Examples of Entries in the

Encyclopedia of Governance

The length of the selected articles have been calculated in two ways, as number of pages and number of characters (incl blanks). (NB! The calculation does not include “Further Readings and References” and “Entry Citation”. The numbers were calculated for text set in Times New Roman 12pt, single line spacing, with 2 cm margin on all four sides.)

Examples are referred to one of three categories according to their length:

- **Category 1:** Short entry  < 2,500 characters (c. 0.5 pages of text)
- **Category 2:** Medium entry  2,500 – 10,000 characters (c. 0.5–2.5 pages of text)
- **Category 3:** Long entry  10,000 – 20,000 characters (c. 2.5–4.5 pages of text)

Three examples of short entries (Category 1):

**Length of article:** c. 0.5 p., 2,303 characters (incl. blanks)

**Localization**

The term *localization* appears frequently in policy analysis within two contexts. The first we might call the organizational context, where localization fits with what have come to be termed new public management prescriptions for achieving greater responsiveness and customer-centeredness in the public sector by attempting to tailor services to local settings as much as possible. Localization is often used in tandem with decentralization as a governance strategy to attempt to achieve this greater responsiveness, but may have a different meaning than decentralization, which may or may not result in localization, depending on where the center is located in terms of geography or power at the beginning of the reform process. Localization, in the managerialist sense of the term, is perhaps best thought of in the context of center-local relations, with decentralization as a strategy for achieving greater localization of governance. Localization can also be used to attempt to achieve greater participation in political decision making from communities or even individuals through their greater participation in public services, and so is often associated with notions such as citizenship and choice.

The second context of localization occurs on a larger scale—if the opposite of decentralization is centralization, the opposite of localization is globalization. Localization is often held in a dialectic relationship with globalization—as the latter occurs across time and space, often as a force for homogenization, the former appears as a form of resistance to it. Here localization is perhaps even more politicized than in the case of center-local relations, often being used as a term favored by antiglobalization writers as denoting a resistance to the branding of consumer goods and public services. In the context of governance, we might therefore expect attempts at pursuing uniform “global” programs to be encountered by resistance at a local level where “difference” is demanded instead. This clearly has strong
links with the first context in which localization is used, but here it appears to be used in a different sense, being a source of activism, holding more dynamic meanings than is often the case in the rather top-down assumptions held in the organizational notion of localism.

Ian Greener

Further Readings and References


Entry Citation:

Length of article: < 1 p., 2,354 characters (incl. blanks)

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Information and Communications Technologies Protocol was adopted in 1997 by the member countries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Protocol commits the signatory countries to mandatory targets for emissions of greenhouse gases. Although there are six main green-house gases—carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride—one is by far the most significant: carbon dioxide. Before the Protocol could be valid, it had to be ratified by at least fifty-five nations, and these nations had to be responsible for at least fifty-five percent of all greenhouse gas emissions. These conditions were met when Russia ratified the treaty. The Protocol thus came into force on February 16, 2005.

The Protocol includes an overall target for developed nations to reduce their 1990 emission levels by at least five percent by 2012. Actual emission targets vary from nation to nation. The fifteen European Union countries, Switzerland, and most central and eastern European states must make an eight percent reduction. Canada, Hungary, Japan, and Poland must make a six percent reduction. New Zealand, Russia, and the Ukraine are to maintain their current levels. Other countries can actually increase their emissions—Norway by one percent and Iceland by ten percent. And some developed countries have refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, notably Australia and the United States.

The Marrakech Accords, adopted in 2001, are the rules for implementing the Kyoto Protocol. These rules allow the signatory nations some flexibility in how they meet their targets. A country can offset its target with “sinks,” areas of forest that absorb carbon dioxide. Countries that have spare emission units can sell them to other countries that have exceeded their emissions thus creating a “carbon market.” The Clean Development Mechanism allows
countries to pay for projects that reduce emissions in developing countries; developed countries thereby can earn credits toward their own emission targets. Similarly, under Joint Implementation, a member country can implement a project in another member country and thereby earn credit. It is expected that these projects will be paid for by Western nations and built in transition economies, such as Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Mark Bevir

Further Readings and References


Entry Citation:

Length of article: < 1 p., 2,666 characters (incl. blanks)

Migration

Migration is the process by which individuals, families, or groups move from one country of residence to work or settle in another. Originally used to refer to the temporary movement of people to find seasonal or longer-term employment, migration is now more commonly used to refer to a wide range of processes and phenomena that involve movement from one country to another for a variety of reasons. It is also common for individuals to migrate within a country as well as between two states, for example, between rural and urban areas. The academic study of migration therefore involves a wide range of phenomena, such as labor migration and types of forced migration.

