

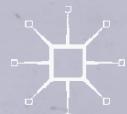
Studies in the Political Economy of Public Policy



Institutional Entrepreneurship and Policy Change

Theoretical and Empirical Explorations

Edited by
Caner Bakir and Darryl S.L. Jarvis



Studies in the Political Economy of Public Policy

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*For Nuran and Kaan
CB
For Hamish and Oliver
DSLJ*

PREFACE

Scholarship into institutions has grown enormously over the last four decades. Political science, sociology, economics, anthropology and history, among others, have each witnessed an ‘institutional turn’, in the process producing a legion of new institutionalisms and voluminous literatures. In policy science the institutional turn has been particularly pronounced, with scholars exploring the complex relationships between institutional environments and policy actors, the role of institutions in shaping policy choices, agential preferences and problem framing, and the consequent impact on policy design, modes of implementation and policy outcomes. Extensive theoretical work has also emerged, addressing broader questions about structure and agency, how institutions constrain policy choices but also how they enable choice in terms of the institutional frames that generate interpretative frameworks, shared understanding, and thus the resources for coordination and policy responses.

Perhaps not surprisingly, recent policy scholarship on institutions has focused increasingly on issues of institutional change. How, why and through what processes policy entrepreneurs are able to generate institutional change, what strategies and resources they marshal to facilitate change, and how change is realised in institutional environments that often resist or steer change in specific directions, have become core concerns of much policy scholarship.

This volume continues this tradition of inquiry, bringing together a collection of scholars who, while empirically diverse in the cases and contexts they analyse, are united by a common desire to understand the role of entrepreneurship, policy actors and agential authority in institutional

change. Drawing on a shared set of debates and literatures, this volume seeks to contribute to the ongoing effort to more adequately explain some of the enduring theoretical and practical puzzles in policy science: how policy actors precipitate change, how institutional obstacles are moderated, and under what institutional contexts change occurs.

Glasgow
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Caner Bakir
Darryl S.L. Jarvis

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CHAPTER 1

Institutional and Policy Change: Meta-theory and Method

Caner Bakir and D. S. L. Jarvis

1 INTRODUCTION

This volume emerged from a general call for papers for a panel on institutional entrepreneurship and institutional change at the International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP) held in Milan, Italy, in the summer of 2015. We were overwhelmed by submissions to the panel and a level of interest in the topic which far exceeded our expectations. In retrospect, we should not have been surprised. Issues of institutional change continue to be of central concern to political scientists, economists, sociologists, and policy scholars alike—indeed, why and how institutions emerge, change, or are transcended over time is a core theoretical question at the centre of most social science inquiry. As North famously noted:

History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity

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of society's institutions. Today's and tomorrow's choices are shaped by the past. And the past can only be made intelligible as a story of institutional evolution. (North, 1990, p. vii)

For North, the focus on institutions was driven by an intellectual interest to understand how social agents create entities that facilitate cooperation, especially around complex phenomena such as exchange relations where interests do not always coincide. It was North's contention that at the very core of successful societies, which North defined in relation to sustained economic growth and deepening economic and technological complexity, lay the role of institutions—or, more specifically, 'institutional frameworks'. But, as North also observed, not all institutional frameworks are created equal; 'not all human cooperation is socially productive' (North, 1990, p. vii). North's self-professed task was thus to correct the oversight of his own profession, integrating into economic theory a theory of institutional change by 'explaining the evolution of institutional frameworks that induce economic stagnation and decline' and those that induce success (North, 1990, p. vii).

North, of course, has not been alone in this project. The rise of institutional analysis and renewed interest in institutions has been intimately associated with structural changes in the institutional fabric of modern industrial societies, particularly in the last few decades of the twentieth century. The decline of Keynesianism and with it transformations in the socio-political and economic institutions which guided management of the economy, labour relations, welfare, tax and redistributive measures, social policy and the provision of health, education and public housing, has generated extensive debates about the extent of these changes and their causes (Campbell & Pedersen, 2001). Ideational changes associated with the rise of market-oriented policy preferences, and of political movements seeking to reframe the relationship between the state and market, and between the state, market and citizen, also coincided with the rise of institutional analysis—especially the rise of rational choice institutional paradigms which see institutions (or what the World Bank terms 'enabling environments') as central determinants of economic and political performance (Campbell & Pedersen, 2001, p. 1; Carroll & Jarvis, 2015, 2017; North, 1981, 1990, 2005).

