in the Tibetan areas of Gansu and Qinghai, traditional logical reasoning pedagogy is being applied to the modern secular school curriculum. This indigenous teaching method in fact meets all of the state’s criteria for its curriculum reform of Quality Education for All-round Development. This reform emphasizes going beyond a focus on the memorization of facts to integrating knowledge from several domains for the purpose of developing problem-solving skills and independent thought and creativity. The curriculum centers debate as a form of practice that fosters intellectual growth. The practice of debate is considered to sharpen the debaters’ critical thinking skills and to serve as a model of reconceptualization. The purpose of the logical reasoning curriculum is to develop analytic, problem-solving, and creative thinking skills, and also to gain: a) adequacy of communication, b) reciprocity of perspectives, and c) capability in reformatting reflection. Thus, the system of monastic education has been producing and reproducing the powerful and conclusive minds of Tibetan scholars (Coghlan, 2005; Liberman, 2004; Dreyfus, 2003; Georges, 2003; Thurman, 1997).

Certain notable historical figures have made significant contributions to the institutional rules, codified regulations, and pedagogy of monastic education. For instance, Chaba Chegye Sang Ge (1109-1169): a) created the principle of debate as the main pedagogical method; b) formulated the rule of five learning subjects; c) found a new way of teaching and debating at the same time; d) promoted the idea that teaching should be based on the instructor’s speciality; e) created a schedule of classes and length of period; f) divided classes and formulated rules for class debates; g) made rules for great learners who can go to other monastic institutions to have debates; h) created the names of degrees for different levels; i) determined debate practice as a
foundation of methodological curriculum at three levels and the rules of debate such as respecting your partner; j) determined the content of the curriculum; and k) changed the old pedagogy.

As a significant element of Tibetan monastic cultural practice, orality profoundly intertwines with the transmission of written texts, the performance of rituals, and esoteric learning. There are three categories of oral practices: 1) teaching texts orally, during which oral discourses are written down and become themselves written texts for further oral comment in a subsequent generation; 2) using an oral dialectic of commentary and debate\textsuperscript{63} for the training and performance of scholars; and 3) using speech to transmit oral traditions of esoteric understandings of literal meanings of written texts (Klein, 2003).

For the past three decades, besides the critical issue of compulsory education in oral Tibetan society, monastic academic institutions have been facing the dilemma of tradition versus modernization. During the last ten years, the embedded government system in Tibetan society has been vigorously promoting the tourist function of monastic institutions, disempowering the monasteries' multifunctional practices by increasing the social gap between oral society and monastic societies, and also intently allowing and supporting different religious organizations to dilute Tibetan society (Kaiman, February 21, 2013). These endangering dimensions of reducing agents and increasing social gaps are effectively undermining the foundation of the Tibetan literate social structure at both the micro and macro levels.

However, “Tibetan monastic education serves the intellectual needs of virtuosi and deals only indirectly with the topics relevant to the laity’s everyday life” (Dreyfus, 2003 p. 106). And,

\textsuperscript{63} Ken (2007) asserts that the purpose of Tibetan monastic debating practice is not to defeat or embarrass the debating partner, but rather to provide opportunities to other learners for interactive study and the chance to help the debating partner realize his or her wrong view.
according to Dorje Tseden (1991), who takes a critical view on monastic education, this form of education has both positive and negative aspects for Tibetan social development. On the positive side, monastic education has: a) educated mass numbers of Buddhists scholars, historians, translators, political leaders, and intellectuals; b) built an entire literate and scientific cultural system; c) enriched and developed Tibetan literacy; and d) formulated and completed a teaching and learning pedagogy. On the negative side, monastic education has: a) slackened peoples’ approach to social development and confined them to only thinking about the next life; b) encumbered population growth, c) valued texts, but ignored social practice; d) disrespected personal development and limited religious contributions to the social sphere; and e) rejected modern knowledge. Tseden critically concludes that “monastic education keeps the majority of the Tibetan population as illiterates; 95% of the population remained as illiterates before 1951, and even in recent years, 60–70% of the population still remain as illiterates” (1991, p.43).