Labor migration refers to the movement of individuals seeking employment in another country. A number of trends have historically been associated with this term, among them the movement of rural populations to urban centers during the process of industrialization in Western Europe and the United States, the movement of indentured labor during the colonial period for the building of railways or mines, and contemporary migration of workers in high-tech industries that require specialized knowledge and technical skills. Labor migration has also been actively encouraged within some economic areas, such as the European Union (EU), where citizens of member states are granted freedom of movement to work in other European countries.

Another prominent area of migration is that of forced migration. This term refers to the migration of people who may be fleeing persecution, civil war, or humanitarian crises such as genocide; people who have been smuggled or trafficked; and those fleeing natural disasters.
such as flood or famine. Forced migration is commonly used to refer to all these cases and is concerned with individuals as refugees, asylum seekers, or internally displaced people (IDPs) rather than as migrants. The right to asylum and refuge from instances of persecution and crisis is guaranteed under the 1951 Geneva Convention and is overseen by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Individual states and regional organizations such as the EU draw on UN conventions in formulating their own immigration and asylum policies. Individuals may also be forced to migrate within their own states and are referred to as IDPs. UNHCR estimates that twentyfive million IDPs have been displaced by conflict, persecution, and humanitarian crises of various kinds.

Migration is sometimes used synonymously with immigration, but the two should not be confused. Many different types of migration refer to more complex phenomena than the process of leaving one country to settle in another.

Sarah Parry

Further Readings and References


Entry Citation:

Two examples of medium length entries (Category 2):

Length of article: c. 1 p., 3,769 characters (incl. blanks)

Discourse

There are various definitions of the term discourse: Discourse can refer to verbal expression between speakers, to a form of democratic dialogue in which all participants present their views in a forum free from political domination, or to a system of ideas or knowledge that make meaning in a particular context. The most prominent form of discourse theory today is perhaps that of the structuralists and poststructuralists. In this view, discourse is the way meaning is produced and organized in a particular social field: Discourse encompasses the language, meanings, and beliefs through which the world is constructed and becomes understandable. Such discourse theory builds on the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure to claim that language is constitutive of all human experience. In this structuralist model, reality is understood as an effect of the formal language systems used to explain the world. Discourse creates reality through processes of inclusion—delimiting what can be made intelligible in a social context—and exclusion—determining what cannot be said or cannot be understood in this context. Discourse is thus both a productive and a repressive form of meaning making. In the structuralist system, discourse creates society and stands analytically before its formation.

As discourse theory has become less structural and more sociological, so it has become more relevant to the study of governance. In particular, Michel Foucault moved away from a structuralist theory to a poststructuralist one in which discourse came to include language as well as the institutions, economic relations, and political events that help to create meaning in any social context. Poststructuralist concepts of discourse retain many structuralist echoes. Language is still the primary way to understand society, and the units of language are still defined in relational terms. But language does not stand outside of society. Rather, language is developed from the specific historical, cultural, and political formations of the social field it organizes. Therefore, poststructuralist discourse theory includes more objects of study than did its structuralist predecessor. It also makes less totalizing claims about discursive power. Multiple discourses can interact in any given society. And discourses are always in a process of change. Furthermore, discursive formations cannot exist alone. They rely on a society's technological and material practices for their operation. For poststructuralists, discourse does not create the social field or stand analytically before it. Rather, discourse is embedded in and arises out of the practices and events that define society.

Several approaches to governance draw on ideas about discourse and discursive practices. Typically, these approaches suggest that administrative networks and even whole patterns of rule operate partly through the meanings, languages, and traditions that are at play within them. They challenge attempts to examine politics on the assumption that humans are autonomous actors who make decisions based on calculated self-interest. Yet, discursive theories differ among themselves over the nature of human action. Governmentality theorists often suggest, following structuralism and poststructuralism, that subjects are merely the effect of discourse: Subjects are no longer accorded any agency, but rather viewed as being produced by the discursive regimes that position them within the social field. Other interpretive approaches to governance, such as decentered theory, allow for agency while
seeking to pluralize its forms. In this view, although subjects are formed within the context of traditions and discursive practices, they retain the capacity to shape and transform their social context.

