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# Power and Change: Locating Institutional Change Theories in a Power Context

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**ABOUT THE CCRI PROGRAMME**
"Climate Change and Rural Institutions" (CCRI) is a collaborative research programme which explores the role of meso-level institutions in climate change adaptation. The programme is coordinated by DIIS in collaboration with partners in Nepal, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

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## ABSTRACT

This working paper aims to better understand the drivers of institutional change. To do this, it locates diverse institutional change theories, specifically path dependency, gradual institutional change and institutional bricolage, in a power context and reflects on the power-related aspects of each theory. It then develops a novel approach of a power analysis of institutional change, which allows for the combined use of institutional change theories despite their diverse theoretical underpinnings and thus offers a thorough, highly complex consideration of institutional change.

## 1. INTRODUCTION: THE 'WHY' OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Theories have developed over time to better understand how institutions change; they often provide detailed accounts of the actors, methods and processes through which change occurs. However, due to their focus on 'how' change occurs, they often omit a thorough treatment of another question integral to understanding institutional change: 'Why does institutional change occur?'

Institutional change theories touch on this 'why' to varying degrees. Mahoney and Thelen (2010) reflect on several drivers of institutional change in their work on gradual institutional change, including those related to resource accumulation, shifts in the balance of power and issues of compliance; however, their primary focus on the 'how' of institutional change persists. Other accounts of institutional change, for instance Douglas' (1986) and Cleaver's (2012) presentations of institutional bricolage, also consider this question, albeit more implicitly through their discussion of power in institutional change. In still other accounts of institutional change, these two questions of 'how' and 'why' become entangled, for example in Mahoney's (2000) account of critical junctures in path dependency.

In contrast, this paper singles out the question of 'why.' It seeks to better understand the drivers of institutional change, thereby supplementing existing literature on institutional change and enhancing the analytical usefulness of institutional change theories. It will do this by selecting different theories of institutional change, namely path dependency, gradual institutional change and institutional bricolage, and considering them in a shared analytical context. This strategy allows the analysis to effectively shift between the various theories and creates room for comparison. In addition, by locating them in a shared conceptual location, the analysis can reflect upon how these theories can fit together and may be able to supplement each other.

In identifying this shared context, determining a point of comparison and analytical access to institutional change theories was necessary. A context with an existing, robust body of literature and analytical tools was seen as preferable in order to better support this analysis. These considerations led to the selection of power as a common analytical context; power is included in all of these theories as having a role in change. In addition, I would suggest that certain aspects of power in institutional change, though touched on by some of the theories, are not thoroughly analysed in previous institutional change literature. This choice thus also offers an opportunity to further develop institutional change literature, which will support later analyses of power in institutions and institutional change.

Specifically, this discussion of institutional change theory aims to support the theoretical underpinnings of the Climate Change and Rural Institutions project (for more information see www.diis.dk/ccri). Following the focus of this project, it will reflect specifically on how institutional change theories relate to issues of climate change adaptation (CCA) and change within meso-level, or mid-level, government institutions. To embark on this analysis, the paper will first offer, in Chapter 2, a brief introduction to selected literature regarding institutions and change. The concepts to be used in the paper will then be discussed in Chapter 3, which will present conceptualisations of institutions and institutional change as well as conceptualisations of power. Chapter 4 will then locate institutional change theories in a bower context, offering a basis for Chapter 5's discussion of institutional and innovation theories in power analyses. Chapter 6 will ultimately offer conclusions and reflections.

## 2 INSTITUTIONS AND CHANGE IN LITERATURE

There is extensive literature on both institutions and change. This chapter seeks to present some of the main concepts from literature on these topics to contextualise the paper's subsequent discussions. Regarding institutions, it will present the dichotomy between Critical versus Mainstream Institutionalism and subsequently give a brief overview of the three New Institutionalisms: Historical, Sociological and Rational Choice Institutionalism. It will then discuss and contrast these approaches before moving on to a discussion of institutional change literature, which will include a discussion of innovation literature.

### 2.1 Critical v. Mainstream Institutionalism

Cleaver's (2012) Critical and Mainstream Institutionalisms offer simple, yet conceptually useful, accounts of institutions. She presents these two broad schools of institutional thought in the context of natural resource management in both developing and developed countries, though the two distinct perspectives on institutions are applicable in many other contexts as well. They are distinguished by their dichotomy between rational, functional and designable institutions and more organic or 'messy' institutions, informed by social, cultural and historical contexts.

The first of these (rational, functional and designable institutions) is represented by Mainstream Institutionalism. Cleaver asserts that Mainstream Institutionalism "is privileged in policy, partly because it offers a bridge between neo-liberal economic ideas and the desirability of decentralised local management and 'ownership'" (Cleaver 2012: 8). Looking outside of natural resource management as well, a preference for Mainstream Institutionalism by policymakers is likely given the designable, unambiguous nature of institutions in this view, evident in Mainstream Institutionalism's identification of certain 'design principles' for optimal institutional functioning. This is also evident in development cooperation. A Danida review of methods for evaluating capacity development, entitled *Between Naivety and Cynicism,* discusses the failures of donors' Mainstream Institutionalist approach to capacity building: "Donors have tried to deal with seemingly obvious capacity problems in specific organisations by supporting changes in their structures, staff training, the introduction of new procedures, and supplying equipment and technical assistance (TA). Often this has not had much impact" (Boesen and Therkildsen 2004: 1). The authors refer to these Mainstream Institutionalism-based approaches as 'mechanical blueprint approaches' (Boesen and Therkildsen 2004: 1) and point out the naivety of simplistic conceptions of institutions and institutional change. Generally, Mainstream Institutionalism also sees institutions as regulating behaviour for the common good through both rules and norms, thereby supporting individuals' strategic decision-making.

In contrast, Critical Institutionalism offers a more complex account of the production and function of institutions. It emphasises "the complexity of institutions entwined in everyday social life, their historical transformation and the interplay between the traditional and the modern, formal and informal arrangements" (Cleaver 2012: 8-9). This view incorporates an awareness of the intricacies of social arrangements and identities as well as unequal power relations. Its complexities often deter policymakers as they offer no clear prescriptions and, because of the consideration of social arrangements and power relations, could easily become politicised (Cleaver 2012).

In comparing the two, Cleaver notes that Critical Institutionalist approaches differ from

those of Mainstream Institutionalism because "their starting point is often a broad focus on the interactions between the natural and social worlds rather than a narrower concern with predicting and improving the outcomes of particular institutional processes" (Cleaver 2012: 13). This is one of several fundamental differences between Critical Institutionalism and Mainstream Institutionalism and is extremely relevant in relation to applying these concepts in situations of climate change. Due to the uncertainties and ambiguities of climate change contexts, as well as their intrinsic blending of the natural, social, political, etc., Critical Institutionalism approaches are likely to be much more analytically capable and successful.

Many of these differences are also evident between the three New Institutionalisms, further discussed below.

## 2.2 The New Institutionalisms

Historical Institutionalism, Sociological Institutionalism and Rational Choice Institutionalism are collectively referred to as the 'New Institutionalisms' and have been highly influential in institutional discourse for the last several decades (Hall and Taylor 1996). These New Institutionalisms are characterised by an "emphasis on legitimacy, the embeddedness of organizational fields, and the centrality of classification, routines, scripts, and schema" (Greenwood and Hinings 1996: 1023) and are thereby distinguished from the old institutionalism's consideration of influence, coalitions and competition of values and power (Greenwood and Hinings 1996). Below are brief accounts of the three New Institutionalisms, which describe their main characteristics and critiques and their treatment of institutional change.

Historical institutionalists largely define institutions as "the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 6). Within this, historical Institutionalists often focus on formal aspects of institutions as well as the asymmetric power relations they propagate. This has led them to an implicit focus on power as well as an account of institutions as 'path dependent,' or prone to continue in an established trajectory. Change occurs sporadically when these trajectories are punctuated by points of sudden, substantial change leading to a new trajectory, referred to as 'critical junctures' (Hall and Taylor 1996). Criticisms of Historical Institutionalism focus on its tendency to view institutions in an overly 'sticky,' deterministic manner, thereby downplaying the role of actors and agency (Bell 2011).

Sociological Institutionalism considers institutions in the context of more informal, cultural practices. It argues that culture, not just efficiency, shapes institutions and considers institutional forms and practices in light of "the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the 'frames of meaning' guiding human action" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 14). This provides a broader account of institutions than that of a political science perspective. It also presents an interesting account of the way institutions shape individual action by ascribing institutions not only the power to set rules, but also the power to define what people perceive as possible within a given context (Hall and Taylor 1996). This contributes to a very stable account of institutions, which has led to a critique of Sociological Institutionalism as lacking an explanation of endogenous change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010).

Rational Choice Institutionalism grew out of political science and considers institutions as "coordinating mechanisms that sustain particular equilibria" (Hall and Taylor 1996, Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 6). It proceeds from an economic consideration of organisational dynamics, considering things like rent-seeking and transaction costs in institutional genesis

and reproduction. Rational Choice Institutionalism emphasises actors' rational, strategic behaviour to fulfil their preferences and thus explains the creation of certain institutional structures in terms of their benefit to pertinent actors (Hall and Taylor 1996). When explaining institutional change, however, Rational Choice Institutionalism struggles due to its fundamental understanding of institutions as sustaining an equilibrium. Therefore, it generally relies on exogenous bases for change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010).

