

# Foundations of Institutional Political Analysis: Theory and Methods

**Second term seminar, 2021-2022**

**Organised by Philipp Genschel & Ellen Immergut**

**Mondays, 17.00-19.00, Seminar Room 2**

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“Institutions” are the second nature of society. Creations of men and women, institutions order social, political, economic and even cultural intercourse. Indeed, institutions constitute the very basis for human interaction. Consequently, institutions bear within them equally the potential danger of the most deep-seated social control, as well as the promise of human liberation from both the social bond and the constraints of nature. Institutionalism is the study of the origins, effects and potential for reform of institutions.

This seminar introduces students to the theoretical program of the new institutionalism. We will review the three main strands of theory, rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism, and discuss recent literatures on institutional design, institutional stability and change, and social and political consequences of institutions. In addition, we will focus on the methods used within these three branches of the new institutionalism.

The aim of the class is two-fold. One is to familiarize students with classic texts and recent publications that any emerging political scientist will find useful to know and cite (the list is in that sense necessary but not sufficient, of course). The other is to help students develop their own research projects by encouraging them to see it through the lens of the class readings.

For each session, we ask students to post 2-3 questions about readings (or the relationship among the readings), with each question accompanied by an expository paragraph or two explaining the origins and context of the questions. Over the course of the seminar, students must submit questions for 5 of the 10 course sessions (students may choose the sessions for which they post questions, except for the first session). We expect students to post questions to the course webpage by 17:00 the previous day, as these questions will guide our discussion in the next day’s class. These brief ‘question papers’ are fundamental for a fruitful discussion of the materials, as is a thorough reading of the assigned readings.

**Requirements:** readings, participation, preparation of weekly discussion questions.

**Learning Outcomes:** Understand the distinction between behavioralism and institutionalism, and their theoretical assumptions, including the similarities and differences of the three branches (rational choice, sociological and historical institutionalism). Be able to propose research designs and methodologies derived from these three schools for specific

empirical problems. Learn from key examples how to parse the literature and develop a rationale and justification for a dissertation puzzle. Develop a sensitivity to the fit of theoretical model to a given empirical application.

### Preliminary Reading List:

#### 1. January 10th: Introduction: From Behaviouralism to Institutionalism

- Dahl, Robert A. "The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest." *American Political Science Review*, no. 4 (December) (1961): 763-772.
- Truman, David B. 1970. "Interest Groups and the Nature of the State." In *American Society, Inc: Studies of the Structure and Political Economy of the United States*, ed. Maurice Zeitlin, Markham Sociology Series. Chicago: Markham. 317-37.
- March, James G, and Johan P Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *American Political Science Review* 78: 734-49.
- Krasner, Stephen D. 1988. "Sovereignty. An Institutional Perspective." *Comparative Political Studies* 21, No.1: 66-94.

### Part 1: Three types of Neo-Institutionalism

#### 2. January 17th: Rational Choice Institutionalism

- Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 22-41
- Douglass C. North. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3-10.
- Kenneth A. Shepsle. 2008. "Rational Choice Institutionalism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. Sarah A. Binder, R. A. W. Rhodes, and Bert A. Rockman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Terry Moe. 1990. "Political Institutions: The Neglected Side of the Story." *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 6 (Special Issue), 213-253.

#### 3. January 24th: Sociological Institutionalism

- James G. March. 1994. *How Decisions Happen*. New York: Free Press, 57-102.
- Powell, Walter W, and Paul J DiMaggio. 1991. "Introduction." In *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, ed. Walter W Powell and Paul J DiMaggio. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1-38.
- Gigerenzer, Gerd. 2001. "Decision-Making: Nonrational Theories." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil J Smelser and Paul B Baltes. Oxford: Elsevier, 3304-3309.
- Goldstein, Daniel G. and Gerd Gigerenzer. 1999. "The Recognition Heuristic: How Ignorance Makes Us Smart." In *Simple Heuristics That Make Us Smart*, ed. Gerd Gigerenzer, Peter M Todd and ABC Research Group. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 37-58.

#### 4. January 31th: Historical Institutionalism

- Thelen, Kathleen, and Sven Steinmo. 1992. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." In *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, ed. Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen and Frank Longstreth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1-32.
- Hall, Peter A, and Rosemary C R Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44: 936-57.
- Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 369-404.
- Immergut, Ellen M. 1998. "The Theoretical Core of the New Institutionalism." *Politics & Society* 26 (1): 5-34.

### Part II: Issues

#### 5 . February 7th: Path dependency

- David, Paul A. (1985). "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY." *American Economic Review*, 75(2), 332-337.
- Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94 (2):251-267.
- Capoccia, Giovanni and Daniel Kelemen. 2007. "The Study of Critical Junctures." *World Politics* 59 (April): 341–69.
- North, Douglass C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 73-104.

#### 6. February 14th: Institutional Change

- Mahoney, James, and Kathleen Thelen. 2010. "A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change." In *Explaining Institutional Change. Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*, ed. J. Mahoney and K. Thelen. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1-37.
- Greif, Avner, and David D. Laitin. 2004. "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change." *American Political Science Review* 98 (4):633-52.
- Hanrieder, Tine and Michael Zürn. 2017. „Reactive Sequences in Global Health Governance." In *International Politics and Institutions in Time*, ed. Orfeo Fioretos. Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 5, DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198744023.001.0001.
- Hacker, Jacob S. 2004. "Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State: The Hidden Politics of Social Policy Retrenchment in the United States." *American Political Science Review* 98 (2), 243-260.

#### 7. February 21st: Ideas

- Hall, Peter A. 1991. "The Movement from Keynesianism to Monetarism: Institutional Analysis and British Economic Policy in the 1970s." In *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Perspective*, ed. K. Thelen, S. Steinmo and F. Longstreth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 90-113.
- Goldstein, Judith and Robert O. Keohane. 1993. "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework." In *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 3-30.
- Jacob, Nicolas. 2012. *Playing the Market*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1-9, 26-41.

## 8. February 28th: Actors

- Hans Geser. 2002. "Organisations as Social Actors." *Sociology in Switzerland: Sociology of Work and Organization*. Online Publications. [http://socio.ch/arbeit/t\\_hgeser5.htm](http://socio.ch/arbeit/t_hgeser5.htm).
- Scharpf, Fritz W. 1997. *Games Real Actors Play : Actor-Centered Institutionalism in Policy Research*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 51-68.
- Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology*, 83 (No. 2, Sept): 340-363.

## 9. March 7th: Delegation

- Jon Elster 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 427-443.
- Hawkins, Darren G. et al. 2006. "Delegation under Anarchy." In *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*, ed. Darren G. Hawkins et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3-38.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. *State Building*. New York: Profile Books, 58-123.
- Abbott, Kenneth W., Philipp Genschel, Duncan Snidal and Bernhard Zangl. 2020. "Competence-Control Theory." In *The Governor's Dilemma*, ed. K. W. Abbott et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1.

## 10. March 14th : CONCLUSIONS

For this session we will prepare some interactive wrap-up exercises.