

Structural pressure on a construct [*Analysing Identity: Chapter 2* © Peter Weinreich]

The structural pressure on a person's construct is defined as the overall strength of the excess of compatibilities over incompatibilities between the evaluative connotations of attributions one makes to each entity by way of the one construct and one's overall evaluation of each entity.

For the j th construct in question the set of entities construed is separated into two groups, those for which their overall evaluations $R(E_i)$ (expression 3) have the same sign as the construct scores $s_{i,j}$ – *consonant* – and those for which they have different signs – *dissonant*. The entities in the consonant group are represented by E_{ik} , where k is a summation variable, and the entities in the dissonant group are represented by E_{il} , where l is another summation variable. The total number of consonant entities is put equal to λ , and the total number of dissonant entities to μ .

The two groups of entities consist of:

$E_{i_1}, E_{i_2}, E_{i_3}, \dots \dots E_{i_\lambda}$ – ‘consonant’ group, that is, those entities whose overall evaluations are *compatible* with the evaluative connotation of the characteristic attributed by the particular construct j ;

$E_{i_1}, E_{i_2}, E_{i_3}, \dots \dots E_{i_\mu}$ – ‘dissonant’ group, that is, those other entities whose overall evaluations are *incompatible* with regard to the evaluative attributions by way of construct j .

The structural pressure against re-evaluation of the j th construct is expressed algebraically:

$$\text{Structural pressure on construct } j: \Omega_j = \sum_{k=1}^{\lambda} |G_{i_k} s_{i_k,j}| - \sum_{l=1}^{\mu} |G_{i_l,j} s_{i_l,j}| \quad (19)$$

where the contribution to the summation is weighted by the person's ego-involvement with each entity G_i (expression 2) and there are λ consonant scores $s_{i_k,j}$ and μ dissonant scores $s_{i_l,j}$ in respect of construct j . Ω_j will be positive if the construct in question is generally consonant with respect to each entity in turn, that is, if the sign of the score of each entity on that construct is generally compatible with the sign of the overall evaluation of that entity.

The sums: $\Omega_j^+ = \sum_{k=1}^{\lambda} |G_{i_k} s_{i_k,j}|$ and $\Omega_j^- = \sum_{l=1}^{\mu} |G_{i_l,j} s_{i_l,j}|$ are termed *positive* and *negative* pressure respectively.

For comparison across individuals, in which compensation is made for different response styles, the expression for structural pressure requires *internal standardisation*. This is achieved as follows. For each construct the total magnitude of *pressure*, irrespective of sign, is calculated. The maximum value thus obtained provides the comparison base for *standardisation* as represented in the following algebraic expression:

Standardised structural pressure on construct j:

$$\hat{\Omega}_j = \frac{\Omega_j}{\max(\Omega^+ + |\Omega^-|)} \times 100 \quad (20)$$

This index ranges from 100 to –100, where 100 represents the case when the evaluative connotation of the construct in question is consonant with the person’s overall evaluation of each entity in turn. The positive contribution Ω_j^+ for construct j arises from consonances between that construct and entities, and the negative contribution Ω_j^- from dissonances.

Discourses that express and represent core evaluative dimensions of identity are ones associated with constructs with high stabilising structural pressures. Those that espouse the person’s discomfited and contested notions about identity aspirations and beliefs about the material and social world are linked to constructs with structural pressures that undermine stabilising ones, represented by resultant low structural pressures.