Rational Choice Institutionalism is extremely influential in current international development practice; many of the same reasons for which policymakers prefer mainstream institutionalism, particularly the rational, strategic nature of institutions, also make a Rational Choice Institutionalist approach desirable as it presents institutions as simple to understand and adjust. As Rational Choice Institutionalism has gained ground, it has brought with it complementary approaches, notably that of New Institutional Economics, which incorporates institutions into agency-based theories of markets. Instead of decisions being solely determined by actors' rationality, under New Institutional Economics they are also affected by the underlying institutional context (Hubbard 1997). Within development, this influence has led to a focus on establishing institutions conducive to desired development outcomes, or as it has come to be called, 'getting institutions right' (Rodrik 2004). Dani Rodrik's work has been foundational in this line of thought, and he notes:

> There is now widespread agreement among economists studying economic growth that institutional quality holds the key to prevailing patterns of prosperity around the world. Rich countries are those where investors feel secure about their property rights, the rule of law prevails, private incentives are aligned with social objectives, monetary and fiscal policies are grounded in solid macroeconomic institutions, idiosyncratic risks are appropriately mediated through social insurance, and citizens have recourse to civil liberties and political representation. Poor countries are those where these arrangements are absent or ill-formed. (Rodrik 2004: 1)

Clearly, institutions and the conceptualisations of institutions are highly influential. Within international development generally, institutions have come into the spotlight and have been tasked with supporting and enabling development; within the growing movement to address climate change, institutional development has the possibility of becoming just as influential. The subsequent focus on getting institutions right, however, is not enough. It fails to take into account the complexity of institutional intervention and institutions' role in societies. Because of the power and cultural aspects of institutions revealed in the other institutionalisms, intervening in institutional arrangements is much more challenging than Mainstream Institutionalist and Rational Choice Institutionalist perspectives acknowledge. These perspectives also fail to consider the intricate, interconnected relationship of institutions and society, which renders institutional engineering difficult at best. However, these perspectives continue to be common, especially among policymakers. It is therefore necessary to get conceptualisations of institutions right. Without a thorough understanding of institutions conceptually and the meaning of these conceptions in practice, coherent, institutionally-based development will inevitably be 'absent or ill-formed.'

The presentation of these selected concepts is thus of utmost importance for such development strategies. While the institutionalisms above represent only a few main concepts

within a diverse, extensive body of institutional literature,[1] they offer an introductory point to understanding the meaning and dynamics of this literature. The next section will more deeply explore the differences between these institutionalisms to better grasp the implications of their conceptual distinctions.

### 2.3 Fundamental Differences in Institutionalisms

There are three fundamental differences between the institutionalisms that inform most of the variances in their accounts of institutions. These are the role of structure and agency, the consideration of formal and informal institutions and the role of power. These three aspects are discussed in turn below.

#### *2.3.1 Structure and Agency*

The debate regarding the role of structure and agency has permeated social science and is a key factor shaping the divergences in understandings of institutions. Is it the structures of the institutions themselves or the agency of the actors within the institutions that determine their functions and development? Each of the Institutionalisms above offers a slightly different answer. Rational Choice Institutionalism, for instance, places a greater emphasis on actors' choices, with institutional structures offering a context of rules and regulation that frames actors' strategic options. Conversely, in Sociological Institutionalism, "institutions do not simply affect the strategic calculations of individuals…but also their most basic preferences and very identity" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 15). Critical Institutionalism, on the other hand, presents a more integrated account of the relation between actors and institutional structures.

These accounts offer a clear indication that considering structure and agency should not be an 'either/or' situation. Instead, all of these institutionalisms fall on a continuum between structure and agency, perhaps emphasising one over the other, but clearly informed by both. Indeed, this view is supported by sociologist Norman Long, who contends that, "the constitution of social structures, which have both a constraining and enabling effect on social behaviour, cannot be comprehended without allowing for human agency" (Long and Long 1992: 24). This paper thus rejects an opposition between agency and structure, but sees them as mutually informing; as Cleaver notes, "neither the exercise of agency nor societal structures *determine* outcomes – they are rather shaped in the interaction between the two" (Cleaver 2012: 122; original emphasis). This becomes significant in subsequent discussions of power and institutional change; integrating structure and agency shapes understandings of both sources of power and the manner in which power drives institutional change, which are further discussed in Chapter 4.

#### *2.3.2 Formal and Informal Institutions*

Another key difference is the treatment of informal and formal institutions in institutional schools of thought. Generally, Rational Choice Institutionalism and Mainstream Institutionalism tend to focus on formal institutions,[2] which is especially clear in Mainstream Institutionalism's conception of designable insti-

1 For instance, within natural resource management alone, a single, influential institutional debate is that of negotiated access, which is very much about power, agency and institutions (e.g. Sarah Berry, Sally Falk Moore, Jesse Ribot, Pauline Peters, Christian Lund, etc.). Other fields have similarly specialised institutional discourses.

2 Though there are, of course, exceptions. For instance Elinor Ostrom's work represents an example of a New Institutional Economics mode of thought can also accommodate informal institutions.

tutions (Cleaver 2012). In contrast, the other institutionalisms include more of a focus on informal institutions, with Sociological and Critical Institutionalism most strongly focusing on informal institutions (Hall and Taylor 1996). These differences also have important implications. By including or disregarding informal institutions, the meaning and role of formal institutions also change. For instance, by disregarding the role of informal norms in preventing littering, one attributes a heightened role and meaning to the formal fines established to deter littering. In addition, certain sources of, impacts on and strategies of power are also either included or disregarded. For example, if the role of informal social networks in a disaster-affected community are disregarded, formal humanitarian agencies and institutions are accorded both much more power and responsibility, which leads to a myriad of subsequent consequences. If social networks do play a role in disaster relief, for instance, this disregard could lead to inefficient relief efforts and tragic outcomes.

#### *2.3.3 Role of Power*

Probably the most important difference in the institutionalisms in the context of this paper is their differing conceptualizations and recognition of the role of power. The various institutionalisms diverge sharply on this point. Power drives the dichotomy between Critical Institutionalism and Mainstream Institutionalism, being explicitly acknowledged by Critical Institutionalism and largely overlooked by Mainstream Institutionalism. This is illustrated in Cleaver's description of the factors shaping human behaviour in the two, with those for Critical Institutionalism consisting of "social structures and power dynamics, relationships, norms, [and] individual creativity," while those for Mainstream Institutionalism consist of "information, incentives, rules, sanctions and repeated interactions" (Cleaver 2012: 16). The acknowledgement of power correlates here with the focus on informal institutions, while Mainstream Institutionalism's technocratic focus on formal institutions precludes an engagement with implicit power dynamics. This is in line with certain development literature that suggests de-politicisation (and concurrent discounting of power) is an inherent goal and result of technocratic approaches (Ferguson 1994, Li 2007). This paper would point out, however, that there is no correlation between an awareness of power and a focus on agency, which may seem likely given agency's focus on strategic action. Thus, Mainstream Institutionalism intentionally overlooks the subtle pervasiveness of power in social processes and norms, considering instead the formal and explicit, while Critical Institutionalism's dynamic, 'messy' approach to institutions fosters an awareness of and engagement with these subtle aspects of power.

Differing views on power are also evident in the New Institutionalisms, though not with the same clarity as in the dichotomy between Critical and Mainstream Institutionalism. Similarly to Mainstream Institutionalism, Rational Choice Institutionalism's emphasis on formal institutions and individual agency largely steer it away from acknowledging wider dynamics of power. However, it leaves some space for dynamics of power in institutions' impact on actors' preferences. Conversely, historical institutionalists engage more explicitly with power dynamics. Hall and Taylor (1996) write that a "notable feature of historical institutionalism is the prominent role that power and asymmetrical relations of power play in such analyses" (Hall and Taylor 1996: 9). Social institutionalism also considers power, though implicitly through its considerations of, for instance, cultural authority. These diverging views on power should be kept in mind as factors that inform differences in theories of institutional change.

## 2.4 Impacts of Innovation

Another influential discourse to be acknowledged in discussions of change is that of innovation. While there is not yet an established body of scholarly literature on climate change innovation, innovation has long been present in development discourses, for instance those surrounding agricultural practices. As climate change affects some of the same development-oriented institutions as those involved in agriculture, looking at innovation discourses in agricultural development can offer insights into the impact of these discourses in a climate change setting.

Innovation literature has historically been dominated by three interlocking narratives: that of the diffusion of innovations, the agricultural treadmill and the transfer of technology (also called the linear model). Though these theories have their origins in economics and agricultural development, they have become highly influential in extremely diverse share of industries, fields and schools of thought. The 'diffusion of innovations' propagated by Everett Rogers (1962) considers groups of farmers according to how quickly they adopt an innovation. In Rogers' account, the distribution of these groups followed a bell curve, with very few being innovators, slightly more being early adopters, roughly a third being the early majority, another third being the late majority and the remainder being laggards. Since its development, this concept of the spread of innovation has become widely accepted and applied in everything from advertising to health care (Horsky and Simon 1983, Khoumbati et al. 2006). It represents a classic example of rational choice assumptions, with its focus on actors' strategic decision-making to maximise their benefits.

Within agricultural development, this concept of the diffusion of innovations has been extremely prominent. Those who quickly adopted new agricultural technologies and practices were praised as innovators and early adopters, while those who did not were cast as laggards inevitably doomed to leave farming. This application of Roger's concept of innovation diffusion has been criticised as misleading and detrimental (Röling 2006) as it disregards structural limitations and other considerations that may affect or predetermine a farmer's decision. An example of such limitations can be seen in Cleaver's description of irrigation practices in Tanzania, particularly in relation to a certain water user association. This association was dominated by locally powerful individuals who monopolised decision-making power regarding the irrigation scheme for the area's irrigation farmers. Less powerful women and smallholders felt that they could not affect change and innovation in their own irrigation scheme, hindered by social dynamics of power which were formalised in the water user association (Cleaver 2012). In addition, the diffusion of innovation concept problematically assumes that the proposed innovation is advantageous for and should be adopted by all. Some farmers, however, might intentionally choose to forgo an innovation because it is irrelevant for their needs. These farmers may opt for other, possibly also innovative, methods or technologies, but may still be deemed 'laggards' because of their reticence in adopting the accepted or 'conventional' innovation. Ironically, this could easily undermine the emergence of new innovations and ultimately also hinders a thorough understanding of the conditions which foster innovations and change.