The coextensive nature of these developments has fostered a burgeoning industry of institutional paradigms (Campbell & Pedersen, 2001, p. 5). Rational choice institutionalism (North, 1990; Ostrom, 1993),

while perhaps the most influential, has also been joined by historical institutionalism (Clemens & Cook, 1999; Hall, 2010; Immergut, 2006; Pierre, Peters, & Stoker, 2008; Steinmo, 2008; Thelen, 1999), sociological institutionalism (or what some term organisational institutionalism) (Campbell, 1998, 2008; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Hall & Taylor, 1996; March & Olsen, 1989; Scott & Myer, 1994) and post-modern or discursive institutionalism (Bourdieu, 1998; Foucault, 1969, 2007; Jameson, 1997; Schmidt, 2008). Despite substantive variation in approach and epistemology, the new institutionalisms all grapple with the enduring issue of institutional construction, instantiation (or how institutions become embedded), and institutional change—in particular, the role of agency in mediating and intercepting power and influence (conceived both in the visceral sense of capturing institutions and steering them but also in the ideational sense of emerging knowledge systems and of the role of ideas in shaping and determining social, political and economic orders).

This volume continues this tradition of intellectual inquiry, attempting to grapple both theoretically and empirically with questions of institutional isomorphism. The vantage points of its contributions are variously informed by the ‘great debates’ of institutional theory. These have typically wrestled with ontological issues about structure and agency, in part to understand the nature of institutional stasis but most obviously as a means to explain change—gradual, evolutionary change and particularly dramatic or revolutionary transformation. Earlier historical institutionalists such as Theda Skocpol (1979), for example, famously analysed the structure and composition of pre-revolutionary state institutions to explain revolutionary outcomes. State capture and the dominance of the state over populations could induce long periods of stability while also laying the foundation for social revolution and the birthing of new institutional orders. Similarly, Chalmers Johnson’s analysis of the rise of ‘revolutionary nationalism’ and the ‘exigencies and requirements of national survival and mobilization’ were used to explain institutional outcomes in Japan and China in the post-war era (Johnson, 1966, 1982; Steinmo, 2008; Woo-Cumings, 1999, p. 2). Both Skocpol and Johnson viewed the state and state institutions as central to the stabilization of social, political and economic orders, while also seeing the state as the primary source of social fissure because of non-adaptability or non-responsiveness to changing contexts. For historical institutionalists, in other words, the span of history was understood as wave like; long periods of stasis interjected by sudden periods of crisis—or,

as Blyth notes, they posit a model as thus: ‘institutional equilibrium → punctuation → new institutional equilibrium’ (Blyth, 2002, p. 7).

Such a model, of course, posits two contradictory axioms: institutions constrain, order, moderate, and pattern agential behaviours, in large measure constricting the possibility of institutional change, while, at the same time, agents and agency are by definition the drivers of history, manufacturing institutional change and new institutional orders. Rational choice institutionalists too explain the tendency to stasis and equilibrium using similar theoretical fiats. Long periods of institutional stasis reflect institutional maturation, in which formal and informal rules act as mechanisms that sanction certain behaviours and induce agential compliance. As long as the functional predominance of institutions in transmitting rules and norms is sustained, the tendency toward change is constrained. Change, in this sense, is either an outgrowth of the breakdown of institutional sanctions and signalling mechanisms causing agential compliance to be fractured, or a reflection of poor institutional design in which the wrong signals (perverse incentives) are transmitted, producing disequilibria and causing agential authority to reconfigure new institutional arrangements.

Institutionalists of various persuasions have thus assumed a *hierarchical ontology* between institutions and actors. While change, evolutionary or revolutionary, is uniformly viewed as a filament of social action, institutions are typically viewed as minding the store, as it were, tending to constrain actors and stabilize patterns of behaviour which, in turn, reproduce institutional orders. For institutionalists, such ontological relationships help explain the tendency toward equilibria; long periods of continuity, the infrequency of revolutionary change and the predominance of evolutionary or gradual institutional change through ideational adaptation and incremental rule and norm modification. Equally, for social theorists, the predominance of structure—defined in terms of institutional setting or context—has similarly been understood as the substantive force shaping the choices of agents which in turn shapes the universe of potential outcomes or the pathways via which change occurs (Campbell, 2004, 2010; Giddens, 1979, 1993; Heugens & Lander, 2009). Agency, by contrast, has typically been understood as a second-order variable and subservient to the overarching role of socio-economic structure and history.