Elisabeth Anker

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**Further Readings and References**


De Saussure, F. (1986). *Course in general linguistics (R. Harris, Trans.).* Chicago: Open Court.


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**Entry Citation:**


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**Length of article: < 2.5 p., 6,870 characters (incl. blanks)**

**Transgovernmentalism**

The notion of transgovernmentalism refers to the process of internationalization of policy making through the interaction of government agencies or government officials. The concept challenges statecentric approaches to international relations and, in particular, the assumption of states as unitary actors. Transgovernmentalism also places emphasis on the interaction between international and domestic policy making and the blurring of boundaries between the two levels.

While the concept is linked to debates on transnational relations and actors, its starting point is the direct interaction among single units and agencies or governmental officials (e.g., members of the higher civil service and political leaders, rather than the interaction with or among nongovernmental actors). Transgovernmentalism has been informed by analysis of intergovernmental policy coordination in the context of international regimes as well as in the context of the European Union (EU). The notion is also discussed in the context of world politics more widely and the question of a new world order.

The debate on transgovernmentalism has been shaped by the writings of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye from the 1970s. They define transgovernmental relations as direct interactions among different governments' subunits and point out that these subunits are not directly controlled by the center of government. The differentiation between two modes of transgovernmentalism, transnational policy coordination and transnational coalition building, is still reflected in more recent writing in that context. While functional interdependence makes transnational policy coordination necessary, this policy coordination establishes channels of communication and facilitates frequent interaction among governmental units.
from different countries. These interactions, in turn, cause changes in the attitudes and beliefs of governmental officials and thereby lead eventually to the emergence of transnational networks. Common worldviews and interests, as well as professional orientations, sustain the relationship between individuals across national boundaries. In that context, international organizations and their bureaucratic backbones (like secretariats) play an important role in providing access points toward transnational channels of communication.

Transnational networks could also be the outcome of strategic behavior of individuals rather than emerging from continuous interaction. This is captured in the notion of “transnational coalition building,” which refers to the strategy of governmental units that use actors from other governments as allies against opposition within the domestic arena. More recently, that argument has been expanded to the strategic choice of an institutional arena that is possibly more open than others for a specific policy initiative (venue shopping).

While the interests of Keohane and Nye were mainly directed toward the influence of transgovernmentalism on the development of interstate cooperation, Anne-Marie Slaughter placed the notion of transgovernmental networks at the center of her concept of a new world order in the late 1990s. She argues that most reasoning about the international order was unrealistic in that it required centralized rule making and hierarchic institutions spanning the whole world. She also denies that nonstate actors could develop a transnational world order and substitute state power. However, the web between functionally distinct parts of the state (including not only administrative agencies, but also courts and even parliaments) could constitute a new transgovernmental order.

Transgovernmental interaction feeds back into national regulatory decisions in as diverse domains as international trade, banking, and environmental regulation, creating a web of increasingly transnational regulations. Because these transnational regulations are based on mutual recognition and adaptation, they are not imposed on national regulators. Slaughter also develops a more normative scenario that includes the incremental adaptation of domestic democratic mechanisms (within the nation-state) toward transnational networks of regulation.

While the existence of transgovernmental and transnational networks is accepted as a fact of global governance today, how far these networks transform world politics remains in debate. It is also widely accepted that these transgovernmental interactions and networks shape international law and policy making and that they feed back into domestic regulation. However, it remains contested whether a diversity of domain-based transgovernmental networks could transform the basic international order.

In the context of the EU, the concept of transgovernmentalism has been reflected in two major ways. First, the idea of routine interaction leading to shared beliefs across national boundaries (within policy domains) is a recurring theme in research exploring the transformation of EU policy making from intergovernmentalism toward supranationalism. While some have argued that the “membership” of top civil servants and politicians in different constituencies facilitates the development of a supranational worldview, the transgovernmental perspective suggests that role orientations of officials in specialized departments are neither intrinsically national nor supranational, but are rather shaped by the key role of knowledge and professional norms in domain-based policy making. Second, Helen Wallace has introduced the notion of intensive transgovernmentalism as one mode of governing in the EU. Intensive transgovernmentalism refers to direct policy coordination at the European level in areas of “high politics” that used to be at the core of the national realm (foreign policy, finance policy).
The concept of transgovernmentalism played an important role in the context of governance. In particular, the shift from the image of unitary and rational states toward the view of a functionally differentiated state, which is engaged in an increasingly dense web of regional and transnational networks of regulations, accords with the core of the wider governance debate. How deep transgovernmental mechanisms have changed international and domestic policy making remains a contested issue. In some areas of high international policies (arms proliferation) as well as domestic policies (welfare state), peer-to-peer transgovernmental networks may be less relevant. Other transnationalization is not only driven by transgovernmental interaction but also by developing supranational institutions (e.g., EU) or the activities of transnational nongovernmental actors (international nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations). Understanding interaction between these various driving forces remains a key challenge in research on transnational and transgovernmental governance.