Another influential aspect of the diffusion of innovations concept is the agricultural treadmill put forward by Cochrane (1958). This adds to the diffusion of innovation concept and describes a situation where some farmers adopt an innovation which provides them with windfall profits. Slowly, more and more farmers adopt this innovation until it is only the sick, elderly and inept who have not adopted

it. These groups, now using outdated production methods, cannot compete and drop out of the market. Their resources, e.g. land, are absorbed by the remaining farmers, leading to 'scale enlargement' (Cochrane 1958). In this concept the diffusion of innovation is driven by market forces.

The third of these interlocking narratives is the transfer of technology model, or linear model. It is based on a simplistic, linear innovation pipeline that progresses from fundamental research, through applied and adaptive research, subject matter specialists, extension and contract farmers, ultimately ending with 'follower farmers' (Röling 2006). This model considers science and research as the sources of innovation, extension as the delivery mechanism and end users as the recipients of external innovation. In this way, it and its predecessors promulgate closed innovations, characterized by control of the development of innovations.

Röling describes how these three concepts of innovations and their diffusion came together to dominate international agricultural development practices:

> Diffusion of innovations was a *research tradition* based on *empirical* studies that looked at what had happened in the *past*. But the macro benefits of the treadmill, as perceived by economists, transformed the research tradition into a *policy model* for what is desirable in *future*. This model emphasises *technology transfer (technology supply push)* and *free markets* as recipes for agricultural development. (Röling 2006: 4; original emphasis)

These interlocked concepts of innovation and diffusion have been propagated by the Washington consensus and adhered to by the WTO. This is despite repeated failures of the model in agricultural development and the impossibility of predicting whether a technology innovation will diffuse or not. These failures in the models' performance are further worsened by the damaging effects they can have when actually successful (see Röling 2006 and FAO 2005).

These innovation concepts have other possible pitfalls that should be noted. One of these is an underlying idea of innovative change as 'discontinuous processes' (Anderson 2008: 55), or cut off from existing power dynamics and institutional processes. This conception of innovation effectively renders causal study of institutional change processes useless as the notion of discontinuity removes any possibility of identifying connections or relationships between innovations and wider institutional processes. It is thus not useful for this analysis and in general offers a limiting perspective. Another possible pitfall is the sharp, unflattering contrast that is often drawn between innovation and previous practices. Anderson (2008) notes a "…tendency to portray the historical heritage, including know-how, values, norms, and principles, as some sort of straight-jacket or networks as lock-in mechanisms that have to be overcome. Launching a new course or pioneering is portrayed to be an urgent necessity for a vigorous economy and a modern public sector" (Andersen 2008: 55). Innovation becomes equated with future growth and success through highly normative suppositions, and becomes a goal in itself. Kimberly and Evanisko (1981) acknowledge this long-standing trend, describing the attitude as: "Innovation is good and more innovation is better" (Kimberly and Evanisko 1981: 710). In a study of organizational innovation of hospitals, they also find that it is not clear that the quality of innovation is considered when an innovation is adopted. Innovations can thus become an untried silver bullet, a tendency of which analyses should be wary. In climate change realities, adaptation innovations offer precarious choices as they present a risk which must be weighed against the alternative risks of failing

to adapt. For a rural farmer with no other livelihood strategies or safety nets, an unsuccessful innovation can be disastrous.

Despite these pitfalls, such innovation literature still flourishes in many fields, and as climate change literature begins to emerge, the imprint of innovation is already evident. In the 2010 World Development Report, for instance, an entire chapter is devoted to 'Accelerating Innovation and Technology Diffusion' (World Bank 2010: 287) in the face of climate change. With phrases such as, "breakthrough innovations," "energy revolution" and "climate-smart alternatives" (World Bank 2010: 287), it reflects the overly-simplistic approaches evident in Boesen and Therkildsen's (2004) naivety concept and characteristic of policymakers' preference for rapid, straightforward results. It is only after this heady optimism that the report goes on to note that "reaping the benefits of technological changes will require significant changes in human and organisational behavior, as well as a host of innovative supporting policies to reduce human vulnerability and manage natural resources" (World Bank 2010: 288). The report itself thus illustrates divides within institutional thinking, with more simplistic mainstream perspectives uneasily coexisting with critical perspectives of more complex realities. This is especially problematic in relation to climate change, where simplistic, linear innovation assumptions are foundationally incompatible with the variability and uncertainty that characterizes changing climates.

While the diffusion of innovation concepts clearly remain influential, their weaknesses have led to the dominance of other concepts of innovation since the 1990s. Instead of focusing on linear pipelines, one new perspective instead emphasizes innovation systems, or the "wide range of different actors and organizations…required to stimulate widespread local technological development" (Friis-Hansen and Egelyng 2007). Rather than focusing on producing technological innovations, or *doing different things,* the objective thus becomes *doing things differently*, or supporting change in innovation systems (PHILA 2005). In addition, in an innovation systems approach, innovation is an interactive process involving many different actors and sources of knowledge (Friis-Hansen and Egelyng 2007).

Another focus of new innovation concepts is learning. Douthwaite's (2002) "learning selection" model, for instance, also suggests a complex, multi-agent system, but focuses specifically on multi-actor learning and innovation selection. Another learning-focused innovation concept is that put forth by Pretty (in Uphoff 2002), which looks at the social processes supporting sustainable innovation. Pretty presents sustainable agriculture as a learning process, not a technology package or specific model.

These newer innovation concepts thus incorporate diverse actors and sources of knowledge and focus more on the endogenous occurrence of innovation than exogenous production and diffusion. They consequently diverge from the closed innovation tendencies of the earlier innovation concepts, instead illustrating open innovation, where internal and external influences are combined in developing innovations. The divide between these two generations of innovation and diffusion concepts also reflects some of the same divides as those of institutional theory. The older generation reflects the economic, technocratic simplicity of Mainstream and Rational Choice Institutionalism, where models and straightforward policy prescriptions dominate. In contrast, the newer generation presents a more complex account of the inputs to and processes of innovation and diffusion more in line with the foundational perceptions of Critical Institutionalism.

Concepts of innovations and institutions are thus closely linked in both theory and prac-

tice. In practice particularly, they become further integrated as they are implemented jointly through development projects and programs, a reality also evident in CCA, for instance in the 2010 World Development Report. Due to innovation's inherent focus on change, the impacts and pitfalls of concepts of innovation and diffusion also become tied to concepts of institutional change. As the different innovation concepts have varying implications regarding the role of power in change, the paper will return to them later in Chapter 5's incorporations of power.

# 3 CONCEPTUALIZING INSTITUTIONS, CHANGE AND POWER

This chapter presents the main concepts of institutions and institutional change to be discussed in the paper. It then discusses the role of power in these concepts generally to prepare for the more detailed integration of power into institutional change theories in the following chapter.

## 3.1 Conceptualizing Institutions

Developing coherent concepts of institutions and institutional change is essential. Conceptions of institutions, for instance, determine both the properties of institutions as well as possibilities for institutional change. As Mahoney and Thelen (2010: 4) note, a "focus on persistence of institutions makes it natural for approaches to explain continuity rather than change". They go on to say: "If institutions are changed not just in response to exogenous shocks or shifts, then their basic properties must be defined in ways that provide some dynamic element that permits such change" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 7).

The definition used for the purposes of this paper, according to the discussions of the previous chapter, must then take into account power, agency, structure and both formal and informal institutions. At the same time, it must be narrow enough to remain analytically useful. The following definition balances these needs:

> The formal and informal norms, rules and organizations which structure a society and which are established, reproduced and altered through contestation and reassertion by societal structures and actors.

This definition offers an excellent starting point, providing space for both institutional establishment and change as well as influence from structures and actors. It paints a diverse picture of the many different aspects of institutions that will be important for this analysis. It should, however, be noted that no single sentence can adequately describe the diversity of institutional realities. For instance, while the definition divides out formal and informal, such a clear divide does not always exist. The purview of informal and formal can overlap and their relationship with each other often changes over time. In this sense, the definition should be considered as a starting point to inform the discussions below.

## 3.2 Conceptualizing Institutional Change

The following sub-section presents the concepts of institutional change to be presented in the paper, namely path dependency, gradual institutional change and institutional bricolage.

### *3.2.1 Path Dependency*

Path dependency, rather than describing how institutions change, focuses on why they remain the same. In a path-dependent perspec-

tive, institutions are seen as 'sticky,' or difficult to change, which leads them to continue in a set path or trajectory. When changes do occur, they are attributed to critical junctures where major shocks disrupt the status quo, causing a new trajectory to be established. In path dependency, institutional change is thus a polarized pattern of continuity punctuated by drastic change.

Theories of path dependency focus on continuity in a certain trajectory, and a corresponding body of literature within path dependency has developed to explain this tendency. There are several different causes to which a path dependency can be attributed. Campbell (2010) provides an overview of the causes as explained in different disciplines. Four reasons from a political science perspective include: (1) political institutions have large start-up costs; (2) politicians deliberately make institutions they establish difficult to change; (3) actors accumulate knowledge of a set of institutional processes and are reluctant to change to an unknown system; and (4) the beneficiaries of an existing institutional arrangement support its continuation. Other causes include those put forth by sociologists, that the institutionalization of certain perspectives and practices limits what decision-makers consider as possible or appropriate, and by comparative political economists, that the interlocked nature of institutions makes it difficult to change a single institution (Campbell 2010). These aspects of institutions and institutional actors contribute to the 'sticky' nature of institutions.

There are both more rigid and more relaxed accounts of path dependency. Sehring (2009), for instance, offers a relaxed view of path dependency, stating that it should not be seen as historical determinism, but instead represents the reproduction of successful strategies. Mahoney (2000) describes this view as "a broad conceptualization that essentially entails the argument that past events influence future events" (2000: 510). In contrast to this, Mahoney focuses on certain defining features of path dependency, for instance how a sequence of path-dependent events are started and the methods by which they are reproduced. This represents a more strict conception of path dependency, where particular characteristics must be present for a trajectory to be considered path-dependent. It is important to distinguish between these two accounts as their differences have analytical ramifications; this paper will adhere to the first, more general conception of path dependency.