In the context of modernization and globalization, Tibetan monastic education as the key component of Tibetan literate society, is facing a number of challenges regarding its future. In terms of adjusting to modernity, Tibetan monastic education needs to make a significant effort to adapt itself to a material world and especially to satisfy younger monk learners. A number of insider and outsider scholars also argue for a radical transformative change by proposing that the monastery be turned into a modern university. However, the older generation strongly disagrees, concerned that this will eliminate the central element of Tibetan monastic education—the dialectic of commentary and debate—and fundamentally diminish its focus (Dreyfus, 2003). In addition, globalization has been reaching Tibetan literate society.

These challenges will have an impact on the context of collective interaction between oral and literate society, between knowledgeable agents, and on collective co-presence for both social
and system integration as well as spiritual integration. Thus, these challenges and issues facing Tibetan monastic education are not only directly related to Tibetan macro social structuration, but also to the social structure of oral society.

8.2.3. Tibetan oral education and its relation to social structure

In any society, people's first experiences of education are oral education, then followed by school or formal education. School education begins earlier in some societies than in others, while in other contexts, oral education continues for one’s entire life as the only model of education. At the same time, oral education has no particular institution, organization, or place. It is oral language speakers and listeners who constitute it. Thus, in order to become an oral agent in an oral society, having good speaking skills is imperative. In rural Tibet, oral communication is learned through the process of continuous oral education, while oral literacy skills are learned continuously through the content of oral education.

The content of daily conversation is formed of practical knowledge, farming and herding, and retelling the oral epic of King Gesar. At the same time, basing village education on oral culture also allows village women to play a more significant role in their children’s education, for in Tibetan villages, the prime oral educators are women and grandmothers (Jia Luo, 2012; Friesen & Min, 2007).

Oral education has been producing both individual and collective agents throughout time in Tibetan society. These agents from herding and agricultural societies have been functioning as micro-social constituents through the limited scope of their oral communication. The majority of the Tibetan population lives in villages and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. If village culture is disconnected completely from its roots and if village society is passive in the
face of the forces of modernity and does not take steps to modernize itself in its own way, then the future of Tibetan language, culture and society is bleak (Jia Luo, 2012).

Any approach to establishing a place for Tibetan language, culture, and society in multicultural, multilingual China depends therefore on the empowerment of Tibetan village society (Jia Luo, 2012; Zhou, 2003). A key step in this direction is the empowerment of Tibetan village stakeholders to play a stronger role in village development through greater participation in village education and the development of village knowledge centers. As the fundamental ground of Tibetan society, Tibetan villages support literate society and monastic education by providing monks and financial support, and also by sustaining micro social structuration. Thus, Tibetan villages require linguistically, socially, and culturally relevant education that stabilizes and develops all these aspects of village tradition through learning and practice. Tibetan villages are the Tibetan organizations and institutions that can sustain micro Tibetan social structuration.

The purpose of oral education is to maintain subsistence, sustain households in the local community, and learn how to live. The content of oral education is practical knowledge and oral literacies. In Tibetan oral society, oral education plays a significant role in transforming local practical knowledge over time and place. The traits of oral education are several: 1) no specific teachers and students, 2) interaction between social learners, 3) feasible time and place, 4) learning and practice happens at the same time, 5) no administration, 6) only learn practical knowledge, and 7) no gender or age limitations. Cultural taboos and customary laws invisibly manage social members’ day-to-day cultural practices and activities. These cultural taboos and customary laws ensure the continuation of the local social structure through oral agents’ daily activities.

The content of oral education contains rich spiritual and cultural knowledge that is learned
through songs, games, moral stories and plays, and even through making tools and toys. From this point of view, oral education content should be included in village school textbooks in order to strengthen the connection between local knowledge, culture, language, and schooling (Farrell, 2008; Tisdell, 2003). Clearly, combining oral education with school education has great potential to empower villagers and to strengthen the connection between home and school. Of course there is some urgency to such work since the generation most knowledgeable in local customs and most proficient in oral literature is growing old. Much knowledge may disappear if action is not taken quickly.

