

Three Approaches of Institutionalism

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Source

- Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary C. R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political studies* 44 (5):936-57.

Two Central Questions

- All approaches seeks to elucidate "the role that institutions play in the determination of social and political results"
- All started in the early 1980s
- Two central questions
 1. Institutions vs. individual behavior
 2. How institutions originate and evolve

Rational Choice Institutionalism

- Example: Congress, circular voting, from "impossibility" to stability
- Actors have a fixed set of preferences or tastes, behave instrumentally to maximize its goals; in a highly strategic manner of extensive calculation
- Politics: a series of collective action dilemmas (prisoner's dilemma; tragedy of the commons)

Rational Choice Institutionalism

- Role of strategic calculation (institutions structure such interactions)
- Origin of institutions: to realize or maximize actors' value, survival of the fittest
- Institutional change: exogenous shocks push equilibrium to a new equilibrium
- Common questions: why do "bad"/"inefficient" institutions persist?

Sociological Institutionalism

- Arose from "organizational theory" in late 1970s against "means-ends" rationality in organization
- Culturally-specific practices, akin to the myths and ceremonies devised by many societies (Culture vs. Calculus)

Sociological Institutionalism

- Action is tightly bounded up with interpretation
- Individual must find a way of recognizing situation as well as of responding to situation
- A world of individual or organizations seeking to define and express their identity in socially appropriate ways
- Mutually constitutive character between institutions and individual action

Sociological Institutions

- Problematic: why organizations take on specific sets of institutional forms, procedures or symbols
- Broader definition of "institutions": symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the "frame of meaning" guiding human action (Culture is institutions)
- Institutions to provide the very terms through which meaning is assigned in social life

Sociological Institutionalism

- Organizations often adopt a new practice because it enhances the social legitimacy of the organization and its participants. ("logic of social appropriateness" vs. "logic of instrumentality")
- Examples: immigration policy, battle of sex and gender, SCO

Historical Institutionalism

- Institutional organization of the polity or political economy as the principal factor structuring collective behavior ("structuralism")
- State (or others) not as a neutral broker among competing interests but as a complex of institutions capable of structuring the character and outcomes of group conflicts

Historical Institutionalism

- Institutions: the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy (organizations and the rules or conventions promulgated by formal organizations)
- Eclecticism: both "calculus" and "culture"

Historical Institutionalism

- Asymmetries of power associated with the operation and development of institutions
- Emphasize "path dependence" and "unintended consequence"
(examples: QWERTY keyboard; SCO; Soviet Nationality policy)
- Persistent institutions are not always purposive and efficient
- Role of ideas and Beliefs

More questions

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