#### *3.2.2 Gradual Institutional Change*

In contrast to path dependency, others attribute institutional change to more continuous, subtle processes. Lund (2006) and Moore (1978), for example, identify institutional change as stemming from processes of 'regularization' and 'situational adjustment.' Regularization allows for processes and organisations to become durable parts of social reality, while situational adjustment occurs when actors create or resolve ambiguous situations by "reinterpreting or redefining rules and relationships" (Lund 2006: 699).

Others consider these continuous changes in other ways. Mahoney and Thelen (2010) consider gradual transformation the result of the constant negotiations of power and rules. Negotiations of power are characterised by a dichotomy of dominance and pragmatism as institutional actors assert their interests in order to gain dominance, but must often compromise in a pragmatic manner. These negotiations and subsequent changes are grounded in their conception of institutions as *"distributional instruments* laden with power implications" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 8; original emphasis). They are characterised by an interplay between actors and structure and formal and informal, as actors attempt to impact the

institutional structures through both formal and informal means.

Mahoney and Thelen (2010) delineate four specific types of change and four specific change agents, who drive change. The types of change are displacement, layering, drift and conversion. Displacement occurs when existing rules and norms are removed and replaced. Layering is when new rules and norms are established on top of or beside existing ones. Drift occurs when institutions do not change formally, but their relevance and impact change due to changes in their context. Conversion also occurs when institutions do not change formally, but change takes place as actors redeploy or reinterpret them to have a new purpose, meaning, etc.

The four types of actors, or change agents, are then determined according to whether they seek to preserve the institution and whether they follow the institution's rules:

| | *Seeks to Preserve Institution* | *Follows Rules of Institution* |
|---|---|---|
| *Insurrectionaries* | No | No |
| *Symbionts* | Yes | No |
| *Subversives* | No | Yes |
| *Opportunists* | Yes/No | Yes/No |

*Source: Mahoney and Thelen 2010*

Mahoney and Thelen then categorize these four types of change and four change agents according to two main questions: "(1) Does the political context afford defenders of the status quo strong or weak veto possibilities? (2) Does the institution in question afford actors opportunities for exercising discretion in interpretation or enforcement?" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 18). The resulting breakdown indicates the importance of the political context and institutional characteristics in determining both the kind of change and change agent:

| | | *Characteristics of Targeted Institution* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low level of discretion in interpretation/ enforcement | High level of discretion in interpretation/ enforcement |
| *Characteristics of the Political Context* | Strong veto possibilities | Subversives (Layering) | Parasitic Symbionts (Drift) |
| | Weak veto possibilities | Insurrectionaries (Displacement) | Opportunists (Conversion) |

*Source: Mahoney and Thelen 2010*

The dynamics posed by these various types of change and change agents will be further addressed in a power context later in the paper.

### *3.2.3 Institutional Bricolage*

In contrast, institutional bricolage focuses more on the pragmatic ways actors address everyday challenges by combining available institutional practices, ideas and norms. Institutional bricolage merges aspects of path dependency and innovation in settings of everyday institutional struggles and considers the dynamic interplay between actors and social structures (Cleaver 2012).

Bricolage draws on the idea of a bricoleur who "uses everything there is to make transformations within a stock repertoire of furnishings" (Douglas 1986: 66). This idea was intro-

duced by Lévi-Strauss (1966) and elaborated on by Mary Douglas (1986); Douglas suggests that within institutions, patterns of precedence offer an ever-present stock of materials which can be combined, adapted and adopted by institutional actors to 'make transformations.' These transformations are then justified by and accepted through the authority of the previous practices (Douglas 1986). Frances Cleaver, among others, has further developed the concept of institutional bricolage. Cleaver applies it specifically to understanding how mechanisms of natural resource management are fashioned from existing social formulae, for instance particular styles of thinking or accepted social norms. Within this, Cleaver emphasizes the tendency to reproduce inequalities in access to resources as entrenched social patterns are readopted in new manners and situations (Cleaver 2012).

Overall, institutional bricolage offers an insight into the often chaotic nature of institutional formation and change. It allows for an understanding of institutions as "neither completely new nor completely traditional but rather a dynamic hybrid containing elements of 'modern', 'traditional' and the 'formal' and 'informal'" (Cleaver 2012: 45). In addition, it provides a coherent account of the interplay between structure and agency as actors initiate change according to the structural limitations of the materials at hand. This 'dynamic hybrid' perspective on institutional change is both useful in practical analyses and in understanding power in institutional change.

### 3.3 Concepts of Power in the Context of Institutions

As evident in the discussions above, there is an extensive role for power in concepts of institutions and institutional change. Mahoney and Thelen (2010) explicitly define institutions as "*distributional instruments* laden with power implications" (2010: 8, original emphasis), while discussions of authority, agency and structure implicitly touch on the role of power. Institutional reproduction and change especially occur within a landscape of power, as described by Campbell (2010):

> … the notion of struggle, conflict, and negotiation over institutions … reveals how institutional reproduction and change are flip sides of the same coin. That is, institutions are contested. So, depending on the balance of power among those contesting them, they may change or not. In this sense the processes of institutional reproduction and change are mutually constitutive–many of the forces that change institutions also stabilize them. (Campbell 2010:108)

Power is thus integral in institutional change and can reveal the nuanced dynamics and drives behind it; analyzing the role of the power and forces which Campbell mentions can address the 'why' of institutional change and explain what drives 'struggle, conflict and negotiation over institutions.'

To do this, the concepts of power to be used must be clarified. In identifying which concepts of power would be most useful, it was clear that they must be able to grasp and explain the various dynamics within institutions, including the role of actors, structure, formal and informal practices, and social norms and ideas, among other things. This suggests the necessity of a broad, complex understanding of power and led to the consideration of Foucault's account of power:

> … power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confronta-

> tions, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. (Foucault 1990: 92-93)

This conception of power reflects the struggle, conflict and negotiations considered by Campbell (2010) and importantly also links easily up to an institutional setting by considering the 'chain or system' and 'institutional crystallization' of power. At the same time, Foucault's conception of power leaves room for individual agency and contestation and also takes into account the social aspects of power, characteristics necessary to adequately engage with the theories of institutional change.

Below, four specific types of power based on Foucault's work on power are presented specifically: strategic games, governmentality, domination and power-knowledge.

### *3.3.1 Strategic Games, Government and Domination*

From Foucault's works on power, Thomas Lemke has derived three more specific forms of power: strategic games, government and domination (Lemke 2010). 'Strategic games' offers a concept of power ideally fitted to considerations of strategic action. Lemke notes that strategic games entail actors "structuring the possible field of action of others" (2010: 53) and can include everything from rational argumentation to economic exploitation. In discussions of institutional change, it will thus be used in understanding how actors' diverse, strategic actions affect others' options and room for manoeuvre and subsequently establish power. In this way, it will accommodate actor-oriented accounts of power in institutional change.

'Government' then refers to systematized, regulated and reasoned forms of power. This is derived from the ideas behind Foucault's own concept of 'governmentality,' which refers to the 'conduct of conduct' (Lemke 2010), or the systematic ways in which people and societies are governed. Foucault's governmentality originated in his study of the conduct of the European state in the Middle Ages and offers helpful insights into the systematic nature of power in governance. A generalizable excerpt of Foucault's definition of governmentality describes it as the "ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow for the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power" (Foucault 1991: 102). A notable aspect of governmentality, evident in this quote, is its rational, reasoned nature; "analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics" contribute to a coherent, strategic character of this form of power. Contrary to the actor-based strategy of strategic games, however, governmentality retains a wider focus on the mechanisms of the state in governing its territory and population; Foucault (1991) states that governmentality is exerted to 'reinforce, strengthen and protect' a government's relations with its territory and subjects. In a study of climate change and meso-level institutions, governmentality can offer interesting insights into various institutions' struggles and adaptive mechanisms to 'reinforce, strengthen and protect' their role within a dynamic and uncertain environmental and social situation.

In addition, a broad understanding of governmentality offers an important analytical tool for understanding informal conduct. This is essential for exploring issues of social norms and social contracts, for example, or the infor-

mal systems according to which societies are governed. Applying governmentality to these informal systems will be particularly useful in accounting for the power dynamics inherent in both Social and Critical Institutionalisms. In addition, this aspect of governmentality links up to discourses and perceptions of power-knowledge, which are also significant in social rules and norms, further discussed below. Governmentality shows itself to be extremely accommodating as it also evokes many of the rational, regulated aspects of Rational Choice Institutionalism and Mainstream Institutionalism. Its explicit focus on power, however, offers an important counterpoint to Rational Choice Institutionalism and Mainstream Institutionalism's whitewashed perspectives of power.

Lemke also includes 'domination' in his typologies of power to describe a "type of power relationship that is both stable and hierarchical, fixed and difficult to reverse" (2010: 53). While domination describes a certain situation of power, Lemke is careful to note that it does not explain the establishment of that situation. Instead, "[t]echnologies of government account for the systematization, stabilization and regulation of power relationships that may lead to a state of domination" (Lemke 2010: 53). It is thus the procedures and tactics of governmentality, if coherently established and entrenched, that contribute to a state of domination where those dominated have very limited room for manoeuvre.

### *3.3.2 Power-knowledge*

A final, essential concept of power to be used in this paper is that of power-knowledge. Power-knowledge is based on the idea that power and knowledge mutually inform and constitute each other. Foucault asserts: "[w]e should admit rather that power produces knowledge…that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault 1995: 27). Power-knowledge opens up an important discussion of the force and implications behind the knowledge of different actors and institutions, for example the ways in which knowledge is used in claims to dominance, authority, resources, etc. In climate change particularly, it presents an interesting dynamic within the state of uncertainty, or knowledge scarcity, characterizing climate changes. This paves the way for power manipulations, necessarily based on ambiguous assertions within conditions of uncertainty.