Modernization in Tibetan society has produced a dilemma (Huber, 2002; Mackerras, 1999). As Liberman (2004) argues, both the maintenance of traditional culture in isolation from the rest of the world and the abandonment of Tibetan language and culture in the face of the forces of globalization are a dead end. Yet the acquisition of modern knowledge mediated through English and Chinese has also had a debilitating effect on the vitality of Tibetan culture. Tibetan youth in rural areas are receiving modern knowledge but are growing up increasingly unaware of the twin sources of traditional Tibetan identity. Traditional knowledge and modern knowledge are not being integrated (Teng, 2009; Zhu, 2007).

8.2.4. School education and its relation to Tibetan social structure

School education in Tibetan society has a complex relation both to micro and macro social structuration. First, increasing school attendance results in reducing the oral and spiritual agents that have been informing and re-informing Tibetan social structure. The irrelevant content of the textbooks and the poorly translated curriculum undermine students’ communicative capacity and increase alienation. There is little content in the school textbooks that relates to the three principles valued by oral agents in Tibetan villages—to be able to use rich proverbs in various
social relations and communication contexts, maintain trustworthiness, and remain intelligent.

As a result, students who return to the village after their schooling cannot uphold these principles or mutually participate in village collective interaction and activities. Table 17 shows the results of an analysis I did of school textbooks for grades 1–9 published in 2005 by Qinghai People’s Publishing House, Xining, China. These textbooks are used in compulsory education in all schools in Tibetan society. The findings show clearly that the content is lacking both in rich proverbs and trustworthiness. This results in producing intelligent metis generations who are neither pure Tibetan nor Chinese Han. Further, these metis generations will be incapable of supporting either micro or macro Tibetan social structure.

Table 17
*Content of Compulsory School Textbooks: Grades 1–9*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of Proverbs</th>
<th>Lessons About Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Lessons About Intelligence</th>
<th>Lessons About Patriotism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* These results are based on my analysis of textbooks published by Qinghai People’s Publishing House, Xining, China, 2005.

64 A few graduates travel from the villages to work in the city. However, they practise Chinese culture more often than Tibetan culture and have no interaction with village life.
Second, increasing school attendance and constraining the number of monks in monasteries results in reducing the production and reproduction of spiritual agents, though it has not reduced the spiritual agency of reincarnate Lamas. For this study, I reviewed literature in English, Chinese, and Tibetan on school education research with a focus on Tibet. My review revealed findings on three different aspects of compulsory education in Tibetan areas: i) purpose of education, quality of education, and curriculum issues (Bass, 2008; Lobsang tsering, 2006; Wang, 2012), ii) stakeholders’ perspectives on education, school location issues, teachers’ challenges, and lack of relevant knowledge (Postiglione, Jiao, & Li, 2012; Postiglione, Jiao, & Gyatso, 2006; Jia Luo, 2003), and iii) education policy and critiques of cultural issues in education (Zhou, 2010; Laursen, 1993; Dulha Gyal, 1992). These aspects of education are significant matters in producing and reproducing Tibetan social members and agents.

Tri Samden's (1993) review of the education literature in Tibetan revealed that both insiders and outsiders commonly stress the curriculum and education policy issues. Insiders have been focusing more on the purpose, quality, and history of Tibetan education. During the periods 1979–1989 and 1990–2010 insider Tibetan educators and researchers only produced 30 articles that focused on various aspects of school education in Tibetan society, including: 1) place of

---

65 This was the period when China was implementing a reopening policy right after the Cultural Revolution. Tibetan elites and scholars had the social space and conditions to identify and examine various social-cultural issues, but paid little attention to school education. The scholars who produced articles in Tibetan mostly focussed on micro issues of school education. At the same time, there was a significant cultural revitalization movement begun in all areas of Tibetan society; in particular, secular writers started to produce literature articulating social issues and life. Dhondup Gyal, for example, one of the most influential figures from 1980–1985, was educated in the school education system. In the same period, a number of famous monastic scholars were invited to be university professors who exercised key roles in transforming traditional culture into the modern academic context, and became the legacy for today’s Tibetan language and culture departments in those universities in western China.