This tendency toward a hierarchical ontology in theory construction, most often encapsulated in anthropology, sociology, philosophy, economics, political science and history with the rise of *structuralism*, has had far-reaching implications for how research into policy entrepreneurship

and institutional change has proceeded. As Bakir notes, this has essentially funnelled research into two broad questions: (1) *how* and *why* institutional contexts inform and frame agential actions?; and (2) how do policy entrepreneurs initiate institutional change if their decisions and actions are conditioned by the very institution they wish to change? (Bakir, 2013; Bathelt & Glückler, 2014, p. 353; see also DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Morgan, Campbell, Crouch, Pedersen, & Whitley, 2010, pp. 4–5; Peters, 2001, p. 71).

In social theory, of course, structuration theory was meant to overcome this ontological dilemma. Giddens' 'duality of structure', for example, attempted to replace ontological hierarchies with a reflexive situationalism, in which the 'recursive' or reflexive 'character of social life' was constituted by the interactions of agents with structures that reproduced social orders while also modifying them. As Giddens notes, structuration theory understands that 'even action which disrupts the social order, breaking conventions or challenging established hierarchies, is mediated by structural features which are reconstituted by the action, albeit in a modified form' (Giddens as quoted in Thompson, 1989, p. 58; Giddens, 1984). History and historical change, in other words, were to be explained through recursive interactions; 'social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time they are the very *medium* of this constitution' (our emphasis) (Giddens, 1993, p. 121).

Rational choice institutionalism has similarly dealt with the problem of hierarchical ontologies. As Campbell observes, one of the main contributions of political scientists and sociologists to rational choice perspectives has been to develop a 'choice-within-constraints approach' in which agential authority is seen to be limited by the coextensive institutional frameworks in which agents operate (Campbell, 2004, p. 15; Peters, 2001, p. 67; Roberts & Greenwood, 1997). Much like structuration theory, rational choice institutionalists have sought to level the ontological playing field by conceiving of agents and institutions as processes of mutuality, codependent but differentiated by the quality of institutional endowments (capacities) across institutional contexts—which provides either more or less space for agential interventions and thus greater or lesser latitude for institutional change. Institutional constraints, in other words, are context specific and change through time, either through the erosion of institutional quality or the failure of institutions to adapt to changing exogenous forces which, in turn, explain the preponderance of institutional stasis and incremental change and the infrequency of sudden revolutionary transformation.

2 POLICY SCIENCE AND THE PROBLEM OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Despite these theoretical advances the sense in which they can be simply imported, adapted, deployed and operationalised as research frameworks in order to understand policy change and institutional isomorphism remains problematic. Five interrelated issues are apparent.

The first arises from what we might term the vantage point of observation or temporality. Social theorists, for example, enjoy the benefit of hindsight when examining the sweep of history. Hindsight provides a vast laboratory for investigation, observation and theorization, allowing the historian to examine known outcomes and draw connections between events, time and place, identifying causalities of change and how these manifest in terms of new or evolving institutional orders. Hindsight, in other words, provides the historian with a *fungible temporality* which, as North noted, demonstrates how 'today's and tomorrow's choices are shaped by the past' (North, 1990, p. vii).

Absent a fungible temporality, however, how do social scientists operationalise structuration theory as a means of explaining institutional change, particularly change which is contemporaneous? How do we identify 'choice-within-constraints' when the choices may not be readily apparent or the constraints obvious? For policy scholars, for example, the vantage point of hindsight is not always available, 'recursive interactions' are often hidden behind institutional facades and the professional practitioners who populate them, while knowledge about change is typically empirically fuzzy, contradictory, or contested. More obviously, how do policy scholars assess which change is important, what impact it will have on institutional orders or practices, whose interests it may serve and how, and whether what they observe is incremental, episodic or potentially revolutionary change? Much policy science, for example, is projection: scholarship designed to intercept emerging problems, change trends with potentiality deleterious implications, or avoid outcomes that may generate negative social and economic consequences (global climate change, the impact of ageing demographics, deterring low rates of savings to ensure sufficient income in incidences of increasing longevity, etc.). Policy science invariably sits at the intersection of contemporaneous intellectual inquiry and is designed to project into the future to change outcomes that have yet to transpire. Rather than a fungible temporality which allows assessments of institutional change to be triangulated through time and interrogated in terms of sig-

nificance, direction, impact and outcome, policy scholars are often required to address change in contexts of indeterminate temporalities and make assessments about change in present and future contexts.