Kai Wegrich

**Further Readings and References**


**Entry Citation:**

One example of a long entry (Category 3):

Length of article: c. 4.5 pp., 17,229 characters (incl. blanks)

**Institutionalism**

The study of institutions has a long pedigree. Contemporary institutionalism draws insights from older works in a wide array of disciplines including economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. The reappearance of interest in institutions in the early 1980s follows a familiar pattern: a reaction to dominant strands of thought that neglected institutions, historical context, and process in favor of general theorizing. As a result, institutionalism is characterized by an epistemological preference for historicist rather than deductive-nomological approaches to research. The new institutionalism (NI) is less “new” than it is a restatement of previous scholarship. At the same time, the contemporary study of institutions has been reinvigorated by a concern for theoretical elaboration of microlevel processes. The following discussion traces the development of institutionalism from the nineteenth century until the emergence of the NI. Although the focus is on intellectual developments that occurred before the neoliberal turn, a historical understanding of institutionalism is useful for approaching contemporary problems of governance because the concepts used to discuss contemporary institutional arrangements originated in the past.

**Nineteenth-Century European Institutionalism**

A full overview of the institutionalist tradition would go back to Aristotle's discussion of regime types (*politeia*). More recent interest in institutions emerged during the nineteenth century among the German historical economists (GHE) or what Paul Pierson called the institutional economists. Providing a critical response to the universal theories of the classical economists, these scholars disparaged deductive work, which they considered to be self-referential mathematical modeling. They argued that economic life is better understood through empirical work rather than through logical philosophy.

Their key insight was the need for historically and sociologically informed empirical analysis of reality. The earliest figure from this group was Wilhelm Roscher. His work insisted on the importance of context—historical, social, and institutional—for understanding the laws of political economy, economic behavior, and the empirical diversity of social life. Early research focused on the relationship between the social and economic organization of society, stages of development, and evolutionary processes. Bitter conflicts with their Marxist contemporaries (followers of the theories of Karl Marx) notwithstanding, some scholars now see a close analytical affinity between the two traditions.

It is customary to divide the GHE into three generations: Early, Younger, and Last. The latter is noteworthy because it encapsulates some of the work of Max Weber, who was influenced by early GHE. Weber is perhaps the most influential modern institutionalist. Contemporary institutional works that posit institutions as an independent and non-epiphenomenal variable are indebted to Weber's theorizing a political realm that is autonomous from economics and ideas. In his discussion of the state and bureaucracy, he proposes a macrosociological theory of institutions.

Institutionalist insights are also present in Weber's theory of authority. For Weber, charismatic authority, though magical in essence, is inherently transient. As charisma exhausts itself and becomes routinized, traditional or rational-legal forms of authority take its place. With routinization, social relations and interactions become increasingly regular, predictable, and
impersonal. Under modern capitalism, these take on a rational-legal form and become more extensive and elaborate. Some usages of the term *institutionalization* are thus a subset of Weber's process of routinization. Later institutionalist insistence on the importance of the legitimacy of social action is informed by Weber's insight that social action is framed with reference to a “sacred” metaphysical principle.

**Early Twentieth-Century American Institutionalism**

Institutionalism appears in American scholarship during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the works of the American institutional economists (AIE). Thorstein Veblen was a pivotal figure who criticized the neoclassical approach for its focus on individuals and exogenous specification of preferences. He argued that individuals are shaped by their institutional and sociocultural context. He emphasized habit, instinct, and emulation as alternatives to utility calculation models of behavior. Veblen theorized institutional persistence, a product of lock-in, and developed several mechanisms of change, including conflict between institutions, exogenous shocks, and the interplay between routines and the variable and volatile action of agents.