66 Tri Samden conducted a comprehensive ten-year review of the literature in Tibetan while suffering cancer at the age of 38. The review reveals that from 1979 to 1989, there were few newspapers, magazines, journals, and publishing houses that published articles on Tibetan education. The Northwest University for Nationalities Press in Lanzhou, the Journal of Tibetan Studies with Tibetan and Chinese
education; 2) reflection on ancient Tibetan education; 3) how to develop education; 4) the constituents of teacher quality; 5) the challenges of developing Tibetan culture and education; 6) moral concern for teachers and students; 7) the situation of private education; 8) rethinking the experiences of translating textbooks; 9) analyzing the function of Tibetan education; 10) critical thinking on Tibetan education; 11) school education issues; 12) education during the Tibetan empire; 13) how to teach Tibetan literacy; 14) the need for reform in teaching, curriculum design, and the relation of English, Chinese and Tibetan; 15) the challenges of increasing the quality of teachers; 16) grammar teaching and its experience; 18) how to prepare lessons; 19) discourse on traditional Tibetan education; 20) emphasis on Tibetan as medium of instruction in school education; 21) stressing mother-tongue education; 22) using Tibetan as medium of instruction for teaching the natural science curriculum; and 23) experiences of rhetoric lesson preparation.

Briefly, these 23 points focus on the quality of education, purpose of education, mother-tongue policy in compulsory education, culture and curriculum issues, teacher education, and pedagogies. However, in terms of theoretical frameworks, these articles lack a broad view on the theory of education. Although Chinese leadership had an open-minded policy toward minorities in the period 1979–1989, most Tibetan scholars discussed their personal opinions and experiences with no theoretical application\(^67\) in support of educational development. The versions in Lhasa, and Blue Lake Education in Xining played major roles in publishing Tibetan articles focusing on Tibetan education and other subjects. In late 1988, the Central Government of China established the Tibetology Research Institute with Tibetan and Chinese language journals. The Institute allows people with no Tibetan language and social-cultural background to become experts in Tibetan studies.

\(^67\) To date, there has only been one Tibetan Ph.D., Badeng Nima, who majored in education and oral Tibetan language, and graduated from Northwest Normal University. He was the first in six decades from the entire Tibetan population to receive a doctoral degree at that time in China. Gong-Tang Rinpoche read his dissertation and provided the financial support. I translated the Chinese version of the dissertation: \textit{The Cultural Perspective on Tibetan Compulsory Education Curriculum} into Tibetan in the same year.
Panchen Rinpoche remediated two macro level social relations regarding Tibetan areas’ internal social relationship as well as their social concern with the central government in Beijing.

After the Panchen Rinpoche passed away, these mediations, mutual social developments, and cultural revitalizations stopped at the macro level of Tibetan social totality. In addition, Tibetan issues and international political movements have been negatively influencing Chinese policy makers’ attitudes on Tibet. Due to Tibetan internal weakness and external powers, the overall contributions and efforts could not shift the general educational tendency in the direction that Tibetans desired. In addition, a recent four-year research report (Wang & Zhou, 2010) maintains that while the quality of facilities in school education in Tibetan society has improved, the quality of teachers has decreased. Thus, school education in Tibetan society needs both broad relevant views and theoretical development.

In terms of using structuration theory to analyze education and schooling, Shilling (1992) provides an important insight by re-conceptualizing structure and agency, and applying his ideas to school education. In spite of Giddens’s exclusion of education in structuration theory, Shilling’s application helps me to understand how school education influences Tibetan social structuration. Shilling focused on several key areas: a) structure and agency in the sociology of education, b) bridging the dualism of structure-agency, and c) moving from dualism to duality.

Shilling also reviewed an important contention that still remains among sociologists of education about the macro-micro gap in educational analysis. The educational research remains divided between macro level studies of social systems and national policies, and micro level case studies of individual schools, social interaction, and teaching strategies. These persistent divisions have caused a number of unexpected consequences that have affected the development and published it in 1998. The Tibetan version is the only comprehensively analyzed theoretical book supporting Tibetans who work in the school education system in Tibetan society in China.
of the field of sociology of education. Bridging this macro/micro gap is the key contribution of Shilling’s adaptation of structuration theory to the study of education. He argues that structuration theory, instead of viewing structure and agency as separate phenomena, emphasizes the duality of structure and that 'structures' are rules and resources as the mediator and consequence of social interaction. As he says:

Structuration theory does not provide any answers to fundamental questions about the position of education in our society, and it leaves a number of sociological questions unresolved. For example, structuration theory says relatively little about the likely direction of social change (Archer, 1988) or the ontological depth of different social structures (Craib, 1992). It also tends to equate the conditions of agency with consciousness; thus failing to articulate either a fully embodied notion of human agents (Shilling, 1991b) or an adequate account of what an embodied sociology might look like (Shilling, forthcoming). However, structuration theory does provide a new way of looking at the relationship between social interaction in schools and the reproduction of the major structural principles that characterise society. It also has important implications for the study of education policy and comparative education (1992, p. 84).