Regarding climate adaptation specifically, power-knowledge is evident in multiple ways. In both developing and developed countries, for instance, claims of knowledge and expertise drive competition over funds newly allocated to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Various ministries at the national level and other government institutions between scales use these claims to establish authority and secure these financial resources, which can ultimately also confer dominance and power. While this illustrates the more formal power claims based in knowledge, power-knowledge also allows for the analysis of less formalized knowledge. The power within perceptions and discourses, for instance, can be highly significant in the workings of a society, including in the role of institutions. Foucault notes that "[d]iscursive practices are not purely and simply ways of producing discourse. They are embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behavior, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them" (Foucault 1977: 200).

The exertion of this more subtle power-knowledge can been seen in the green growth discourse, which has reshaped the cli-

mate discourse in a way that benefits corporate actors. A discourse initially based on the problematics of industrialization and growth now offers growth as a solution, and those who may once have been perceived as part of the problem can now become champions of a climate change response. This powerfully reshapes the landscape of possible 'winners' and 'losers' and 'right' and 'wrong.' It illustrates how deeply discourse and the power-knowledge behind it can shape societal perceptions and norms, irrevocably shaping society itself. Knowledge aspects of power can thus be quite influential and are important in considerations of the struggles informing institutional change.

### *3.3.3 Meaning for Analysis*

What Foucault describes as reinforcing and strengthening an institution's role closely mirrors processes of institutional reproduction and change. The calculation and tactics Foucault describes are reflected in the constant political mobilization Mahoney and Thelen (2010) note in institutional continuity. In Mahoney and Thelen's account, institutional actors constantly engage in "ongoing mobilization of political support as well as, often, active efforts to resolve institutional ambiguities in their favor" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 9). While Foucault's account considers these strategies from a structural, institutional perspective, introducing an agency-based perspective such as that of Mahoney and Thelen offers space for productive interplay between agency and structure. In addition, the same aspects of governmentality that reflect processes of continuity also inform institutional change; as Campbell asserts, "institutional reproduction and change are flip sides of the same coin…many of the forces that change institutions also stabilize them" (Campbell 2010: 108). Foucault's governmentality is thus both helpful in describing the exertion of systematic, institutional power and also the reproduction and changes of this power. Importantly, when supplemented by an agency-oriented approach, it can also offer space for interplay between institutional structures and actors.

Together, the concepts of power-knowledge and governmentality offer important analytical opportunities. Power-knowledge allows for the identification and analysis of claims to knowledge, expertise and authority as dynamics of power, which will be useful in analysing such claims by both institutions and institutional actors at the meso level. In addition, power-knowledge also recognises the analytical importance of norms, perceptions and discourses, which are formative aspects of societies and institutions and will be essential to understanding institutional change. This is supplemented by governmentality, which opens for engagement with systematic exercise of power through institutions' procedures and strategies. Governmentality also provides an understanding of institutional reproduction and change in a power perspective, including for the informal institutions which regulate conduct, for instance norms and social contracts.

Through the calculations and tactics of governmentality as well as the production or perpetuation of knowledge, institutions establish, claim and challenge territorial and conceptual space (and thus power); power-knowledge and governmentality also create the analytical space necessary for engaging with both structures and actors and informal and formal aspects of institutions.

### *3.3.4 Critique of Foucault*

The concepts of power offered by Foucault provide notable analytical strengths; however, they also come with possible weaknesses. One of these is the ubiquitous nature of power in Foucault's account, a point which has drawn heavy criticism. Some critiques argue that this

ubiquity divests the concept of power of its meaning and analytical usefulness as, in the end, everything is power (Sayer 2012). For this analysis, however, the ubiquity becomes a boon as it aids in locating diverse theories of institutional change within power. In addition, by focusing on specific concepts of power-knowledge and governmentality, the paper seeks to offer more of a focus within Foucault's broad concept of power.

Another criticism of power in Foucault's account is its lack of agency. This is partly a symptom of the focus of his study, which looks invariably at the systematic nature of power, the institutions which exert power and the manner in which power comes to govern the individual. For Foucault, the individual then becomes the subject of power, rather than a source of power or contestation (Lemke 2010). One social scientist notes, "a completely passive subject renders the very notion of control meaningless" (Gordon 2002: 126). As stated in the discussion of governmentality, however, this issue is addressed by supplementing Foucault's perception of power with a more actor-oriented perspective. His focus on 'struggles and confrontations' creates room for the integration of individual agency, which simply adds a new dynamic to these struggles and confrontations without disregarding the underlying systematic focus.

# 4 LOCATING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THEORIES IN A POWER CONTEXT

Having explored the conceptualisations of institutions, institutional change and power, this chapter will combine these concepts by locating institutional change theories in a power context, first considering path dependency, then gradual institutional change and finally institutional bricolage.

## 4.1 Path Dependency

Even in Foucault's most general concepts of power, the tendencies found in path dependency are evident. Foucault notes, "power must be understood as…the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming *a chain or a system*" (Foucault 1990: 92; emphasis added). This system, or path dependency, is supported by multiple factors, for instance those put forward by Campbell (2010). Each of these factors represents a force in itself, constantly pushing for the continuation and reproduction of the existing institutional arrangement. When a confluence of these factors or forces arises, institutional arrangements become extremely secure and difficult to change. This shares multiple parallels with governmentality, the "ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections…" (Foucault 1991: 102). Within path dependency, this ensemble of forces for stability additionally creates a more entrenched power, or a situation of domination. The continued exercise of the strategies of governmentality allow for the reproduction of this domination.

### *4.1.1 Types of Change within Path Dependency*

Because of the situation of domination, one type of change permeates literature on path dependency: critical junctures. As accounts of path dependency do not consider significant endogenous change a viable option, the only possible recourse for change becomes external and necessarily extreme critical junctures, which overcome the domination of a path dependency (Campbell 2010). The 'why' of change in this account is thus that external forces overcome the domination, disabling some or all of the mechanisms of governmentality which support it. Indeed, this contestation and interruption of a power trajectory is noted in Foucault's description of "the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them [force relations] from one another" (Foucault 1990: 92).

By isolating the forces of stability from one another, foundational change is made possible.

The less stringent conception of path dependency, while acknowledging such foundational change in response to domination, also allows space for incremental change (Sehring 2009). Campbell describes this process of incremental change, pointing out that, "change typically occurs only at the margins, which in turn means that institutions tend to change only in incremental or evolutionary ways" (Campbell 2010: 91). Campbell even equates this type of change with path dependency, describing it as "more incremental or evolutionary (i.e. path-dependent) change" (Campbell 2010: 91).

#### *4.1.2 The Role of Agency and Context in Path-dependent Change*

Explaining the 'why' of this incremental change is more complex, but points to two significant aspects, agency and context. These two aspects come to light due to the structural limitations of path dependency itself; when an existing organizational structure becomes path-dependent, change must come from other sources, hence a focus on agency and context.

Returning to Foucault's definition of power with agency in mind, we find that power includes, "the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses" (Foucault 1990: 92) force relations. The inclusion of 'struggles and contestations' offers extensive space for the role of agency in power, which is also quite clearly reflected in Lemke's (2010) 'strategic games.' These agency-based power concepts offer a valuable starting point for understanding incremental change; they provide room for understanding the strategies that contribute to domination as well as to contestation by marginal actors. Contestation is the inherent flip side of the understanding of path dependency as enforced by actors benefitting from existing institutional arrangements. Implicit in this is that not all actors benefit from existing arrangements and that without beneficiaries' 'strategic games,' existing arrangements would change. In other words, those at the institutional margins, the 'losers' of existing institutional arrangements, contest these arrangements, bringing about incremental change.

In addition, context also contributes to incremental change. For instance, in Sehring's (2009) concept of path dependency where actors duplicate successful strategies, changing contexts lead dominant actors, the 'winners' of institutional arrangements, to adjust their strategies to optimize their benefits and retain power. Within climate change specifically, this is evidenced in an example given previously, where national institutions compete for control over new climate change financing. Other examples include institutional competition due to changes in resource access, e.g., water, arable land or grazing land, caused by climate change. Notably, such strategic games and competition are often exercised through power-knowledge, where institutions justify domination through claims to knowledge and expertise, for instance expertise in managing a resource or administering funding or through discourses justifying their right to control the resource. This illustrates that, while institutions may be 'sticky' and difficult to change, they operate within dynamic social and political settings, which actors necessarily respond to in order to either maintain or contest power. In a structural perspective as well, changes in an institution's context may render specific aspects of an institution's structure redundant, ineffective or obsolete, possibly also prompting incremental change.

#### *4.1.3 Returning to Concepts of Power*

These discussions reveal the dynamic, complex landscape of power present within path dependency. What also becomes evident is the

ability of power concepts to encompass and explain such complex dynamics of change, abilities which path dependency lacks. Campbell notes, "we need a more nuanced approach to explain institutional change than those found typically in arguments about path dependence" (Campbell 2010: 91).

This issue is evidenced in path dependency's simplistic dichotomy of incremental, endogenous change and extreme, exogenous change. Here, path dependency may gloss over the interrelated nature of these factors and overlook the drivers behind endogenous and exogenous incremental changes. This paper would instead suggest highly complex processes of change, where endogenous and exogenous influences and structures and actors all interact to shape change, both incremental and extreme. A power perspective including the roles of agency and context can help provide this complexity. For instance, take the case above where changes in an institution's context cause shifts in dominant actors' strategies. Thinking in terms of Foucault's power concept, this may open up new space for contestations by actors on the margins, possibly contributing to the more significant change of a critical juncture. By bringing to light the struggles and contestations informing change, it becomes clear that the lines of causation blur and multiple factors from various sources can ultimately be linked to change.