Although Veblen embraced an organicist approach to social science, favoring the biological metaphor of evolution over the physical metaphor of mechanics deployed by economists, he was explicitly antifunctionalist. He raised the possibility of social breakdown, and his vision of history as an unfolding process that is cumulative but also crisis ridden, rather than as a self-balancing smoothly changing system, marks an early appearance of both critical junctures and path dependence. Veblen's theory of institutions, though underdeveloped, already identified many concepts that are central to historical institutionalist (HI) research.

A later figure among the AIE was John R. Commons, who rejected the framework of the classical economists in which providence endows individuals with freedom to enter into relations of economic exchange and economics is separate from politics. Commons argued that economics was a series of transactions that were made possible by institutional supports. He identified three types of transactions: rationing, managerial, and negotiated (associated with communism, fascism, and capitalism respectively). Institutions have to guarantee liberty and property before negotiated transactions can occur. He defined institutions as the working rules of collective action that are laid down and enforced by various organizations including the state. Institutions produce order by creating expectations toward which individuals can orient their economic behavior. This interpretation of institutions is at the heart of rational choice institutionalism (RCI) and the new institutional economics (NIE) and can be seen in the recent works of authors such as Douglass North. (Commons also added that collective action occurs most frequently according to customs, which are later supplemented by formal rules that are more precise, elaborate, and carry sanction.)

**Mid-Twentieth-Century American Institutionalism**

An anthropological version of economic institutionalism emerged later in the work of Karl Polanyi. Influenced by the GHE, he argued that economic relations are historically contingent and cannot be understood outside of their social context. For Polanyi, economics is always embedded in society. Rather than economic relations producing social integration, Polanyi argued, the social background, and institutions in particular, integrated the economy. According to this logic, markets are not the product of spontaneous acts of exchange. Instead, personal-level acts of exchange produce prices only under a system of price-making markets—a system that cannot arise solely from random acts of exchange. Historically, the market system is a relatively recent innovation and only one of several, contingent
institutional solutions to the problem of economic integration. Additional forms of integration are reciprocity (e.g., lend-lease) and redistribution (e.g., the Soviet Union).

Polanyi defined institutions broadly as uniting, stabilizing, and giving structure to the economic process. Although economic institutions such as price and money are important, Polanyi also stressed the importance of non-economic institutions such as religion and government. Haggling over price and individual choice are understood as a product of institutions; this foreshadows later sociological institutionalists (SI) who see human behavior as following a “logic of appropriateness” and institutions as creating identities. Like his predecessors, Polanyi rejected the idea that contemporary economic science can universally capture economic relations.

Institutionalism also appears in political science during the mid-twentieth century when American political science was dominated by the study of democratic progress in the United States. Analysis of other countries was rare. Nevertheless, theorists such as Carl J. Friedrich focused on institutions in their cross-national work on constitutionalism. For Friedrich, constitutionalism was characterized by both a concern for individual autonomy and institutional arrangements—divided government and federalism—to prevent the concentration of power, especially in the state. Institutions are the rules of politics and the instruments of their enforcement. However, Friedrich is careful to note that institutions must reflect social and political reality, and without belief in their legitimacy, they are greatly weakened. Friedrich sharply contrasted modern constitutionalism from nonconstitutional systems such as totalitarianism, and his work on the latter influenced an entire generation of Sovietologists. Finally, he was also interested in questions of institutional crafting—a concern that re-emerges among institutional transitologists of the 1980s and 1990s—although he was agnostic about the existence of a “universal common denominator” for institutional design. Friedrich's insights can be seen in both HI and RCI.

Institutionalism appeared in sociology with the emergence of organizational science (OS), which was a response to the rapid growth in the size of firms starting in the 1860s. The earliest and most influential figure was Chester Barnard, who in the 1930s argued that an organization is a complex system of cooperation and highlighted the need to understand the behavior of the individuals that compose it. He identified a disconnect between an organization's conscious system of coordination (formal aspects) and its unconscious processes (informal aspects). The latter include customs, habits, attitudes, and understandings. The role of the executive is to create open communication and inducements for individual members.

Barnard stressed the importance of nonmaterial inducements, which facilitated individuals' carrying out orders without consciously questioning authority. From this perspective, a manager directs the values of the organization so that individuals work toward a common purpose. He also argued that organizational forms vary across organizations because the configuration of individuals is unique to each organization, as is the appropriate organizational solution. Starting in the 1950s, organizational theories by Philip Selznick and others combined Barnard's insights with ideas from structural functionalism; these are sometimes referred to as the “old sociological institutionalism.”