Second, while a core analytical variable, the concept of *change* remains both under-theorised and analytically diffuse. Historically, for example, first-wave institutionalism concerned itself predominantly with patterns of stasis or institutional stickiness, focusing on the role of authority, power and legitimacy, along with the high transaction costs (and risks) associated with institutional isomorphism, in order to explain the reproduction of institutional orders through path dependencies (Bush, 1987; Koning, 2015, p. 641). In part, this reflected the way first-wave institutionalism defined institutions; as a ‘stable, recurring pattern of behaviour’ (Goodin, 1996, p. 22). Change, in other words, was antithetical to the core idea of institutions as technologies of social, economic and political reproduction. Krasner, for example, encapsulated this dialectic noting ‘a basic analytic distinction [...] between periods of institutional creation and periods of institutional stasis’, where change was important but only in the context of the birthing or ending of institutional orders—the bookends of epochs. Gradual or incremental change was, in essence, squeezed out of analytical view, with change understood episodically and often the result of systemic crisis (Krasner as quoted in Koning, 2015, p. 643; Krasner, 1984, p. 240).

This intellectual legacy continues to impact how issues of institutional isomorphism and isomorphic processes are framed theoretically. Much contemporary institutional scholarship, for example, is unable to differentiate between *patterns* or types of change and thus ‘the degree to which a given episode of change is actually evolutionary, revolutionary or something else’ (Campbell, 2004, p. 5). Capano reinforces this point, noting while there is a ‘plentiful selection of studies from various academic fields examining the question of whether the processes of change should be considered evolutionary or revolutionary, reversible or irreversible, linear or non-linear, contingent or partially determined’, the ‘*explanandum* (change) is too frequently defined in an ambiguous manner’, its complexity set aside or treated as a mechanical variable (e.g., t^1 to t^2) (Capano, 2009, p. 8). A continuing theoretical dilemma for institutional scholars, in other words, is the conceptual indeterminacy of one of its core analytical categories: *change*.

Third, this intellectual legacy also has implications for where scholars situate the *locus* of causality that produces change. When institutions are conceived as patterns of recurrent behaviour that propagate stability or

stasis through combinations of cascading norms, rules, authority structures (legal and juridical systems), power relationships and traditions, for example, the locus of change is typically identified as *exogenous* to institutional orders rather than propagated through *endogenous* institutional processes. Change is viewed as institutionally alien and most often conceptualised in relation to large-scale structural transformations or the sudden, episodic rupture of institutional stability brought about, for example, by war, financial crises, sudden environmental change, or other large-scale disruptive exogenous events and processes. Much historical institutionalism has thus posited change as an episodic consequence of institutional non-adaptability, or a consequence of insufficient institutional capacity to manage various large-scale exogenous processes. Issues of endogeneity, by contrast, while not dismissed entirely from analytical view, have tended to be framed as issues of institutional inertia, where the absence of institutional change, or the right types of institutional adaptability in relation to increasing tensions brought about by emergent exogenous realities, ultimately ruptures institutional orders and produces new institutional configurations. Endogeneity as a core locus of isomorphic processes has thus often been marginalised, or seen as less consequential and thus less professionally rewarding as an object of intellectual inquiry.

Fourth, and relatedly, the tendency of historical and rational choice institutionalists to theorise institutions through functionalist lenses has also tended to marginalise issues of endogeneity as a locus of institutional change. The dominant means of analysing institutional change, for example, has rested on mapping interests with institutional type, functions, and capacities in order to correlate specific institutional endowments (or institutional designs) with their ability to satisfy economic, social and political needs—i.e., the institutional characteristics which manufacture *legitimacy*, where legitimacy is understood as central to the reproduction of institutional orders. For many historical and rational choice institutionalists, in other words, institutions are understood as sets of social and political relations that, above all, contain distributional instruments in relation to power and economic resources (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010a, pp. 8–9). What makes some institutions more effective than others simply reflects the balance of legitimacy in respect of how adroitly power and economic resources are distributed, and how, over time, institutional capacities to manage distributional instruments adapt to changing realities. Rational choice and historical institutionalists thus posit institutional stasis as a function of legitimacy, and thus, in turn, as a reflection of individual interests

being institutionally derived. It reflects what Bathelt and Glückler (2014) term the ‘paradox of embedded action’, whereby the interests of actors is both derived from, and reflected in, the prevailing institutional orthodoxy, rendering change through agential authority irrational. The paradox of embedded action thus made *endogenous* change theoretically nonsensical, substantially blinding first-wave institutionalism to issues of institutional adaptation, institutional learning and other *endogenous* isomorphic processes (Blyth, 2002, pp. 19–20; Koning, 2015, p. 647).