These reflections on complexity are also useful in considering the concepts of power themselves. They offer an important reminder that domination conceals contestation, which is an important point of analysis for change. In addition, they suggest a more complex perspective of governmentality, where instead of a single ruler establishing an ensemble of rules and strategies, many actors converge to determine the procedures and rules of governmentality.[3] Governmentality can thus be seen as the institutionalization of strategic games, where the strategies of the most successful actors are established and reproduced to govern the possibilities for others.

## 4.2 Gradual Institutional Change

Complex power dynamics in institutional change become more evident in certain accounts of Gradual Institutional Change. In Mahoney and Thelen's perspective of gradual institutional change particularly, institutions "not only emerge and break down; they also evolve and shift in more subtle ways across time" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 2). This perspective is "grounded in a power-distributional view of institutions that emphasizes ongoing struggles within but also over prevailing institutional arrangements" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: xi). The book title itself *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency and Power* also emphasizes this focus on power and contestation. Power is thus an essential element in their conception of why institutions change. This section will explore this element of power more deeply, specifically how it relates to the concepts of power discussed above.

### *4.2.1 Mahoney and Thelen's Account of Change*

Mahoney and Thelen's account of institutional change goes beyond the simplicity and lock-in of path dependency. With their assertion that "there is nothing automatic, self-perpetuating, or self-reinforcing about institutional arrangements" (Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 8), they offer a fundamental contradiction to the per-

3 Importantly, this detracts from the rational nature of a governmentality. Assuming the rational choice of the individual actors, they will act in their best interests, likely undermining a cohesive, rational trajectory within the governmentality.

petuation inherent in path dependency. Specifically, they focus on the endogenous dynamics of institutional change and ground their explanations of change in the distributional nature of institutions and the idea of actors' compliance to institutional norms and rules as a variable (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). This creates a situation where actors, through strategic games and power-knowledge plays, struggle to secure optimal benefits by affecting institutional rules, procedures and outcomes. According to Mahoney and Thelen, this actor-oriented account of change takes place in the space created by institutions' structural weaknesses, the 'soft spots' between rules and their interpretation and enforcement (Mahoney and Thelen 2010).

#### *4.2.2 The role for power*

While Mahoney and Thelen (2010) present a highly complex account of change, the 'why' of change is, quite simply, struggles over resource distribution. Returning to where this change takes place, the 'soft spots' of the interpretation and the enforcement of the rules, relevant parallels can be drawn with power-knowledge and governmentality. Change occurring due to change in the interpretation of the rules can be tied to power-knowledge, where a changing interpretation or understanding of the rules can bring about substantive changes in their application and use. Change surrounding the enforcement of the rules is then linked to governmentality, where the procedures and applications through which the institution administers the rules change.

Power-knowledge and governmentality are also helpful in the consideration of what type of change occurs and why. Some of these types of change include important roles for power. Displacement and layering are clear examples of governmentality, where rules and their enforcement change. Conversion presents an explicit role for power-knowledge, where the interpreted meaning of an institution changes, powerfully affecting its role in practice. Finally, drift, rather than reflecting a major shift in power, illustrates instead a situation where the meaning of an institution changes due to a shift in context.

Power can also be seen in other aspects of Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) gradual institutional change. The 'change agents,' for instance, all exercise power through strategic games, where they attempt to limit the possibilities for other agents and optimize their benefits through governmentality and power-knowledge. Domination, however, is not as evident as in path dependency; Mahoney and Thelen's dynamic conception of institutions makes the establishment of dominance more difficult and thus less frequent.[4]

### 4.3 Institutional Bricolage

Institutional bricolage offers a less structured perspective of institutional change with its concept of ad hoc processes of change enacted in response to everyday challenges. Here, structures and actors interact more fluidly as actors adopt and adjust institutional structures to address new challenges and situations. Within this, power plays an essential role as "[b]ricolage is an authoritative process, shaped by relations of power" (Cleaver 2012: 49). In fact, these relations of power permeate processes of bricolage and determine their outcomes, offering key roles for different modes of power, discussed below.

#### *4.3.1 Power and the Bricoleur*

Bricolage offers a unique role for institutional actors, who can become institutional bricoleurs, (re)forming and affecting institutional

4 For an example of dominance in Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) conception of gradual institutional change, see Dan Slater's account of authoritarianism in Indonesia (Chapter 5, same volume).

structures. The strategic games of these actors thus become extremely important as they play a formative role in determining bricolage outcomes. However, these strategic games are themselves shaped by power. More than the other theories of institutional change, institutional bricolage emphasizes the power disparities of the institutional actors who shape institutional change. Cleaver points out that "[i]ndividual bricoleurs are able to exercise different levels of influence over the formation and functioning of institutions, as a result of their social positions. Authority, reputation, status and assets (or a lack of them) all matter when it comes to making and breaking institutional rules" (Cleaver 2012: 45). The resulting dynamics are similar to that of gradual institutional change, where actors struggle to establish institutions that suit their needs best.

Cleaver's bricolage takes one step back, however, and looks at the foundational power aspects that inform this struggle. Among them, both formal and informal expressions of power-knowledge and governmentality are influential. Power-knowledge is especially evident in the informal aspects of power on which bricoleurs draw. Authority and status, for instance, are based on social norms, which as discussed above are products of power-knowledge. They are built on societal discourses, in this case the cognitive perception or knowledge of what constitutes authority and the implications of this authority. Governmentality then plays a role as these perceptions, widely adopted and adhered to, translate into rules and procedures which informally govern a society. These modes of power subsequently shape the ability of the bricoleur to successfully engage in strategic games with other actors. "Negotiation and contestation, involving competing claims to tradition or modernity, or particular sources of authority, is therefore an inevitable part of bricolage" (Cleaver 2012: 49).

Importantly, actors' strategic games are restricted by structural limitations. Cleaver states explicitly that "exercising agency and deploying resources is not simply a matter of individual choices or preferences. For example, wider relations of power and authority are implicated in the exercise of agency" (Cleaver 2012: 41). Such limitations include those of norms and power discussed above. These informal conceptions of social order and rules shape people's perception of possible action, consequently structuring the perceived field of action for possible bricoleurs (Cleaver 2012, Giddens 1984). In addition, the bricoleur is also limited by both the informal and formal materials at hand. As the role of the bricoleur is to recombine institutional procedures, practices and arrangements, the choices of the bricoleur are necessarily limited by which of these is available (Cleaver 2012). Structure thus comes to play an important and unique role in bricolage, which must not be overlooked in a focus on bricoleurs' strategic games.

#### *4.3.2 Power-knowledge in bricolage*

Beyond the more self-evident role of governmentality in the procedures, practices and arrangements in institutional bricolage, power-knowledge also plays a key role. Specifically, it shapes the materials at hand and the outcomes of bricolage. Cleaver (2012) illustrates this in a discussion of development policy formulation, and the insights from this discussion can shed light on the role of knowledge in institutional change more broadly.

Power-knowledge is essential in determining the materials at hand for the bricoleur. As the procedures, practices and arrangements of institutions are permeated by particular knowledge and norms, recombining practices from institutions sharing the same basic norms reinforces the power and prevalence of these norms. This leads to the domination of a certain kind of institutional 'material,' which

because of its ubiquity is more likely to be reproduced. Cleaver notes that "the ways that understandings of the world are cognitively institutionalized often means that policy reproduces dominant views and power relations" (Cleaver 2012: 151).

Furthermore, Cleaver suggests that dominant views, once established, are exceedingly difficult to shift. In a policy-related case, she notes that certain dominant views were "embedded in institutionalized power relations permeating the state from national to local levels" (Cleaver 2012:151). Foucault similarly reflects on the embedded nature of discourse, saying "[d]iscursive practices are not purely and simply ways of producing discourse. They are embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behavior, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them" (1977: 200). This suggests a broader reproduction of dominant discourses beyond merely in state institutions, pointing to such reproduction as a far-reaching social occurrence affecting diverse institutional arrangements and everyday realities. Thus, not only does power-knowledge determine the materials at hand, it subsequently predisposes bricolage outcomes.

Such predisposition can also be found in a more diverse and fragmented manner. Various kinds of institutions and the actors associated with them prioritize different types of knowledge depending on their goals and values. Thus, on a smaller scale, certain discourses become dominant in certain institutions, and may be highly incompatible with those of other types of institutions, even within the same society. Cleaver (2012) gives the example of how academic institutions prefer and prioritize critical knowledge, while political institutions put more weight on technical knowledge that is seen as helpful in formulating policy solutions. In adaptation contexts, this is evident in policymakers' preference for (and perpetuation of) natural-science based ideas of resilience versus more critical social science perspectives which include issues of power, inequality and vulnerability. This differentiation of knowledge between types of actors is also addressed by Norman Long, who asserts that, "discursive means or types of discourse…vary and are not simply inherent features of the actors themselves: they form part of the differentiated stock of knowledge and resources available to actors of different types" (Long and Long 1992: 24). This reproduction of certain types of knowledge and the goals and perspectives implicit in them is a notable sub-trend of dominating societal discourses.

## 5 INCORPORATING POWER CONCEPTS INTO INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE ANALYSES

As the chapters above indicate, there is a clear and formative role of power in institutional change which has important implications for change outcomes, analyses of institutional change and institutional interventions. Foucault himself applied the concepts of power used above to understand the very real and tangible impacts of discourse, governance, knowledge and authority on people's lives. To support further exploration of the impacts they have in regards to institutions, this chapter presents methods of operationalizing a power analysis.