After World War II, a group of behavioral economists known as the Carnegie School criticized neoclassical economics for deductive theorizing that relied exclusively on empirically untenable theories of rational choice. Influenced by the behavioral revolution in psychology, they offered alternative microfoundations for understanding human behavior. In his analysis of firm behavior, H. A. Simon remarked that both the internal organization of firms and their external decisions did not correspond to the predictions made by neoclassical
economic theory. He theorized that emotional and cognitive processes interfered with goal-directed behavior, rendering rational choice difficult. Though institutions were not explicitly mentioned, patterned individual behavior was explained through “behavioral routines”; the new concept had an important influence on organizational theory.

**Institutions Neglected**

During the 1950s and 1960s, American social science was dominated by structural functionalism (SF), a universalistic approach developed by Talcott Parsons. Parsons was greatly influenced by European classical sociology and particularly by Weber's concept of legitimate authority and routinization. Rather than dealing with the difficulty of establishing their empirical boundaries, Parsons theorized institutions as constituting the political subsystem and performing functions to promote the stability of the larger social system. In this view, institutions are not autonomous but, rather, adapt to pressures that emerge from outside the subsystem. Institutional change is explained by analogy with Freud's ego psychology of the individual: Institutions undergo a process of character formation, which leads to symbolic and functional coherence. Structural functionalism is closely related to David Easton's systems theory (ST). Inspired by cybernetic science, the political system serves the function of authoritatively allocating values for society. Specifically, institutions converted inputs (demands and supports from outside the political system) into outputs (decisions that are universally binding for all of society). Both SF and ST were characterized by a modernization teleology that was subsequently criticized.

Starting in the 1940s, a behavioral research program emerged that focused on individuals and their location in the social structure. Relying on increasingly sophisticated statistical methods, these scholars sought to correlate political behavior with various socioeconomic variables. The implicit theory of politics is pluralist; macrolevel outcomes result from the aggregation of individual choices. Nevertheless, as in SF and ST, institutions are epiphenomenal. The state and political institutions are in the background and merely serve the function of allocating public goods to competing social groups.

**Institutionalism Revisited**

In response to theories that focused on social structure, the 1980s witnessed a resurgence of interest in institutions and the emergence of the NI. Theorists of comparative politics such as Peter Evans, Dietrich Reuschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol suggested that the state was autonomous and called for bringing the state back in as an explanatory variable. *Bringing the State Back In* became a seminal work that proposed an institutionalist research program that would sustain political science for more than two decades. The study of institutions was significantly advanced with research in political economy on the state-led development of the Asian NIEs, as well as institutional reforms in the developed countries. With the onset of the third wave of democracy, researchers also became increasingly interested in cross-national comparison of institutions, with a view to understanding the process of democratization. Finally, the global expansion of capitalism and European Union (EU) integration led to significant research demonstrating the role of institutions as intermediaries between structures and outcomes.

Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell's call for a new institutionalism is noteworthy because it emphasizes the “taken for granted” nature of institutions. The inspiration for this concept comes from *The Social Construction of Reality*, in which Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann argued that human beings create and recreate the social world themselves but experience it as an objective reality. Adopting the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, Berger and Luckmann argued that the disconnect is because humans are introduced to knowledge of society through
language that reduces all unique and concrete experiences of social encounters to generalized meanings. More broadly, “objective reality” is a product of the institutionalization of language, roles, and traditions.

Finally, James March and Johan Olsen's explicitly referenced earlier institutional works in their call for bringing institutions back in. In addition, they offered a specific critique of rational choice theories and rearticulated older concepts such as path dependence, unintended consequences, and critical junctures, and claimed that theoretical work remained to be done at the level of microprocesses. Finally, they adumbrated a research program to investigate among other things the interaction of society and institutions, the sources of institutional coherence, how historical processes lead to delayed outcomes, and nonutilitarian models of behavior.

Conclusion

Most of the concepts used to understand institutions in discussions of governance appeared in earlier institutionalist research. In response to ontological and epistemological changes in the social sciences, some concepts underwent various transformations. One example is the SI idea of “taken-for-granted,” which is a phenomenological version of what behavioral economists called “routine,” which is a cognitive version of what Veblen called habit. At the same time, the concepts that underpin institutionalism are becoming more theoretically elaborate. This is particularly true at the microtheoretical level and can be seen in the NI. From this perspective, one might say that our understanding of institutions is itself becoming institutionalized.

Boris Barkanov

Further Readings and References


Entry Citation: