# Leadership in World Society: Power and Change from the Perspective of Sociological Institutionalism

Anja P. Jakobi

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Introduction

Nowadays, constructivism forms one of three grand theories of international relations (IR) scholarship. At the heart of this theory is sociological institutionalism, which has become particularly important in research on norms and legitimacy. As such, it has contributed to an enhanced understanding of how international organizations influence states, or why identities and culture are important (Finnemore 1993; Katzenstein 1996). However, given the usual focus on norms, sociological institutionalism is often not perceived as a real challenge to realist or rationalist theories that put power and interests at the center of their explanations. Despite a significant different ontological base (see Risse 2002: 599-600), sociological institutionalism forms a complementary approach that puts forward explanations for phenomena that are hard to grasp with a realist focus on power or a rationalist focus on interests (see, for instance, critique by Drezner 2007).

This paper will take a different route. It aims to enlarge the framework of sociological institutionalism by also covering issues that are usually left out of its analytical focus, specifically power and change.[1] Sociological institutionalism is a highly developed framework in sociology and encompasses a breadth of arguments that are currently widely overlooked by scholars in IR, who thus miss an opportunity to test new explanations in key areas of interest to the discipline. Most importantly, norm-related research is actually only one aspect of sociological institutionalism, and other pillars in this theoretical tradition underline very different aspects. By conceptualizing power and change in this theoretical framework, I aim to show that this tradition can provide an important alternative to standard realist and rationalist theories in core fields of their application. The paper thus delivers a more nuanced picture of sociological institutionalism, and at the same time, it opens up an array of further research on international politics. This is important given that political activities in current global governance reflect different and complex political maneuvers, ranging from hard to soft governance, and including the orchestration of state and non-state actors (Abbott et al. 2010). The idea of world society corresponds well to this complexity, but conceptualization of change and power is still required in this framework. However, the theoretical focus on structures and outcomes, but not on actors, is an important reason why sociological institutionalism has been applied only partially in IR.

To overcome these limitations, this paper lays out a theoretical framework to explain the rise of regulations, norms or global governance efforts, as well as the change brought with them. I first present the development of sociological institutionalism, in particular its roots in organizational analyses and its understanding of world politics. In a second step, I then turn to a specific concept of power and change in world society, derived from approaches of institutional entrepreneurship in organizational studies. As the section shows, it is possible to conceptualize these issues in institutional terms, resulting in a widely relational concept, considering specific interactions with other, less powerful actors. In the third step, I provide an empirical case study on institutional entrepreneurship, namely the United States and the field of global crime governance. In the final section I identify several research areas that could build upon an enlarged concept of world society

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1   The paper is derived from work presented in Jakobi (2011).

and sociological institutionalism. I particularly outline the potential for research on global political change, governmental strategies for change and the linkage to diffusion.

Throughout the paper, I refer to 'sociological institutionalism' as the body of thought that, for example, Finnemore or Hall/Taylor presented in earlier work (Finnemore 1996; Hall/Taylor 1996). However, from the very perspective of the theorists concerned, this is not necessarily the most appropriate label, given that there are different institutionalists in sociology, and that those labeled 'sociological institutionalists' in political science are usually considered to be the 'new institutionalists' in sociology (Powell/DiMaggio 1992). Moreover, there is considerable variation among these institutionalists with regard to main explanatory models, the role of actors and many more aspects (see Meyer 2009; Scott 2008). Besides, scholars in organization theory have begun to define themselves as 'organizational institutionalist' (Greenwood et al. 2008: 1). While these terms all denote a strong variety of institutional approaches, I stick to the label of 'sociological institutionalism' here, since it has become widely established in IR research, but, as we shall see below, at the cost of lessening the distinctive character of specific discussions therein. By 'world society theory', I refer to a specific strand of research that developed in this framework, and which explains worldwide political and social change (compare Drori/Krücken 2009; Meyer et al. 1997a).

In sum, incorporating political leadership to the idea of world society adds an important element for explaining change in world society. From such perspective, world politics is a relational struggle for leadership and the diffusion of common ideas and regulations that are in line with those ideas favored by the leaders. This is closely related to many other approaches in IR, but entails a strong relational component and also conceives power as being linked primarily to a specific issue area.

## The Background of Sociological Institutionalism

Sociological institutionalism can be differentiated in two interrelated, yet distinct research fields, namely world society research and organizational analyses (Jakobi/Koch 2011). While organizational analyses focus on the processes related to organizations and their environment, world society is concerned with cross-national and longitudinal analyses of how a common culture is disseminated (Meyer et al. 1997a; Drori et al. 2003; Djelic/Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Drori et al. 2006; Krücken/Drori 2009). Elements of sociological institutionalism theorizing are increasingly used by IR scholars, in particular related to research on international organizations, norms and legitimacy (e.g. Finnemore 1993; Barnett/Finnemore 1999; Koch 2008).