It is clear that Shilling feels that structuration can and needs to be adapted. However, he does not give specifics. More importantly, what I draw from his work for my own study is that structuration theory has much potential for the analysis of education policy. For instance, school education policy in Tibetan areas in China is related to policies on textbook content, language-in-education policy, and policies on the equal distribution of educational resources.

As the previous sections have revealed, education is related both to macro and micro social structuration in Tibetan society, and education can shift the tendency of social structuration by producing and reproducing social members and agents. Clearly, irrelevant compulsory school education has been undermining both Tibetan oral and monastic education and also diluting its sociocultural context. The sociocultural context is the primary foundation of both micro and macro Tibetan social structuration.
8.2.6. Exploratory critiques on the purpose of the three forms of education in Tibetan society

Nurturing the capacity of the next generation to take on significant social roles in the future is the purpose of education. However, in Tibetan society, there is a conflict between happiness and economic prosperity as the leading purpose of education. This conflict is rooted in philosophical debates on the material versus the spiritual. Tibetan monastic education attempts to liberate people from inner suffering as ultimate happiness, while Tibetan oral education strives to approach both happiness and economic prosperity.

Oral and monastic education have very different focuses. Oral education allows people to remain as nature human beings, and monastic education attempts to gain ultimate liberation from spiritual suffering. Besides these two forms of education, school education plays politically instrumental roles rather than cultural roles. According to the monastic understanding of happiness, economic prosperity is an unstable form of happiness in conventional reality. It is not ultimate happiness. Thus, Tibetan monastic education sees the goal of education as teaching people to reach the ultimate realm of wisdom and compassion that can channel them toward liberation from mental suffering.

Thus, while Tibetan monastic education aims to teach people to entertain ultimate happiness, oral education aims to teach practical knowledge that supports local peoples’ livelihood, and school education aims to build a new Tibetan identity while alienating young social members from their local society through irrelevant curriculum content (Bass, 2008). All three forms of education lack the aim of mutual Tibetan social development. It is clear that all three are limited when it comes to producing and reproducing capable agents who can act for
mutual social development. It is also clear that school education is weakening both the macro and micro scope of Tibetan social structuration.

**Conclusion**

This chapter helps us to understand the general situation of multidisciplinary research on Tibetan society and also confirms the need for sociological study. It has addressed institutional factors and specifically the two types of society, the spiritual dimension of social life, and the forms of education and their relation to social structure. The discussion revealed that Tibetan oral agents are produced and reproduced by oral education in Tibetan oral society and, similarly, that spiritual agents are produced and reproduced by literate monastic society. Both oral and literate Tibetan societies are categorized by language usage.

The three forms of education lack the aim of mutual Tibetan social development and are in need of reform. Oral education needs to broaden its scope of oral literacy practice, standardize the content of oral education, and organize regular dialogue between knowledgeable elders and the younger generation through an institutionalized practice of speech exchange. Monastic education needs to address the pressures of modernization and globalization, the decreasing population of young monks, and the gap between traditional knowledge and modern science. How oral and monastic education will move forward has become an internal concern. At the same time, compulsory school education in Tibetan society is increasingly centralizing the national curriculum. It needs to localize this curriculum to fit different social-cultural contexts through a multicultural dialogue.

Taking a sociological perspective on Tibetan society results in an urgent call for radical reform in order to narrow the distinction between oral and literate society. Ultimately, education in Tibetan society needs a new approach that reflects the strength of the three forms of education.
in a new culturally relevant education for all and a mutual social development of Tibetan society in China.
CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

Taking a sociological perspective on Tibetan society and education is an enormous academic task. As a first step, it requires critically redefining Tibetan scholars’ approaches to social analysis and social change. As a second step, it requires critically applying Western sociological theories to Tibetan society. Third, it requires synthesizing both insider and outsider sociological theories into one suitable theory for the future of Tibetan society. And fourth, from a Tibetan point of view, it requires balancing conventional and ultimate levels of reality in order to avoid emphasizing ultimate reality over the conventional social context. Taken together, a multi-perspective sociological theory is essential for the future social, cultural, and educational development of Tibetan society.