### 5.1 Operationalizing a Power-Based Analytical Framework

To operationalize a power-based analytical framework, it must first be determined what such a framework would include. Relationships of power are of course essential, so strategic games, governmentality and power-knowledge must be included, along with dynamics of

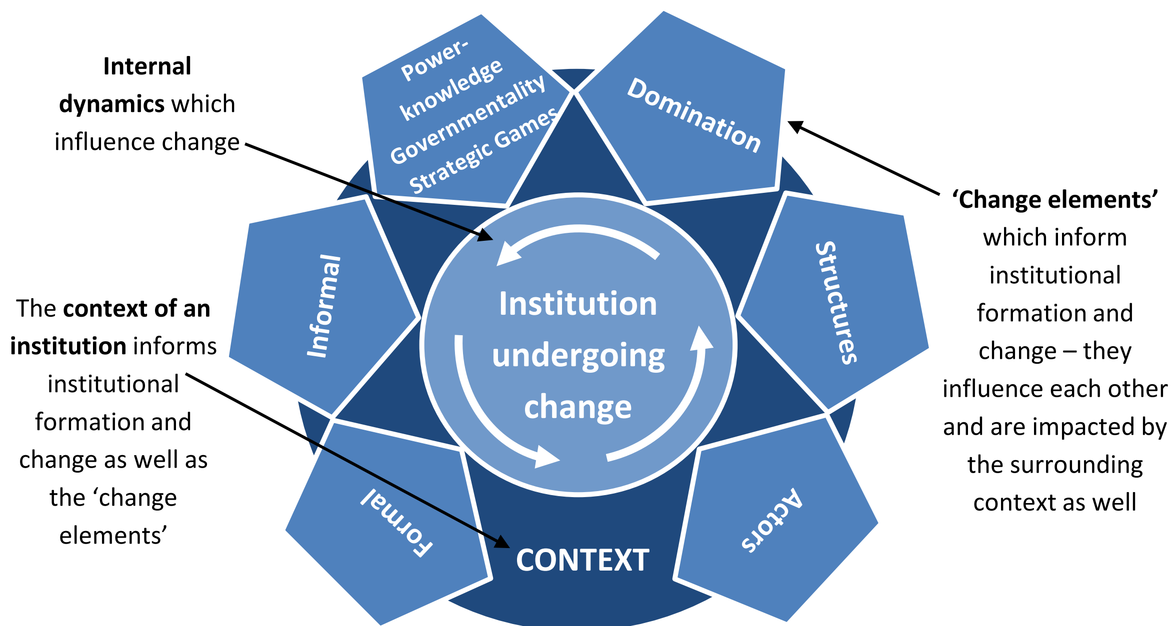
domination to which they can contribute. In addition, formal and informal structures and relations are critical elements, along with both institutional structures and actors. Changes in any one of these key elements informing institutional formation and change – which I will simply refer to as 'change elements' – can affect the others as well as the institution undergoing change. Shifts in the underlying context must also be acknowledged and considered, especially in a climate context, where climate changes can have a significant effect on any and all of the aspects informing institutional change. Ultimately, dynamics within the institution undergoing change must be recognized, as they determine how external changes are experienced and internalized by the institution. An overview of these aspects is included in the figure below.

While this diagram is clearly a simplified account of the elements within institutional change, the complex relations it portrays between change elements, context and internal institutional dynamics offer an important foundation for further analyses and discussions.

## 5.2 Applying these Relationships in Analysis

While the section above illustrates the key relationships and elements that a power-based analysis should take into account, applying these offers a further challenge. Such an analysis follows no singular institutional change theory, and because of the complexity and interconnected nature of the change elements presented above, identifying the influences and relations that ultimately contribute to a change can be challenging. However, a structured strategy for identifying and analysing change, informed by the theoretical discussions of earlier chapters and supplemented by insightful questions and a thorough approach offer a strong foundation for such an analysis.

*Figure 1: Factors Informing Institutional Change*

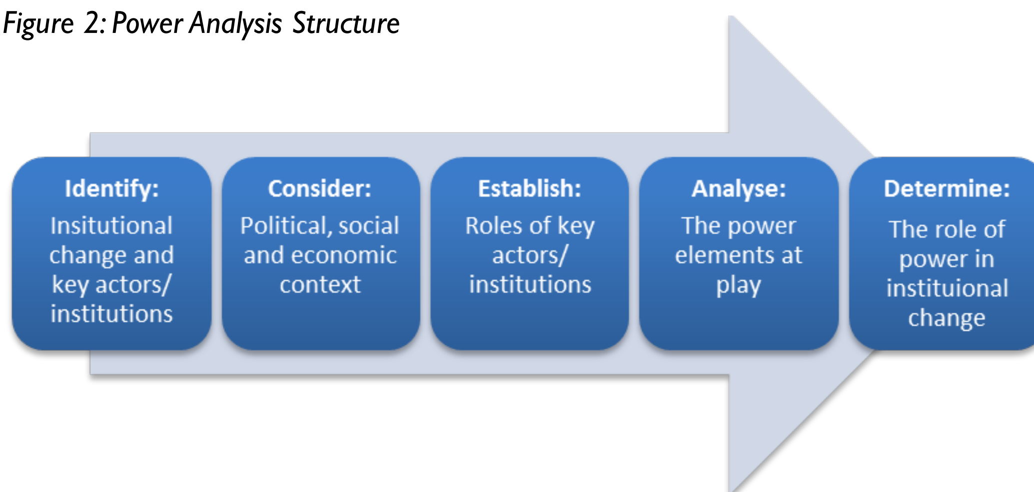


An example of what such a strategy could look like and the questions which would direct it are explored below.

These steps include the following actions and considerations:

1. Identify a singular institutional change of interest within the event study, and the key actors and institutions which play a role in the change.
2. Consider the political, social and economic context surrounding the event and the change. Try to understand the wider dynamics in which the change occurs and how the key actors and institutions fit into these dynamics. What is going on politically, socially and economically? How might that affect the change and impact the interests and roles of the key actors and institutions?
3. In light of the contextual background, determine the interests and roles of key actors and institutions. This should be both a wider exercise in determining their role in political/social/economic dynamics and a more focused exercise in determining their specific role in the change; the first will likely provide insights into the second.
4. Analyse the power elements involved in establishing the change and how they are deployed (by whom and through which channels). Use the types of power discussed earlier as well as examples from the different institutional change theories of how power can drive institutional change. Also consider insights from or parallels with innovation theories. Keep in mind contextual power elements, e.g. societal norms, and also power elements within the institution undergoing change which might play a role. Figure 1's depiction of various change elements can be used as a tool to consider different combinations of these elements which might be at play, e.g. 'domination (through) formal structures' or 'strategic games (through) informal (relations between) actors'.
5. Draw conclusions on the role of power in institutional change. What kinds of power were exercised by whom to establish the change? How does this link up to wider contextual dynamics and roles?

*Figure 2: Power Analysis Structure*



Taken together, these steps provide the foundational structure for a power analysis. To further explore how they would be approached in practice, the following section will apply them to the work of the CCRI project specifically.

### 5.3 CCRI as a Power Analysis Case

To further explore how to apply this approach, the work of the CCRI programme will be used as an example. Specifically, the findings from Vietnam will be used, but aspects relevant to the program more broadly will also be discussed. The case will be examined step-by-step, according to the structure presented above, and will consider the increasing involvement of Vietnam's Communist Party in flood and storm control issues. First, however, a brief background to the situation, specifically the role of the Communist Party, is provided.

In Vietnam Communist Party structures run parallel to many other organizational structures, including the civil service. While it is safe to assume that the vast majority of civil service members are also Communist Party members, it is important to make a clear distinction between the two. The civil service, while influenced by Communist Party values and ideologies, retains a focus on fulfilling everyday governmental duties. The Communist Party then offers a parallel structure aimed at furthering a certain political ideology and securing the Communist state and therefore does not necessarily represent or serve the public interest. In practice, the Communist Party can also be extremely influential for everyday governance decisions, and on the individual level as well, the Communist Party can make or break careers and determine access to future opportunities within a wide range of fields and industries. With that background in mind, the specific case will now be discussed step-by-step.

1. Identifying a change to study is largely about focusing in on the most relevant aspects of what may be larger processes of change. Establishing a limited focus is key as the elements involved in a change can be many and the processes complex; having too broad a focus can undermine the feasibility of the analysis. In Vietnam, for example, CCRI fieldwork has indicated that there has been an increased prioritization and perceived importance of flood and storm control by the civil service and the Communist Party at multiple levels as well as corresponding changes in structures and procedures. While this fits well with CCRI's focus on meso-level institutional change regarding climate change, these broad changes are not a feasible focus of study, and a more limited case must be identified within it.

   One thing that seemed especially interesting during the fieldwork conducted in July and August of 2013 was the increased role of the Communist Party in the civil service's responsibilities for flood and storm control preparedness and response, as presented in the box below.

   This is both a feasible and also interesting case to look at in regards to both power and institutional change. While further fieldwork and in-depth analysis of this specific case has not yet been conducted, a brief initial power analysis is presented here.

   Having identified the key change, the main actors and institutions involved must also be identified. From three different cases of Communist Party involvement, the key players seem to include meso-level civil servants involved in flood and storm control and Communist Party officials, and the key institutions seem to be provincial and district level flood and storm control committees and Communist Party leadership.

### Cases of Increasing Communist Party Involvement

**Thai Binh Province Director of Radio and Broadcasting**

In June 2013, the Director of TV and radio broadcasting of Thai Binh Province failed to ensure proper broadcasting of flood and storm warnings. The broadcasting organisation is obligated to broadcast important messages regarding storms and floods, but when a storm came, only 2 of the 8 warnings that should have been broadcast were sent out. Because of this lapse, the Provincial Chair suspended the Director for 15 days to investigate his responsibility in the matter. Because he is also a member of the Communist Party, the Party inspection committee met and attempted to determine if he was responsible or if there were technical problems which hindered broadcasting. The Director claims that there were technical problems with his telephone which prevented him from communicating regarding the warnings, so he retained his position and was not punished. A key informant, however, notes that though he is still allowed to work, he will likely face difficulties in the future, for instance lower pay and slow advancement.