Fifth, while second-wave institutionalism has attempted to overcome this problem by focusing on *endogenous* sources of change, and by addressing explicitly the paradox of embedded action, it has often attempted to do so by situating interests in more diffuse theoretical containers. Ideational institutionalism, for example, focuses on the receptiveness of institutions to ideational innovation, institutional learning, and the way institutions do or don’t, as the case may be, interact with values, norms and beliefs. It thus posits the central importance of *ideas* in institutional change—if not their role as the constituting basis of institutional orders. As Blyth points out, institutions do in fact change, ‘sometimes without obvious punctuations, and because of this theoretical problem, ideas also become attractive to historical institutionalists as an *endogenous* source of change’ (Blyth, 2002, p. 20). For Blyth, ideas are the *zeitgeist* and intellectual scaffolding that ‘provide agents with an interpretive framework’, a scientific and normative framing of the economy and polity, and a blueprint about how these entities should be constituted and related. Ideas act as normative frames or constructions which facilitate the design of new institutions and the development of plans and politic strategies—ideas, in other words, are an important source of endogenous change:

... such an analysis of institutional change suggests that the reduction of uncertainty, the specification of causes, and the actual supply of new institutions are parts of a temporally distinct sequence of events where ideas have different effects at different junctures.... This is *not* to say that only ideas matter, nor that institutional change is purely an ideational affair; they do not and it is not. (Blyth, 2002, p. 11)

Blyth thus suggests that there exists a certain reciprocity between ideas, institutional learning, processes of policy or ideational diffusion and change—in which ideas form an important, perhaps even dominant, agency in institutional change.

But if we accept the importance of *ideas* as a source of change, as does much contemporary institutional scholarship, then how should *ideas* be understood? How do ideas manifest, propagate, and impact institutions and produce change; indeed, how do they overcome the paradox of embedded action especially if they impact or threaten interests? As an analytical category, *ideas* are conceptually slippery. Do we view ideas as a thought or suggestion, an aim or a purpose, a mental impression, an opinion or belief, a cognitive map, as shared values or concerns, or as strategies to inform actions? How do we differentiate between ideas? Are economic ideas as important as ideas about social values and beliefs in terms of inducing institutional change? And where do ideas sit in terms of their locus; within institutions as statements of purpose, mandate, role, function or aspiration, broadly within the polity as a means of projecting group identity, or diffusely as conceptual boundaries which allow for inter-subjective understanding? More fundamentally, how do we understand the relationship between ideas and interests? Do ideas trump interests, or do ideas reflect the ways and means of projecting interests (Colomby, 1998)?

Equally, why should we assume that ideas are the repository of agency that produces change? Ideas can be constraining and disciplining. Ideas comprise knowledge systems which impose meaning, reproduce social, political and economic institutional orders and often resist change. The canon law of the Catholic church, for example, or the notion of Christendom are ideas that involve the imposition of certain values to the exclusion of others, seeking to embed certain social relations and modes of conduct, and resist ideational deviation other than through acts of proselytising. Similarly, as Campbell notes, paradigms can act as ‘cognitive background assumptions that constrain decision making and institutional change by limiting the range of alternatives that decision-making elites are likely to perceive as useful and worth considering’ (Campbell, 2002, p. 22, 2004, p. 94). There is no reason to assume that ideas are always sources of change. They can also be sources of stasis, a means of constraining change or of disciplining contrarian thinking (Carstensen, 2011).

