

Chapter 6

Convergence: Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

ABSTRACT

Actor network theory as the “sociology of translation,” is used as a lens to examine the chronology of the development of the MOU Agreement, which provides insight into the mechanics of its formation and network of relations. Translation uncovered dimensions of the network’s development: why associations between the actors were created, the factors that mobilized these heterogeneous parties to come together. Further, it also uncovered how their functions were ascribed and how stability or “black box” status was achieved. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is positioned as a moment in ANT facilitating the analyses of the network linkages of the MOU actor network assist to identify the interactions at various levels of the MOU social partnership actor network. The two worldviews complement each other within an interpretivist framework revealing the potential to analyse network interactions through the lens of discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis enables an understanding and analysis of the dialectic interactions involved that shape systems of discourses as well as how these in turn have shaped social practices and structures with transformative and reproductive capacity, in relation to the MOU in Jamaica.

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On using discourse as the unit of analysis, Fairclough's CDA approach facilitates the deconstruction and exploration of the discourses surrounding the MOU as a network through which the research questions are answered. Its usefulness also resides in being able to facilitate "multiple points of analytic entry" (Janks 1997) as well as being a vehicle to investigate, describe, interpret and explain patterns within the interactions within the study.

BACKGROUND

The utility of Actor Network Theory (ANT) or the sociology of translation as an appropriate theoretical framework to understand the MOU, resides in the possibilities that it presents to trace the linkages and interactions between actors and to explain how the network of social partnership converges, diverges, stabilizes or disintegrates. Furthermore, it allows an exploration of the dynamics of network construction, the mechanics of how alliances (Williams-Jones & Graham 2003, p. 273) are built and to identify the interactions at various levels of the MOU social partnership as a "lens", to "follow the actors" (Latour, 1987, p. 176).

THEORY OF TRANSLATION

This involves the application of ANT as a 'Theory of Translation' to derive the MOU chronology, that exhibits usefulness in providing an explanation of the mechanics of the interactions. ANT also serves as a "lens" to facilitate the use of a network perspective which is of value for exploring the MOU partnership, even as an emerging relational network and mode of governance, affecting the structure, human relationships, interactions, and associations amongst and between the Partners of the alliance. This chapter 'follow the actors', in developing a chronology of the formation of the MOU partnership and ANT provides an explanation as to the MOU actor network of relations, being "a social construction of social relations" (Lowe, 2001, p. 345) and the dynamics operable within it. The utility of Actor Network Theory (ANT) or the '*Sociology of Translation*' as an appropriate theoretical framework to understand the MOU, resides in the possibilities that it presents to trace the linkages and interactions between actors and to explain how the network of social partnership converges, diverges, stabilizes or disintegrates. Further, the ways that the networks of relations are composed, how they emerge and

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