Research on world society has a long-standing tradition that first became explicit in the 1970s (see also Greve/Heintz 2005). Starting points were the findings of organizational analyses that point at the decoupling of actual functions and organizational structures. A similar concept – common world trends that impact on the policies and structures of countries – has been used in the world society strand of sociological institutionalism (Meyer et al. 1997a). World society represents the environment in which nation-states, but also non-state actors like business or non-governmental organizations are embedded (Drori 2008: 449). In its basic form, world society research analyses thus how international influences impact on nation states and societies. This is often done in cross-national analyses and by longitudinal data which shows surprising convergence over time, irrespective of national conditions (for example Meyer et al. 1997a, 1997b).

Two different aspects can be distinguished in these studies (Drori 2008: 462-4): One is the consolidation of the global that is linked to the rise of global ideas, global institutions or the enlargement to world society as important point of reference. The second is worldwide diffusion, conceived as the dissemination of world societal ideas and practices. In any of these strands, world research analyses a diverse set of cases, ranging from women's rights, non-governmental actors, formal organizations, conflict or science (see Drori et al. 2003; Lechner/Boli 2005; Hironaka 2005; Drori et al. 2006). In its totality, research on world society fulfils criteria that are linked to the definition of a comprehensive theoretical research program (Drori/Krücken 2009: 5). It is explicitly

rooted in American traditions of empirical research, but also has strong linkages to theoretical claims prominent in European thinking in constructivist terms (Drori/Krücken 2009: 6).

However, world society theory is actually a derivate and expansion of institutionalist thinking in organization studies. Organizational analyses provided key insights that have later been applied to the state world, and later vice versa (Drori 2008: 449). The so-called new institutionalism in organizational analyses developed since the late 1970s, against a background of foremost functionalist theories and with the idea of an organization as an open system and responding to the external environment (Scott 2008: x). From then on, three phases of sociological institutionalism can be distinguished: the first, founding years of late 1970s and early 1980s; the second phase until the early 1990s; and the third phase of an expanding research agenda from then onwards (Greenwood et al. 2008): The foundations of new institutionalism were laid down in several articles that newly introduced the idea that organizations correspond to normative expectations, in particular if these expectations are linked to rational reasoning, for example justifying a better performance (see also Hasse/Krücken 1999). Six most important insights can be identified in this phase: Firstly, the institutional and network context influences organizations. 'Rationalized myths' of appropriate conduct represent this institutional context (Meyer/Rowan 1977). Secondly, while all organizations are subject to these pressures, they impact in particularly on organizations that have unclear technologies or outcomes that are difficult to evaluate. Thirdly, since organizations seek social approval and legitimacy, and such approval is granted to specific organizational behavior, organizations tend to become isomorphic over time (DiMaggio/Powell 1983). Fourthly, the conformity to external expectations might be at odds with the actual aims of the organizations. As a consequence, organizations decouple symbolic structures from the actual core of its operations, and the alignment to external expectations therefore remains mainly ceremonial. Fifthly, institutionalized practices are typically widely accepted, taken for granted and difficult to change. Sixthly, and finally, organizations are embedded in an organizational field, in which intense exchange takes place and in which organizational structures are disseminated, either due to coercion, due to professionalization and elite interests or through mimesis (Greenwood et al. 2008: 6-7). Only slowly, these ideas caught attention, but grew constantly over time.

In the second phase, research split up to different fields with ongoing interactions. Studies analyzed how organizations adopt external models, underlining the rationalization of these ideas and their spread across organizational fields. Different kinds of organizations were distinguished and their varying responses to the environment examined. The transmission of the external expectations and how exactly organizations were influenced also became more important. Finally, different cultural environments were compared. New research strands in this phase considered agency and interests in institutionalization, institutional change and the consequences of institutional behavior (Greenwood et al. 2008: 7-13).

In the last phase, starting in the early 1990s, institutionalist theorizing has become an established perspective in organization studies (Greenwood et al. 2008: 14-21). As a consequence, the term 'institution' multiplied in meanings. One research direction analyzes institutional isomorphism, focusing on how and why organizations respond differently to their environment, including structural factors, intra-organizational causes, agency and concepts like translation or organizational identity. A further strand of research analyzes legitimacy, differentiating different forms, different sources and different ways in which it can be acquired Other areas have been concerned with institutional entrepreneurship and change, identifying important factors for the rise and decay of institutions, and the existence of institutional logics (for example Leca/Naccache 2006; Leca et al. 2008; Beckert 1999; Thornton/Ocasio 2008). Table 1 summarizes the development of sociological institutionalism in organizational analyses over time. It shows that institutionalist theorizing started with questions of rationalization, homogeneity, and structural causes, but ultimately resulted in diverse research fields, including agency, interests and the explanation of change (Greenwood et al. 2008: 23-30).