As an *explanandum*, *ideas* thus remain theoretically obtuse and suffer from indeterminacy and contestation. It is one thing to assert that ideas are important, even powerful, but quite another to trace their origins, to map why some ideas become more powerful than others, and how ideas manifest as a change agent to influence actors, interests, or cause variation, modification, or innovation in institutional orders. No one doubts the

pervasive influence of Keynesianism, liberalism, and neoliberalism, but demonstrating ideational pathways as mechanisms of change and their manifestation in institutional orders is both theoretically complex and vexed. Blyth's statement of the problem perhaps best summarises this theoretical conundrum:

Despite ... historical institutionalist analyses opening up more fully to ideas as independent causal elements, some problems remain. For example, Helleiner's study, explaining why ideas about the role and function of finance changed in the 1930s and 1970s, relies on the ostensible "facts" of economic difficulties promoting new ideas. However, positing that the supply of new ideas is reducible to material changes itself relegates ideas to being autonomic responses to periods of crisis. If this is the case, then the transformative role of ideas is limited at best. Similarly, although McNamara's and other recent historical institutionalist scholarship has been increasingly open to viewing ideas and interests "not as competing causal factors, but as ... inherent[ly] interconnect[ed]," such scholarship has not, as yet, explicitly theorized exactly how this occurs [T]he assumptions behind this body of theory—and the lack of explicit theorizing about the relationship between ideas, interests, and institutions—dictate that ideas tend to be seen ... as auxiliary hypotheses employed to account for the anomaly of change within otherwise static theories. (Blyth, 2002, p. 23)

At one and the same time, Blyth's statement is a call for more explicit theorising about the relationship between ideas, interests, and institutions, but also an admission that ideas, values, and beliefs remain problematic as stand-alone theoretical categories—unless, that is, social scientists reconceptualise *ideas* such that they are not seen as simply 'anterior or external to interests' (Blyth, 2002, p. 27).

To a large degree, this has been the most recent project of ideational institutionalists—a third-wave institutionalism. Recent work by scholars such as Mukand and Rodrik (2016), for example, has sought to demonstrate that 'ideas and interests both matter for policy and institutional change, and also feed into each other' (Mukand & Rodrik, 2016, p. 5):

On the one hand economic interests drive the kind of ideas that politicians put forward. As Shepsle (1985) put it, ideas can be regarded as "hooks on which politicians hang their objectives and further their interests." However, ideas also shape interests. In our model, this happens because they alter voter preferences ex post and/or shift their worldviews, in both cases shifting rankings over policy. (Mukand & Rodrik, 2016, p. 5; Shepsle, 1985)

For Rodrik, in other words, ‘interests are an idea’ (Rodrik, 2014, p. 206). Interests ‘are not fixed or predetermined. They are themselves shaped by ideas—belief about who we are, what we are trying to archive, and how the world works. Our perceptions of self-interest are always filtered through the lens of ideas’ (Rodrik, 2012). Indeed, for third-wave institutionalists the historical primacy of *interests* in social science is puzzling. For them, the market place of ideas is rarely centred on purely economic interests but filtered through political entrepreneurs developing new ideas, institutions, or policy by appealing to values, identities or other normative reference points which make new ideas or policy compelling and thus change possible. As Mukand and Rodrik (2016, p. 1) note, ideas matter, ‘ideational politics seems at least as important as interest-based politics’—indeed more important especially if we understand interests as a sub-set of preferences defined in relation to ideational values and beliefs (see also Rodrik, 2014). For ideational institutionalists, it is ideas which provide the ‘interpretive frameworks that give definition to our values and preferences and thus make political and economic interests actionable’ (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016, p. 318). This is why resources are given to think tanks, lobbyists, civil society organisations and religious orders who each attempt to shape opinions, push certain ideas and thus achieve change relative to the values they hold.

For third-wave ideational institutionalists, far from ideas being the jetsam and flotsam floating above the realpolitik of power and interests, ideas in fact embody and reflect power; they manifest in institutional orders, impacting the organisation of social, political and economic relations. Indeed, for more recent discursive institutionalists, ideas are the constituting basis of power and power projection. As Carstensen and Schmidt observe, ideational power reflects the ‘capacity of actors to persuade other actors to accept and adopt their views on what to think and do’, while the persuasiveness of ideas, the entrepreneurialism of brokers marketing ideas, and the way actors view, interpret and understand ideas, help to explain the complex and reflective processes by which some ideas become accepted and thus powerful, either engendering institutional and policy change or, by their very dominance and power, precipitating stability and long waves of stasis (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016, p. 323).

While such insights have made valuable contributions to institutionalist literatures, the theorising of ideas and their relationship to interests, and of ideational power and its relationship to institutional change and stasis, remains theoretically vexed. Despite several decades of scholarly effort and