This study takes a holistic perspective on social structuration by applying interdependent concepts of education, language, and spirituality to the analysis of Tibetan society and its history of structural change. I argue not only that the extremes of materialism and spirituality are an incomplete social approach, but also that the social desire to reach ultimate happiness requires highlighting both inner and physical needs in the process of social structuration through education. Thus, a Middle Way Dialectical Philosophy is crucial. In this concluding chapter, I discuss the contributions of my study, its limitations, and the implications of the work of Je TsongKhapa and Giddens for the future of Tibetan society.

9.1. Contributions of the Study

In my study, I use Giddens’s structuration theory to analyze the social structuration of Tibetan society. However, using this approach requires attending to his lack of analysis of ultimate reality and premodern social factors, both of which are important to understanding
Tibetan social structuration. Thus, my study introduces Je TsongKhapa’s two analytical frameworks of ultimate and conventional analysis to a Western sociological perspective.

In my study, I analyzed Tibetan society by classifying its two types of society, three forms of education, and the effects of these classifications on the two levels of macro and micro social structuration. Further, given the importance of spirituality in Tibetan society, I explored the notion of spiritual integration as an element of social structuration additional to social and system integration. Introducing the work of religionist and philosopher, Je TsongKhapa, strengthens the field of modern sociology by bringing the dialectical relationship between conventional reality and ultimate reality to bear on social analysis, especially analysis of spiritual society. My study also brings to light the comparative ontological relationship between these realities from the perspectives of Je TsongKhapa and Giddens, with a critique of both thinkers.

Proposing a holistic approach to a sociology of Tibetan society meant inviting other relevant concepts into the analysis, notably: the relation of spirituality to social structure, the ontological perspective of Tibetan scholars, research by Chinese and Western scholars on the Tibetan social structure, religious and anthropological notions of controlling time and space, religion in social development, the notion of monasteries sharing similar institutional structures, Tibetan sub-society, and the relations of language to social structure and agency. These notions can be integrated into the Tibetan sociology of education in the future.

My study identifies Tibetan oral culture as the basis of micro social structuration in Tibetan society, and literate monastic culture as the basis of social and spiritual macro structuration. In addition, it defines four elements of macro social structuration—environment, population, language, and culture—in relation to the multifunctional monastic institution of Tibet. Similarly, identifying the structure of the clan, village, and tribe, in addition to oral cultural elements such
as the use of proverbs and the epic of King Gesar contextualizes the content of interactions and day-to-day practices at the micro level of social structuration. Through this analysis, my study brings to light the history of Tibetan social structural change and also the broader notion of Tibetan agents and agency in relation to culture, education, and spirituality. As a result of critically applying structuration theory to Tibetan society, my study extends the scope of structuration into several subdivisions: personal life, institutional life, educational life, and spiritual life. It also contributes an analysis of the types of authority in Tibetan society—political and spiritual—that allows readers to see the complexities of how authority functions in a spiritual society.

As an institutional factor, language plays a key role in empowering social members to become agents, particularly in Tibetan oral society. Social agents are produced and reproduced by education and, accordingly, this study argues that there is no social structure and structuration without agents. Tibetan oral agents are produced and reproduced by Tibetan oral education in Tibetan oral society, and spiritual agents are produced and reproduced by monastic education in literate society. In terms of the sociology of education, my research contributes to understanding the complexities of education in the political and social context of Tibetan society in China, and the need to embrace the traditions of oral education as a possibility of social change. Thus, dealing with the issue of social change through oral education contributes a new dimension to the sociology of education.

### 9.2. Limitations of the Study

There were a number of unavoidable limitations to this study. First, as a conceptual case study, it applied structuration theory only to the analysis of Tibetan society and education. Although the scope of the study was broad, including the relations of language, education, and
spirituality to social structuration, there were several limitations to the analysis of how these fields relate to social structure and structuration. In addition, these categorizations of Tibetan oral and literate societies and three forms of education were limited to a holistic sociological analysis.