Table 1: The Development of Sociological Institutionalism in Organizational Analyses

|  | Starting Points | 1st Phase: 1970s | 2nd Phase: 1980s | 3rd Phase: 1990s onwards |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status |  | Institutional theory as a peripheral perspective | Institutional theory as an important perspective | Institutional theory as a major perspective |
| Main Issues | Organizations as open systems<br><br>Garbage can models | Institutional context influences organizations, in particular those with unclear technologies/goals<br><br>Organizations construct and respond to shared meanings<br><br>Establishment of conformity | Adoption and spread of models<br><br>Variation of responses to environment across different types of organizations<br><br>Cross-national comparisons of organizational responses<br><br>Transmission of external influence<br><br>Linkages to other theories | Institutional isomorphism<br><br>Variation of responses to environment due to structural factors or intra-organizational features<br><br>Different sources and transmissions of legitimacy; different acquisitions and processing of legitimacy<br><br>Institutional entrepreneurship and change<br><br>Institutional logics, including conflicts |
| Important concepts |  | Decoupling<br><br>Taken-for-grantedness<br><br>Rationalized myths<br><br>Isomorphism<br><br>Organizational field | Different kinds of isomorphism<br><br>Sources of institutionalized behavior<br><br>Institutional change<br><br>Consequences of institutional behavior | Different kinds of legitimacy<br><br>Change<br><br>Conflict<br><br>Heterogeneity |

While sociological institutionalism is rarely covered in its breadth in IR scholarship (but see Barnett/Finnemore 1999; Dingwerth/Pattberg 2009; Koch 2009, Lipson 2001), a world society perspective has been employed frequently, but with mundane differences (see Meyer et al. 1997a; Albert/Hilkermeier 2004). In any of these different understandings, however, world society is more than the interstate world. The concept also focuses on the importance of non-state actors, transnational relations or the importance of community formation at the world level This inclusive perspective does not necessarily result in causal hypotheses on actor influence or outcomes (see Albert et al. 2000). Yet from a perspective of sociological institutionalism, world society and the role of politics are conceptualized in a very specific causal way, specific processes are emphasized and related hypotheses are drawn. The theorization of world society – and, consequently, world politics – from this angle is based on three interrelated concepts: the global field, its central units and its world culture. A world society perspective does not call for a completely new set of important actors in world politics, but it enlarges the focus from nation-states and international organizations to other organizations, for example non-governmental organizations, business

companies and science, and points at the important relationships between these different groups. This interplay of nation states, international governmental organizations and non-state actors is part of several analytical approaches (for example Abbott et al. 2010; Albert et al. 2000). Their activities and interrelations in a specific issue area turn them into what Avant and coauthors call 'global governors' (Avant et al. 2010): a mix of public and private actors who are actively governing a specific policy field. However, world society theorists would argue that global governors are not random. Rather, there are similarities in patterns of governance, both across issue areas and over time, which can be explored.

But sociological institutionalism not only conceptualizes world society as a field and its units, it also assesses a constitutive culture linked to them (see also Buhari-Gulmez 2010). Following this approach, the process of global institutionalization in world society is linked to specific normative assumptions, namely a culture deeply influenced by models of functionalism, by causal theories and explanations (Lechner/Boli 2005; Boli/Thomas 1999). In consequence, this provides a background that makes the acceptance of specific norms and regulations more or less likely (Finnemore/Sikkink 1998: 907). In this broad understanding, culture refers to the rules that constitute society, going beyond questions of taste and morality. Instead, culture lays the foundations that determine what we conceive as being an actor or an activity, what social action is and what provides the basis of its acceptance. It its most extreme forms, this includes which explanations about the world that we are more likely accept than others. Cultural rules form the center of a social system, and culture defines the very basis of society and according to this understanding, it encompasses both an ontological aspect – linking actors to means and ends – and a significatory aspect, relating actors to meaning and legitimacy. More visible regulations, for instance property rights or childhood education, are derived from underlying cultural – and often unconscious – rules on what seems to be appropriate. In that sense, culture is constitutive (Meyer et al. 1994: 17-18).

The three aspects of field, units and culture are crucial for analyses of world society, and they also reinforce each other. For example, given the high legitimacy that units like individuals, organizations, nation states enjoy in world culture, they are likely to be central addresses of new trends in the field. The trend to increasingly regulate 'behind-the border issues' (Zürn et al. 2006: 16) – setting up international regulations for non-state actors instead of regulating state behavior – is one element of a world cultural expansion. Nonetheless, sociological institutionalism shows weaknesses in conceptualizing the role of nation states and other actors. They actually appear only peripherally as actors in world politics, even if some countries are seen as being dominant in specific areas – for example the United States in cultural matters (Meyer et al. 1997a: 164). Given a substantial critique on actorhood though (Meyer et al. 1997a: 148-151; Meyer 2010), world society theory has not yet put nation states central to world cultural and world political change. This will be conceptualized as power in the following, based on institutional entrepreneurship and political leadership.