**Hue Province, Quang Dien District Chair**

In this case, the Communist Party in Quang Dien district involved itself in Flood and Storm Control Committee leadership. Interviewees suggested that due to observation of and previous experience in other districts, Party leadership decided that it would be more effective to have the District Chair as head of the Flood and Storm Control Committee instead of the Vice Chair. It is thought that due to his higher position, he may be better able to coordinate and lead the district departments in Flood and Storm Control. (This was decided by the District Standing Committee of the Communist Party, which is the small, powerful group which manages the daily work of the Party between the meetings every 3 months.) As this has to be approved by the District Chair himself, it is not decided by the Party autonomously, though the Party can be seen to have notable influence in the matter.

**Communist Party Official Checks Preparedness in Hai Phong**

In Hai Phong, as a flood/storm was coming, the Provincial Secretary of the Communist Party decided to check flood and storm preparedness. He went out and performed random checks within the province. When he was returning, the ferry was closed as per regulations due to the coming storm. To check the response of ferry personnel, he offered them a bribe to let him take the ferry (without revealing his identity), and they accepted it. He crossed the river and called the Director of Transportation and Communications to make him aware of the lapse. However, the Director was not available as his phone was out of battery. As a result, he was fired. The Vice Director was also fired and the Vice Deputy Director's salary was docked and he was demoted.

2. The political, social and economic context must then be considered. While the dynamics of these cannot be presented here fully, it was evident that in relation to flood and storm control issues, many things are coming into play. Vietnam is moving further into middle income status, and there is pressure from the population to continue the trend of high levels of economic growth. Socially, demographics are shifting as many desire higher incomes and leave rural areas of Vietnam to travel to cities and other countries to find other work. In rural areas, the populations are experiencing decreasing economic security due to climate changes and unpredictability. Politically, the government (the civil service, though with influences from the Communist Party) feels the pressure for growth and in rural areas specifically, to secure rural livelihoods. Taken together, these wider issues are also impacted by the government's perceived and accepted responsibility to provide economic growth and stability. Most obviously, economic and political ramifications and concerns in connection to flood and storms were growing increasingly acute in the case study areas and there has been a broadly-observed increase in prioritization of and funding for flood and storm control over roughly the last 15 years, from national to household levels. Overall, this complex context creates sharp trade-offs, most particularly between addressing underlying factors of climate risk and securing economic growth, which affect the Party and meso-level governments' decision-making.
3. To establish the roles of the key actors, in this case Communist Party officials and government officials involved in flood and storm control, the dynamics above provide a starting place. The government officials in charge of flood and storm control are affected by pressure to secure rural livelihoods and growth and stand in a particularly precarious position between economic security, increasing climate unpredictability and fulfilling their responsibilities. Many officials interviewed have noted that they have increased their own emphasis on climate issues and time spent on attempting to solve these issues, which corresponds to the increased national emphasis on flood and storm control.

However, Communist Party officials who have stepped into flood and storm control issues have done so due to perceived weaknesses of civil service actors and structures in fulfilling flood and storm control duties. The Communist Party, as the single and controlling party in Vietnam, has a clear interest in securing economic stability and growth as well as securing popular opinion, and flood and storm control issues often provide particularly publicized and widespread impacts and threats. By increasingly emphasizing flood and storm control, the Communist Party fulfils expectations of its responsibilities as the ruling party. In this change, the Communist Party is assuming a role of greater oversight and authority over civil servants in flood and storm control situations and, more broadly, attempting to address issues that could threaten the Party's legitimacy and social contract with the people. Interestingly, however, Communist Party action has been limited to issues of flood and storm control and response, and has not included disaster risk reduction. This may be due to the highly publicized nature of flood and storm control, but also to the complex trade-offs and subsequent conflicts presented in disaster risk reduction, for instance in relation to livelihoods, socio-economic security and future growth.

4. Using Figure 1 as a starting point, it seems that this change involves dynamics of both governmentality and domination. The governmentality occurs in the first example through formal procedures, while in the last two, it is conducted through informal procedures. It is these last two instances especially which thus indicate an institutional change as new roles and responsibilities are being adopted. It is also these two examples which indicate a growing situation of domination; while the Communist Party is clearly dominant in Vietnam, these instances reveal its increasing assumption of power in flood and storm control through governmentality. As these actions go uncontested by civil servants, they quickly solidify a new institutional arrangement of dominance by the Communist Party regarding flood and storm control.

   When considering these changes in light of the discussions of institutional change and innovation theories, they seem to link up most closely to governmentality within gradual institutional change. The increasing authority of the Communist Party in the enforcement of flood and storm control 'rules' corresponds to the change in enforcement of rules which Mahoney and Thelen (2010) discuss. Specifically, this change can be identified as layering, where new rules and norms are established on top of or beside existing ones. In this case, the Communist Party's involvement is layered over the existing institutional arrangements, in a way creating a new, informal institutional structure of domination, with the Communist Party acting as a powerful 'watch dog'.

   Mahoney and Thelen (2010) also focus on the distributional aspects of institutions, which could offer an interesting perspective in this example. The actions of the Communist Party are endowing flood and storm control with a growing political significance, which, when considered in terms of the contextual elements addressed in step 2, may relate to the increasing threat climate events pose to the Party's interest in a content population experiencing growth and security. The Party's increasing management of flood and storm control issues could thus be interpreted as a bid to preserve political resources of legitimacy and a strong social contract.
5. When taken together, the considerations of the fourth step indicate a growing governmentality by the Communist Party in flood and storm control issues. It is conducted by layering new procedures over existing flood and storm control procedures and establishes a new authority and domination of the Party over existing structures and procedures; it also creates a new, informal institutional structure of domination. In a resource distributional perspective, this can be seen as a bid to secure the Party's political resources of legitimacy, authority and social contract with the people.

While this example is brief and straightforward, it offers insights into key aspects of such an analysis, specifically regarding understanding the institutional landscape, considering context and incorporating local insights and perspectives. Regarding the first of these, many diverse actors are often involved in a single instance of change, though this example offered only a simplistic presentation of what would likely be a much more lengthy and complex process of analysis involving many actors and institutions. Such a situation of complexity is made evident in Cleaver's (2012) consideration of a case of irrigation management in Tanzania; Cleaver notes at least 22 various types of insti-

tutions involved in irrigation and pastoralism in the case study area – not including individual water users or highly informal institutions such as norms or discourses. Such plurality is important to keep in mind to avoid overly simplistic and inaccurate analyses.

The example also indicates the importance of considering the wider context; the Communist Party's actions link up to broader political, social and economic shifts, and understanding the impacts and pressures these create is essential for a complete understanding of the institutional change at hand. Ultimately, an informed perspective also requires the input of local perspectives in the analysis. In the CCRI project, this is incorporated through country teams, including local researchers and PhD students who are able to offer invaluable insights and inputs into understanding the nuances of each country context.

Likely the most effective approach to understanding these multifaceted institutional changes is through thorough qualitative fieldwork; this is especially relevant for grasping the nuanced relationships between different change elements and identifying informal institutions and relationships, tasks which can be difficult or even impossible through a document analysis or other types of desk study or by using quantitative data. In addition, contact with a range of actors and institutions, which is important in building up an understanding of context, is also an essential aspect of a power analysis to which thorough fieldwork can contribute. When looking at meso-level government as the CCRI project does, for instance, it is important to get perspectives from both different levels of meso-level institutions as well as internal and external (government and non-government) perspectives of these institutions. This contributes to a more holistic, nuanced consideration of the institutional landscape, which may offer important insights in a power analysis.

# 6 INSTITUTIONAL AND INNOVATION THEORIES IN POWER ANALYSES

This chapter will offer final reflections on institutional change and innovation theories as well as what a power analysis can contribute. It will first discuss conclusions and reflections of theories of institutions and institutional change, before considering innovation theories and ultimately offering final conclusions.

## 6.1 Theories of Institutions and Institutional Change

The discussions above indicate the significant role for power in Path Dependency, Gradual Institutional Change and Institutional Bricolage. In addition, they point to the importance of an inclusive account of institutional change – there is no single method or mode of institutional change; it is instead a complex, multi-faceted process, with many possible inputs and outcomes.

These findings offer critical insights into the usefulness of the main schools of institutional thought. Particularly, they suggest that the more simplistic, technocratic perspectives behind Mainstream Institutionalism and Rational Choice Institutionalism are less useful for in-depth analyses of institutional change. Instead, the more complex accounts presented in Critical Institutionalism as well as Historical and Sociological Institutionalism offer a much stronger foundation for nuanced, insightful discussion of institutions and institutional change.

For both analysis and practice, acknowledgement of institutional complexity and power aspects are therefore an essential starting point. Any other approach would disregard the critical dynamics presented in the preceding chapters, producing a significantly enfeebled analytical output or project outcome.

### 6.2 Innovation Theories

In addition, the findings offer important reflections on innovation theories. Much as with institutional change theories, they suggest that simplistic accounts of innovation are incomplete as they disregard the complex realities and interactions of the structures and actors which allow for and drive innovations. This therefore supports more complex accounts of open innovation through multi-actor systems. It also supports the process-based accounts of innovation as learning, which are predicated upon the idea that innovations are not the result of single, one-off interventions. These conclusions severely undermine the suitability of linear perceptions of innovations, especially in a context of climate uncertainty and change.

### 6.3 Contributions of a Power Analysis

Ultimately, these discussions also indicate the two major contributions of power analyses of institutional change. First, such analyses enable consideration of the complexity of institutional change. The diverse power concepts and the relations they entail, for instance between actors and structures and formal and informal arrangements, have the capacity to both describe and explain a wide range of institutional arrangements and dynamics, including why and how these might occur.

Second, power analyses of institutional change allow for the combined use of institutional change theories despite their diverse theoretical underpinnings. By conceptually locating the theories in a shared context of power, such analyses can avoid segregated consideration of either one or another account of institutional change. They thus evade the subsequent weaknesses of such analyses, which are inevitable in situations where adhering to theoretical delineations takes precedence over analyzing the realities of institutional change.

Power analyses can therefore contribute valuably to studies of institutional change; they support more thorough, complex understandings of the drivers and processes of institutional change, ultimately addressing the ‘why’ of institutional change.

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