Nevertheless, these categorizations opened important further research areas, and the subdivisions of structuration are at the beginning stage. More importantly, in terms of positioning myself in a safer socio-political realm, the study not only sidestepped a deeper critical sociological analysis of the Tibetan political and Buddhist authority system, but also refrained from a more explicit critical analysis of how these multiple dual structural conflicts and educational divergences are undermining the foundations of Tibetan social totality in China.

Second, the study was only able to review literature in English, Chinese, and Tibetan, which may have narrowed the perspective and thus could not cover all international studies on Tibetan society and education. However, these limitations stem from both internal and external factors. The internal limitation was my exclusion of literature on Tibet in German, Swedish, French, and Spanish. The external limitation was the lack of sociological, philosophical, and interpretive literature on Tibetan society and education in international English literatures. Thus, I spent much energy synthesizing diverse notions from multiple disciplines in order to establish a Tibetan sociology of education and have, in the process, opened a door of preliminary sociological study of Tibetan society and education.

9.3. Implications of the work of Je TsongKhapa and Giddens for the future of Tibetan society

Several significant implications derive from revisiting Je TsongKhapa’s philosophical notions and applying Giddens theories to the Tibetan context. Looking beyond an analysis of today’s society toward planning a better society for Tibet, we need to keep several points in
mind. First, there is a contradiction between the materialist social philosophy of modern business and economics, and the non-materialist social philosophy that Tibet has developed over many years. Second, it seems clear that planning should be based on the extension and development of both internal and external theories through dialectical critique and synthesis.

Therefore, we need “a sociology with Tibetan characteristics.” What does this mean? First of all, it means that this sociology needs to be constructed internally by those within Tibetan society. However, there is no knowledge of sociology among Tibetan scholars, based as they are in an ancient philosophical tradition. Systematic sociology as such is an external discipline. It cannot be brought to the Tibetan question except from the outside, but in interaction with Tibetans it can bear fruit.

Tibetan scholars are divided into traditional and modern scholarly streams. The traditionalists have no exposure to modern sociological theory at all while the modernists have only received modern knowledge mediated by external political and social structures. Marxism was the only accepted sociological theory; other Western sociology has only been permitted in the last 20 years, but has not penetrated into Tibetan areas. Moreover, these Tibetan scholars are not well educated in traditional Tibetan language and scholarship. The work of creating a Tibetan sociology is massive: it requires young Tibetans who can learn their own social, cultural, and academic traditions and language, as well as external sociological theory. This must be applied to actual practices at the micro level—to villages, schools, local governments, and monasteries.

The historical experience of intended social changes in Tibetan society shows that top-down efforts originating in Tibetan government institutions have failed. At the same time, the successful spread of major change through the network of spiritual institutions shows that this
network has greater power in Tibetan society than the central government. Thus, attempts at reform that have any chance of success in Tibet will focus on the diffusion of change at the level of the daily practice of individual agents mediated through existing social networks and validated by respected individuals and institutions ranging from individual actors and leaders at the village level to those higher in interaction with current conditions and Tibetan social norms. At the same time, social agents/agency need to be critical and reflexive about the dilemmas of modernization that impact both micro and macro social structuration, notably: the cultural and political relations between internal and external institutions, regionalization, choice of lifestyle, and the three forms of education, since they have ultimate responsibility for whole societal change.

Being critical and reflexive about the social system and structuration requires many conditions. Education contributes to production and reproduction of society. However, Tibetan monastic education lacks modern knowledge, while school education lacks traditional learning and emphasizes modern Western knowledge delivered through a paternalistic Sino-centric filter. What is needed is a school system in which Tibetan language, culture, and society are central to curriculum making, and both internal and external knowledge are included.

At present, a political straitjacket hamper local creativity. This straitjacket distorts the interplay between micro and macro, and between internal and external, in the development of a modern Tibetan approach to Tibetan education. In this context, adapting the school-based curriculum to local realities is a step in the right direction. It would permit changes in practice at the school level that would encourage a critical and reflexive approach which, when accumulated, may lead to the system itself supporting critique and reflexivity. Thus, the result of the uncritical and irreflexive action learned in part through examination-based irrelevant
education in which 'the teacher talks and the students listen' has led to a form of Tibetan macro social structuration that has been leading toward a progressive weakening of society.