In that context, the notion of change is particularly important. Powerful actors can bring about change in a field or they can stabilize it in a form that serves their interests. Yet explaining change is difficult for many theories in IR (for example, Finnemore/Sikkink 1998: 888), and in particular sociological institutionalist theories, given its emphasis on the binding power of established institutions, is foremost concerned with stability. Organizational sociology discusses change in organizational fields as institutional change, in combination with institutional entrepreneurship. While causal explanations for such change are still rare in world society theorizing, organizational sociologists have advanced possible sources for change (Beckert 1999: 779-82). The most important one is institutional entrepreneurship, which identifies properties and activities of specific field members in bringing about change across the field and among its members. From a world society perspective, institutional change is actually an important part of creating a world society and is linked to the dissemination of new institutions and the subsequent establishment of new regulations and practices, yet explanations of it appear underdeveloped. The following section

will elaborate on these theoretical refinements and link them to world society theory and research on international relations.

## Power and Change in World Society

The importance of states in world politics is a truism for IR analysts. In the realist tradition, state power has always been the crucial component of global politics (e.g. (Mearsheimer 2001; Drezner 2007). And independent of the theoretical framework, much research is currently devoted to exploring the consequences of a power shift from the West to other countries (for example Ikenberry/Wright 2008). While world society theory usually does not to capture such changes, it does actually not preclude that countries – as well as other entities – promote different world cultural models, indirectly or directly (Meyer et al. 1997a: 164). In much the same way, world culture is connected to the hegemonic position of some states over others. As Meyer and colleagues state (1997a: 167): 'Power and interests aside, the cultural styles or tastes of dominant actors might readily replicate themselves in global cultural models. Some dimensions of world culture […] may fade from world culture when the United States has lost its hegemonic position.' Despite its emphasis on non-power based mechanisms, world society and its culture thus incorporates aspects of hegemony and the important role that dominant states play on the global level. In this paper, the idea of institutional leadership will be used to conceptualize these links between power and world society more closely. Most basically, it means that world society is populated by actors that differ in their importance for institutionalization and diffusion, with some being more important with regard to leadership than others. In effect, policies based on world culture and diffused within world society reflect the approaches of dominant states.

## Institutional Entrepreneurs and Political Leadership

Political leadership is a constant in international relation analyses and practice. Hegemonic stability theory pointed out that hegemons are a necessary part of establishing regimes (Kindleberger 1986; Keohane 1984). Political leadership for stimulating cooperation is also an essential component of soft power (Nye 1990; Nye 2002). Initially, literature in organizational studies had problems in conceptualizing leaders as part of the theoretical framework, and research on institutional leadership is a reaction to this problem. Theories based on sociological institutionalism usually treat actors as the dependent variable, while relying on macro-structures as an independent variable to explain change. It is a major point of critique that the talk of organizational fields and of world society elaborates on the internal dynamics, but has only partially considered which specific conditions and activities cause such dynamics. Organizational theories therefore introduced the terms 'institutional entrepreneurs' or 'institutional leadership' to denote specific actors that bring change, and to bring back actors, interests and power to the study of organizational fields (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 198). For world society theorists, this strand of research enables a focus on specific actors and their relationship to others in promoting the development of norms and policies. By borrowing on the idea of institutional entrepreneurship and leadership, the theory of world society can be brought closer to traditional and actor-centered IR analyses.

Many analysts of international relations presuppose the existence of leaders for reaching an outcome in international forums (see Lindenthal 2009). Oran Young (1991: 307) elaborated on different forms of leadership, referring to individuals and their characteristics in political negotiations. But the notion of leadership can also be used more comprehensively and with regard to collective actors like states. Leadership is prominent in hegemonic stability theory, which assumes that a leader – a country – is needed to provide a global infrastructure that benefits all collectively (Kindleberger 1986). Later theorists often presumed that a hegemon acts foremost egoistically (see Gilpin 2001; Foot et al. 2003; Krasner 2009). In his work, however, Kindleberger did not imply that leaders are necessarily egoistic and establish such infrastructure only when their own benefits outweigh their costs; instead it was the unwillingness of the Americans to take

leadership costs that he identified as one of the causes of worldwide turmoil. Moreover, leadership is also not only bound to military or economic might. In his conception of soft power, Nye shows how different forms leadership can be exerted, including the cooperation with other states and non-state actors as well as issue-areas like education, culture or science (Nye 1990). In contrast to these approaches, however, sociological institutionalism would need to conceive leadership more closely linked to surrounding social structures, leadership, thus, is leading a common group, a world society, it is not leading 'external others'. In consequence, sociological institutionalism would need a highly relations concept of leadership.

The idea of institutional entrepreneurs provides a useful starting point for this endeavor: In norm-related IR research, the idea of an institutional entrepreneur is already reflected in the notion of 'moral entrepreneur' (for example, Finnemore/Sikkink 1998; Nadelmann 1990). Institutional entrepreneurship was first introduced to organization studies in the 1980s. It refers to the 'activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones' (Maguire et al. 2004: 657). In organization theory, the notion represents an important step in institutionalist theorizing that was to date foremost concerned with exploring the constraints under which actors operate (Leca et al. 2008: 3). Given the strong institutionalization effects of organizational fields, change is actually highly unlikely and the work of institutional entrepreneurs is therefore to some extent puzzling. First, it is unclear how such entrepreneurs can actually envision and implement changes if they are deeply embedded in the field. Second, it is difficult to explain how entrepreneurs actually bring about changes in the orientation of other field members (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 199). Institutional entrepreneurship is thus strongly linked to problems of structure versus agency, given that actors who are strongly influenced by the environment change this environment (for example Leca/Naccache 2006; Fligstein 2001; Battilana 2006).

