

LECTURE 4

NEW INSTITUTIONALISM, BEHAVIOURALISM, AND AN E.U. IDENTITY

What going to do today in this lecture is:

1. Firstly, outline the theory of New Institutionalism and its utility in the construction of an E.U. identity
 2. Secondly, briefly outline the theory of Behaviouralism and its relationship to the construction of an E.U. identity
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1. New Institutionalism

- institutions govern the behaviour of men and women, giving rise to determinate results, i.e. policy outputs or social outcomes
 - the actions of men and women is orientated to/shaped in terms of institutions
- Here institutions are defined in a very broad sense, incorporating a wide range of formal and informal procedures, practices, relationships, customs and norms.

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- For New Institutional analysis institutions in society (and States) provide symbols, rituals and rules so that people can interpret the choices they have and decide between them
 - at the same time those same institutions ‘frame’ the choices available through the values they attach to them
 - in other words the choices available to citizens are conditioned/influenced/controlled by the values that those institutions of society represent
 - for example, institutions within a liberal democratic society will provide symbols, rituals and rules which ‘frame’ the choices available to citizens of that society
 - and the values underpinning the options available and those choices made by citizens will be liberal democratic values (i.e. free market economy, individualism)

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- 3 main variants that have been conceptualised of the New Institutional theory – 3 main approaches:
 1. Historical institutionalism
 2. Rational choice institutionalism
 3. Sociological institutionalism
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Sociological Institutionalism

- of most interest us in this course
- this approach sees institutions as crucial mediators both between the individual and the world at large (society itself) and between different individuals
- institutions give us rules, norms, customs, and values that shape and influence the pattern of our everyday life
- The sociological institutionalism approach offers the fullest explanation or account of how institutions can shape both behaviour and identity.

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- For sociological New Institutional analysis the importance of institutions for outcomes in society can derive from *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* aspects,
 - i.e. the *intrinsic* importance of institutions in their own right, in terms of their very existence and consequent 'institutional' effect on society in promoting their self-interest, reflecting their self-image
 - or their *extrinsic* effect, in terms of the resultant consequences upon society of the operations of institutions.

Behaviouralism

- observing and analysing individual and group behaviour
- Talcott Parsons, a sociologist, developed the behaviourist approach by linking the behaviour of individuals and groups in societies to the social system and social structures in societies
 - and to the interaction between those elements

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- a social system was self-regulating or self-adjusting
 - it adapted itself as circumstances changed
- For Parsons, the normal state of any social system was one of *equilibrium*
 - and in response to demands made upon it, the social system adjusted itself in order to restore a state of equilibrium
- Thus, the pattern-maintenance function (i.e. managing tension within the system) is performed by its cultural subsystem
 - the adaptation or distributive function is performed by the economic sub-system
 - the integration function (i.e. co-ordinating inter-relationships between members of the system) is performed by the legal and regulatory sub-system
 - and the goal-attainment function (i.e. mobilising people and resources to achieve collective ends) is performed by the political sub-system

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- Parsons' theory of the social system is also known as *structural functionalism*
 - since the functions necessary for the survival of the system are performed by the structures or patterns of behaviour which constitute each sub-system.