This kind of result was exactly what Je TsongKhapa was referring to when he discussed causality through “interdependent co-arising” at the conventional level of social reality. Each newly produced or appearing social phenomena has many elements that are dialectically complex—individuals’ everyday actions, problems of leadership, educational issues, and in-group conflicts, irrational choices, and external institution penetration. Moreover, although a single micro level agent cannot make a macro level change, many interdependent elements interacting can shape and reproduce the general structure. In recent years, a few young Tibetan scholars have been blindly criticizing Buddhism as the obstacle to social development in Tibet by using Western theories without any prior critical review. Although it is good to be critical and reflexive about social matters, they do not use Western theories rationally as evidence.

Supporters of Tibetan Buddhism, on the other hand, criticize all attempts at modernizing Tibetan society as intentions to undermine Tibetan language, culture and society. However, these are oftentimes a result of well-intentioned but misguided over simplistic applications of modernization theory to Tibetan societies without understanding the complexities, or interaction with Tibetans at all levels of social development planning. As a social and cultural nest, villages are the stationary ground of Tibetan society. Empowering the villages means focusing on four elements through educational development—environment, quality population, language, and cohesive cultural values. But that education does not yet exist. In terms of an approach to education, we need to develop a philosophy that sustainably balances conventional and ultimate reality, and avoids both mental and material poverty.

The consequences of “accommodating the authority of the state to monastic rule” (Harris,
continue to generate serious political and sociological arguments in Tibetan society. It would constitute a shift from a material approach to a spiritual one that would mirror the historical process of transition from social structuration to spiritual structuration at the macro level. This shift and social structural transition is rooted in the epistemological understanding of ultimate happiness. Tibetans have paid the historical price of seeking ultimate happiness. Buddhism was introduced to Tibetan society over 1300 years ago, and it has not yet been reached though Buddhism was introduced to Tibet over 1300 years ago. Similarly, the material approach has not yet reached ultimate happiness either. What kind of role can education play in this context?

Based on my work in this study, I suggest a dialectical Middle Way philosophy that sees education as a means of reaching a well-balanced society. A well balanced society can only be achieved by reconciling the extremes of materialism and spiritualism, traditionalism and modernization, internalization and externalization, colonization and decolonization, and left and right wing approaches through dialogical learning/education. However, the Middle Way approach to reconciling the exiled government of Tibet and the Chinese government is rejected by top Chinese authorities who forcefully implement an assimilation policy across Tibetan society and other minority societies in China. Thus, the “Middle Way” requires conditions from both sides; a one-sided approach does not work. Further, there is a difference between Giddens's notion of the Third Way and Je TsongKhapa's Middle Way. The Third Way means neither A nor B, but C. The Middle Way means partially accepting A and B, resulting in AB. In the UK, the Third Way has been used to solve internal class issues (Driver & Martell, 2000). The Middle Way is a philosophical approach that tries to avoid biased views by taking the rational parts from both sides and standing in a mutual position.
In terms of Tibetan society and education, I believe the future lies in renewing traditional knowledge in dialogue with external knowledge, and synthesizing traditional and contemporary perspectives. A Middle Way philosophy based on cultural renewal and synthesis will allow Tibetans to strengthen their cultural practice through education toward a sustainable process of social structuration.
REFERENCES


University of California Press.


Beijing, China: Nationalities Publishing House.


Academic.


Language Sciences, 9(2), 134-143.

Psychological Bulletin, 121(3), 355-370.


Li, J. M. & Qie Pai. (2005). Research on Gannan Tibetan tribal characters and its transformative modernization, the journal of China’s Tibetanology (pp.1-19), Beijing, China.


head teachers (LPSH), *Educational management administration & leadership*, 35(4), 535–554;


Tibetan Works & Archives.


Sill, D. J. (2001). Integrative thinking, synthesis, and creativity in interdisciplinary studies. 


Wang, J. M. (2008). The symbolic and dualistic structure in social transition: An analysis of


Yang, Q. F. (2003). The history of Tibetan clothing (Zang Zu Fu Shi Shi), Qinghai People’s publishing House, Xining, China.