Leca and coauthors (Leca et al. 2008) present several conditions when an actor is likely to become an institutional entrepreneur and address how this process unfolds. Field-level conditions refer to changes and opportunities that arise from the field, for example through technological change or high degrees of uncertainty (Leca et al. 2008: 7-11). The actor's social position and linkages to other field members can also be decisive for entrepreneurship. In fact, 'existing institutional arrangements are a source of power for some people and not for others in a given organizational field' (Battilana 2006: 660). On the one hand, actors on the periphery of a field are more likely to innovate given that they are less bound to the fields dominant logic of action. On the other hand, central actors usually have more resources and contacts that help to innovate. The status of actors is a critical component of institutional change: actors that come from an organization with lower prestige or of lower status groups are more likely to be on the margins of the field, which can make institutional change very difficult. However, they can overcome barriers through interorganizational networking and through networking with higher status organizations, groups and individuals (compare Battilana 2006). Actors' specific characteristics, like social skills and the ability to relate to others have been a further important factor in studies of institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana 2006; Fligstein 2001). Social skills include the effective inducement of cooperation among diverse actors, agenda-setting with a view to common activities, or the persuasion that common interests exist.

The concept of institutional entrepreneurs provides a framework in which the rise and dissemination of policies and norms can be linked to embedded agency. Unlike a concept that simply refers to power, literature on institutional entrepreneurship analyzes which activities and properties make actors powerful in relation to others. The literature on institutional entrepreneurship, however, is quite diverse, and ranges from emphasis of individual ability to the positioning in the field. In particular the latter is more closely linked to institutionalist positions and underlines 'the ability of institutional entrepreneurs to see or create 'a window of opportunity' needs to be considered in relation to the way in which the field produces their interests, skills and stocks of knowledge […] (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 202). With a view to institutional entrepreneurship in world society, one could thus claim that the collective actor, or state, that aims

to change an existing global regulatory framework needs to persuade potential allies. This is enhanced by discursive abilities, but also by the position it has in the field. This positioning is relative: Scandinavian countries are more likely to be accepted as leaders in issues related to global social policy, while the United States is likely to be an authority in military or economic affairs. The hierarchy of policy fields – military might usually outruns social cohesion –makes the United States intuitively appear more powerful to most IR scholars. Research on political leadership therefore needs to start from the field, identifying the potentially important leaders and entrepreneurs that have brought about or are about to bring about change. This implies that countries and organizations need to be analyzed that visibly attempt to change the field.

## Analyzing Institutional Entrepreneurs

Institutional entrepreneurship is a collective process. Although power is important, it also involves partnerships, cooperation and coalitions, material and discursive interventions (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 209). Institutional change is a social enterprise, and any activity of an institutional entrepreneur or political leader is targeted to a reaction of others. Institutional change is closely linked to bringing dynamics to an institutionalized field, but since the field has already established specific practices and change does not happen in a vacuum, power is an essential tool in institutional entrepreneurship (Beckert 1999). Traditional analyses in IR often rely on military or economic capability of states (for example Mearsheimer 2001). In organizational analyses, power is based on superior resources, ranging from finance to knowledge or force (Beckert 1999: 792). At the same time, power is intrinsically linked to the position of entrepreneurs in the field, being a relational concept (Lawrence 2008: 174). In particular the accumulation of social, cultural or other capital, following Bourdieu, can enhance the position of an actor and the capability to exercise power (Leca/Naccache 2006: 645). In other words, 'actors do not "have" power; instead, they occupy (or fail to occupy) subject positions that allow them to exercise power in – and on – a particular field' (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 201). This exercise of power can be episodic, e.g. in discrete, strategic action, or it can be systemic, provided through routines, networks and other relationships (Lawrence 2008: 174). Political leadership in world society applies similar mechanisms and is intrinsically linked to episodic or systemic relations. Leaders may be outstanding with regard to resources and the accumulation of different capital (including social or cultural). If they rely on systemic power, they are placed centrally in the field and are linked to many other members of world society through membership, networks or informal relations. If they mainly use episodic power, they use a particular window of opportunity that makes them powerful at a specific event. Both strategies can be combined and make change more likely.

With regard to strategies applied, institutional entrepreneurship reminds us of other political processes: It is accompanied by discursive strategies and mobilizing resources (Leca et al. 2008). Discursive strategies, like constructing causal relationships, diagnosing failures or providing solutions are essential in that respect. Mobilization is a necessary component of discursive strategies, and framing claims need to be done in a way that maximizes cooperation with potential allies (Leca et al. 2008: 13). The formation of alliances and cooperation is particularly facilitated when entrepreneurs convince others that their ideas are mutually beneficial, or when they can present themselves as neutral and acting in the interest of a common good (Leca et al. 2008: 12-14). Mobilizing resources is essential for institutional entrepreneurs since they need to overcome initial resistance and need to secure support. Tangible resources like financial assets can be used to bypass sanctions of other field members, or they can be used to finance initiation of institutions or to pressure other members to favor new institutions. Intangible resources like social capital, legitimacy or formal authority are important, too: Social capital helps in providing and receiving information and support, and it bridges different contexts that might be crucial for institutional change. Legitimacy facilitates the perception of and attention given to claims. Formal authority, finally, also provides an important avenue to institutional entrepreneurship, given that others orient themselves towards formal requirements (Leca et al. 2008: 14-16). Finally, the design of

institutional arrangements is a further important element of institutional entrepreneurship, and area where the common ground between organization studies and IR is particularly obvious (see Leca et al. 2008: 17-18; Wijen/Ansari 2007; Koremenos et al. 2001; Abbott et al. 2000). Institutional entrepreneurs try to choose designs that best serve their ideas on change, ranging from formal and binding institutions to more informal standards e.g. common in professionalization.

With regard to world society, we can thus expect leaders to apply discursive strategies like framing to push forward a specific policy development. Financial and social resources can be used to foster policy development and implementation or by pressuring in networks. Mobilization of like-minded states, coalition-building, and the initiation of cooperation are part of the strategy in institutional change. Finally, legitimacy as well as authority can be used: for example, states can point to the normative or legal obligation to overcome obstacles in policy adoption. Institutional entrepreneurs have different tools at hand to move the field in their direction. They use institutional logics that seem to appeal most to the constituency of the field (Leca/Naccache 2006: 634). 'Because institutional fields are arenas of ongoing and shifting power relations that are only ever contingently stabilized, institutional entrepreneurship can be seen as the realignment of material, discursive and organizational forces around new relations and practices […]' (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 209).

In particular, collective action frameworks are important for institutional entrepreneurs, since they can cause movement around a common issue within the field (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 208). By theorization and framing, institutional entrepreneurs devalue the status quo and seek to establish alternatives that also resonate with the field members. Claims typically involve both interest-based as well as normative claims. Also, sharing ideas and collective sense-making can be part of entrepreneurship (Hardy/Maguire 2008: 208-9). Dorado (2005: 390-2) distinguishes three strategies – leveraging, accumulating and convening – as sources for change in a field. For leveraging, entrepreneurs define the projected change, seek support from others, and afterwards bargain for change with dominant actors in the field. In the case of accumulation, change is caused by the addition of several, partly interdependent, partly independent activities. They accumulate over time, diffuse and are replicated. Convening, finally, implies the creation of interorganizational structures in the field that collaborate to bring change. Political leadership has these tools at hand too: reference to norms and the appeal to common goals can be used to initiate change. Like other institutional entrepreneurs, states can use tools like theorization, framing and the building of collective action frameworks to build alliances in the field and to stimulate movement of in world society. IR Research has frequently pointed at such processes. For example, securitization processes are grounded on these principles, constructing urgency and danger for collective security (Buzan et al. 1998).

The Added Value of Integrating Political Leadership

The presentation of institutional entrepreneurship has shown many parallels to practice and theory in IR research. States and other actors use these strategies like many other institutional entrepreneurs, so that political leadership is only one facet of broader institutional change. However, the added value of linking political leadership to institutional change and entrepreneurship lies in its theoretical closeness to world society research, and in the ability to provide a concept that considers actors in a structuralist framework. From the perspective of institutional entrepreneurship, we should be able to explain change in world politics by reference to actors, but we can incorporate this explanation to world society theory and its emphasis on shared expectations and culture. Structure and agency are thus brought together more closely and allow us to examine them empirically.

Including political leadership in analyses of sociological institutionalism is not the repetition of what has already been shown in other accounts of world politics. First, institutional entrepreneurs and political leaders are not altruists. Instead, institutional change in world society may well be motivated by egoistic means-end rationalities. Nonetheless, the procedure how they achieve these

ends is conceptualized in terms of sociological institutionalism, which allows a more coherent and comprehensive picture of how interests and norms, agency and structure are linked. In consequence, sociological institutionalism also is more open to interest-based activities and thus more applicable to a broader universe of cases in research on international relations. Secondly, this broadening also enables us to use arguments derived from sociological institutionalism when questioning the causes of change. So far, institutional change, its extent and its consequences have been the main focus of analyses in world society theory. Introducing institutional entrepreneurship and political leadership to this theoretical framework allows for more comprehensive explanations. For example, we could asses a current wave of criminalization efforts at the international level, leading to comprehensive international definitions of criminality, in such diverse areas as corruption, money laundering, human trafficking and more. While we can analyze this as norm proliferation from a usual perspective of sociological institutionalism, the idea of institutional entrepreneurship delivers a focus on political leaders that contribute to this process. Here, the United States quickly stands out as being an obvious demander and institutional entrepreneur of crime-related regulations (for example Abbott/Snidal 2002). The broadening of the analytical framework thus supports the analysis of the rise, diffusion and effects of global regulations. Thirdly, from a more practical perspective, the conceptualization of actorhood in world society theory is also an important keystone in reaching a comprehensive idea of global public policy as domestic policy making of world affairs. World society is then the global community, in which specific norms and policies are established. Analyses of successful or less successful strategies may then have important consequences for policy makers.

### Exemplifying Entrepreneurship: The United States and Global Crime Governance

The importance of leadership, also in contrast to hegemony, can be exemplified by the case of global crime governance, the attempt to fight crime on the international level and across countries. While defining and fighting crime has often been closely attached to the nation state, in particular the 1990s have witnessed an unprecedented spread of international, crime-related regulations: Early attempts of prohibitions focused on slavery, prostitutions and drugs, nowadays international regulations concern such diverse issues as money laundering, corruption, migrant smuggling or transnational organized crime in general (for example Nadelmann 1990; Andreas/Nadelmann 2006; Scherrer 2009). In consequence, new criminalization on the national level has taken place, thus translating global regulations to national laws. At the same time, cooperation among law enforcement agencies has significantly increased, visible in new agencies like Europol, growing mandates of Interpol or bilateral exchange (for example Anderson 1989; Deflem 2006). All in all, thus, crime policies constitute a field in which global norms are generated, disseminated and change national practices – representing a typical and global institutionalization process in the understanding of sociological institutionalism. But while such account would usually point at the dissemination of these standards and the convergence of countries over time, incorporating leadership also sheds light at the sources of these norms and their implementation.

A rich literature has repeatedly pointed at the United States as the prominent demandeur of global crime policies and their implementation: The country is not only eager to fight crime within its borders, but – with the exception of early prohibitions like slavery in the 19th century – the United States has taken strong interest in the development of many global policies over time, using different instruments to ensure their establishment, dissemination and enforcement (Andreas/Price 2001; Andreas/Nadelmann 2006). The leadership of the country is visible across issue areas and established by different means. The fight against drugs and the fight against terrorism are just two cases in which the United States pressured for regulations, for example international conventions against drugs, financing of terrorism or special recommendations issued by the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) (for example Gardner 2007). With hard sanctions and significant resources, the United States has implemented these regulations, blacklisting countries, banks and persons, spraying drug producing areas, and prosecuting suspected terrorists (for

example Friesendorf 2007). In fighting human trafficking, the country monitors countries' efforts annually, backed by unilateral sanctions of development assistance for non-compliant countries (for example Chuang 2005-2006).

However, the United States has also used softer and more collaborative instruments to establish global crime governance. For example, together with other G7 countries, it initiated the FATF, therewith internationalizing American laws against money laundering (for example Gardner 2007, Jakobi 2010). The club-organization developed recommendations against money laundering that have been revised and extended over time and applied to non-member countries as well (for example Tsingou 2010). The FATF has also been supplemented by a network of regional surveillance bodies whose task is to ensure implementation of anti-money laundering regulations. While the United States is not member of all of them, many of these organizations have been supported with financial means, technical assistance and other resources by this country and other allies. Also, the United States and partners pushed states to comply with the regional efforts (Sharman/Chaikin 2009). With this subsequent enlargement of regulations and the organizational structure, combined with strong instruments in the background, a global norm in anti-money laundering was established. The United States here clearly provided leadership in internationalizing its former national efforts at fighting money laundering, but it did so in cooperation with others, and with the pragmatic use of available instruments. The international fight against corruption developed in a comparable way. In the 1970s the United States already tried to promote international efforts against corruption, but they failed in the United Nations (for example Abbott/Snidal 2002; Pieth 1997). When national anti-corruption regulations were amended in the 1980s, Congress demanded efforts to establish an international regulation against corruption. The US government turned to members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which first only reacted reluctantly. But in the years to follow, other OECD members, who were also pressured by civil society actors and ethical arguments against corruption, agreed to an international regulation. This first OECD recommendation against bribery ultimately lead to the anti-bribery convention (Abbott/Snidal 2002). Comparable regulations have also been established in other international forums with the United States as member or signatory. With a view to law enforcement cooperation, the country has expanded its policing across the world, providing education and training for law enforcement personnel in other countries (Nadelmann 1993). The country also offers technical assistance in setting up crime-related organizational structures, for example financial intelligence units, and American anti-crime regulations have also developed as standards in business, even in firms that do not need to apply them (Bussmann/Matschke 2008).

The importance of the United States is not based on military or economic might alone, as hegemonic stability theory would pronounce. Surely, economic might helps in setting regulations. However, the cooperation with other states and non-state actors in establishing a new normative framework has been the more crucial part, enabling a common normative background against which enforcement could take place. The expert status of the United States – having a well-trained police force and specialists – has supported the central position of the country. Moreover, the complexity of crime governance resulted in a global field marked by high uncertainty with regard to means and ends, which also reinforced the leadership position of a country that has expertise in the field. As institutional entrepreneur, the United States could use financial capital, their linkage and importance to other actors (social capital) and the expertise in fighting crime (cultural capital). The variation of instruments and approaches to crime governance showed that the country proved to be pragmatic, choosing different strategies and forums to pursue its aim of creating global norms against crime. In none of these examples, the United States applied brute force based on military might, nor would it have been able to establish wide-ranging change without the cooperation of others. Partly, countries also have very different takes on crime-related policies, as the SWIFT-case and data protection showed. However, by combining different channels of influence, building coalitions and linking established instruments from one field to other, the United States have ultimately moved the field of global crime governance – representing a core

example of successful institutional entrepreneurship. In sum, the United States thus represents an important institutional entrepreneur and political leader in this field.

## Conclusions: Leadership, Power and Political Change

This paper theorized the dynamics of world society, in which the power and activities of political leaders are crucial components in bringing about wide-ranging change. In a first step, I identified the different strands of sociological institutionalism, showing that it is a rich research tradition whose take on world politics ranges far beyond the focus on norms and legitimacy. In a second step, I outlined the importance of political leadership for change in world society, derived from the idea of institutional entrepreneurship and institutional change. In the third step, the rise of global crime governance was briefly presented as a consequence of United States' leadership. Taken together, the concept of world society theory supplemented by political leadership allows for an understanding of global policy developments in their broader dynamics, from their rise and global manifestation to their cross-national dissemination. At the same time, it points at a complexity of relations among actors and the need for cooperation among different actors.

The idea of political leadership can be an incentive to broader and more diverse research linked to sociological institutionalism. Three issues are of particular importance in this context: First, research with sociological institutionalism is close to research on networks. The early statements in this theoretical tradition already underlined the importance of networks for isomorphism (DiMaggio/Powell 1983: 155-6). Showing how political leaders use global networks to bring change, which strategies they use and how they craft compromise and cause movement can link sociological institutionalism closely to current research on networks in IR (for example Hafner-Burton et al. 2009). However, not only states and networks disseminate policies, but also international organizations. By tackling the question of agency and its strategies, future research can analyze how exactly international organizations govern and compare their different instruments (see Abbott et al. 2010).

Second, the analysis of strategies becomes even more complex when linking them to the outcome of policy diffusion, in particular patterns of diffusion. To advance the field, actors can chose different strategies, including the establishment of different, overlapping regulations, worldwide networks or the subsequent hardening already-existent soft regulations (see e.g. Abbott/Snidal 2000). In combination with the field idea, this can result in specific diffusion patterns. For example, hardening international regulations result in different waves of diffusion, depending on the actual regulation in place at a given time. When institutional entrepreneurs persuade other states in networks, this can result in a more uneven diffusion across countries, depending on where the leader is active at a given time.

A third case in point is the analysis of norm emergence from a state-centered perspective. While norm emergence has been most explicit with regard to non-state moral entrepreneurs (for example Nadelmann 1990; Finnemore/Sikkink 1998), the idea of political leadership connected to institutional entrepreneurship takes into account that norms can be generated by very egoistic motives and that governmental actors may have an active interest in advancing the field in a specific direction. The different ways in which institutional impact is generated also opens up analytical possibilities for studying the influence of countries in world politics more comprehensively. Not only influence in negotiations or blunt repression make states powerful leaders, but also shaping the field in line with one's own interests. Such preparatory activities help to make claims legitimate and it may help in making the others' claims appear illegitimate.

All in all, the incorporation of political leadership into sociological institutionalism thus provides a variety of new perspectives on the analysis of current world politics. However, this paper is not only a one-way street. For theorists of sociological institutionalism and world society as well, the framework outlined provides new and important aspects on the existing body of literature. First, it uses the development of organizational theory to complement world society theory and thereby brings together strands of research that have a common origin, but have developed differently.

Second, it introduced actorhood and variation to the macro-perspective of a homogenizing world culture. As such, we can focus on how members of world society try to advance the field in a favored direction, but without extracting these actors from a theoretical 'nowhere'. Third, institutional change in world society by leadership opens up the possibility of examining questions of power in greater detail. As Greenwood and coauthors (Greenwood et al. 2008: 25) claim, institutionalists only have a 'limited understanding of how power, conflict and fundamental social interests affect and are affected by institutional processes' (see also Lawrence 2008). This perspective, finally, enables us to examine a further blind spot of sociological institutionalism, namely the use of force linked to institutions. 'The use of force, and especially of physical force, is perhaps the most under-examined aspect of institutional politics in the organizational literature. […] In a broad array of institutional arenas, […], the usage of force by the state or state-sanctioned agencies maintains many contemporary institutions.' (Lawrence 2008: 184). While it is obvious that physical force has been a crucial state tool in establishing global institutional change in the past, it is unclear to what extent it will be in the future, and which other strategies can be used by states to secure an institutional environment that serves their interests. In any case, sociological institutionalism has a say in related analyses.

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Contact

Dr. Anja P. Jakobi

Jakobi@hsfk.de

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Peace Research Institute Frankfurt

Baseler Straße 27-31

60329 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

The author of this working paper is solely responsible for its content.