

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY OF WORK

- Micro-relation in the workplace
 - o Experience of work
 - o Interactions, strategies and power
- Macro-forces shaping the workplace
 - o Technological development
 - o International competition and globalisation
 - o Investment decisions
 - o Institutional forces
 - The state, industrial structure
 - Class, gender, race
- **The main focus of this module is JOB QUALITY**
 - o How can we explain the differences in inequality between different countries?
 - o Analyse the module through the perspective of stakeholders; mainly workers
- Compare with economics
 - o Invisible hand: every firm in the market can action their own interest and this will collectively add up to self-regulating economy
 - o Focus on individuals, incentives, markets

OCED (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)

- Club of rich countries
- Most developed

KEY CONCEPTS OF SOCIOLOGY OF WORK

- Work
 - o Human labour that transforms nature into something useful
 - o Physical or mental, paid or unpaid, employed or self-employed, waged or non-waged
 - o Anytime you transform labour into something useful
- Employment
 - o A contract between two parties, an employer and employee
 - o Generally, for a specific wage
- Economy
 - o System of production, exchange, distribution and consumption
 - o Goods and services
 - o Occupations and industries
- Society
 - o Family and domestic life
 - o Religion
 - o Political sphere and civil society
 - o Cultural institutions, norms

- Gender, race, ethnicity, nationality
- The state
- Society is fundamental to the way the economy works

KEY CONCEPTS OF INSTITUTIONS

- Definitions
 - “settled habits of thought” – Thorstein Veblen
 - “rules of conduct” – John R Commons
 - “durable social structures based in rules, norms and/or cultural beliefs” – W Richard Scott
- Characteristics
 - Basis of stable patterns of interactions; reason why society is so stable isn’t because of the free market, but institutions provide stability
 - Have the appearance of naturalness
 - Formal or informal
 - Formal: the state, corporate governance, education systems, the stock market, use of banks
 - Informal: gender, race, logics of corporate organisation
- Basic Societal institutions:

General Types	Religion	Corporation	Gender	Race
Specific Forms	Protestant ethic and capitalism; Islamic finance	Western corporation; Japanese <i>Keiretsu</i> ; Korean <i>Chaebol</i>	Dual breadwinner (both in the workplace)/ female care (US); Male bw/ female care (FRG); Dual bw/ state care (Sweden)	Slavery; Apartheid; US prison as a labor market institution; Racial occupational segregation

KEY CONCEPTS OF EMBEDDEDNESS

- Economic activity is shaped by, and dependent on, non-economic social relations
 - Economic action is embedded in social networks and social institutions
- Not just individuals rationally maximising utility in market exchange, but
 - Economic action shaped by cultural and political institutions
 - Individual identities shaped by family and communities, relations of power (class, race, gender), ideas and goals other than maximising utility
 - That’s why you get German firms acting differently to American firms, because they’re embedded in their institutions and cultural beliefs

KEY CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

- The economy is constituted through the social and political
 - Social and political institutions not separate from economy; they're fundamental to the economy
 - Economy is built based upon societies and institutions
- Ideas, institutions and ideologies provide meanings that are assigned to events, people and social relations
 - Shape goals, means and practices
 - Socially constructed institutions: race and gender, the purpose of corporations, national institutions
- There is no natural form of market economy
- Different national economies have developed along distinct trajectories
 - Based on different cultures, ideologies and institutions
- Some economies marketized than others, but none is more natural than another
- Social interaction → routines, rules and shared understandings
 - Routines, rules and shared understandings become “social facts” or cultural institutions
 - Taken for granted understandings of the way things are
- Cultural institutions passed down to subsequent generations → become seemingly objective to reality
 - Cultural beliefs of race and gender doesn't seem formal or has any real effect but it does, like gender wage gap
- Regionally: different institutions → distinct development trajectories
- Historical
 - Gender and race in the labour market
 - Social construction of gender: men are better than women in the workplace so there is a process of gender discrimination and bias
 - Gender gap / gender earnings ratios where men were earning much more than women ** gender/race discrimination topic for coursework essay
 - Tested that women are more skilled than men and do better in school and university, but still there is this social construct of them doing worse than men
 - Study in trying to get a job; applying for a job with black sounding name vs white sounding name – white people automatically get the call back – there is systematic discrimination in gender and race. It happens in all corporations at low levels and has cumulative negative effects
 - Logics of the corporation
- Cross-national
 - Comparative institutional analysis

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

- There are no essential male or female characteristics
 - o Inequality and occupational segregation not a result of innate differences
 - o It's all a social construction
- Gender is not determined by biological difference
 - o Bodily material is the same for females and males, except for hormones and sex organs
 - o Male and female genitalia develop from the same fetal tissues
 - o Combinations of incongruent genes, genitalia and hormones are common
 - o Much more fluid construction in present day
- The main difference between men and women is testosterone, but even this does not exclusively determine behaviour

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE

- Race is not a genetically or biologically meaningful concept
 - o Race is constructed through cognitive schemas, cultural frames and political projects
 - o No such thing as innate, biological racial difference
- Biological features through to delineate racial groups (ex. Skin colour, hair texture, facial features) do not co-vary
 - o Sets of features for certain races we have constructed and aligned, they're made up and not real biological differences
 - o They vary independently
 - o Different traits exhibit distinct patterns across geography
- Racial categories vary across place and over time
- The range of socio-historical variation in racial difference cannot be explained via biology
 - o Biology will not explain the outward appearance of race

COMPARATIVE INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

- Comparing the institutional configuration of national economies
- European social model vs Anglo liberal model
 - o An old distinction
- Varieties of capitalism (VoC) model
 - o A new, influential theoretical approach
 - o Heavily economistic (rational choice)
 - o Criticized for being too static and proposing an oversimplified binary model of capitalism
 - o Economistic, tries to describe institutions in a rational way
 - o ** used in BBC tutorial video

1. **ANGLO-SAXON LIBERAL MARKET MODEL**

- Rooted in free market ideology
 - Market efficiency is seen as the primary goal and all market determined outcomes are seen as legitimate
- Minimal government intervention and maximum decentralisation
 - Social protection for extreme poor
 - Business “right to manage”
- Focus on quantity of job through market-determined employment outcomes
- Applies primarily to the US, UK, New Zealand and Australia

2. **EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL**

- Rooted in social democratic ideology
 - Originally: socialism – public ownership and democratic coordination by producers through electoral democracy
 - Since WW!!: extensive state regulation and welfare state to ensure sustainable economic growth with ever improving living standards and working conditions
- Government intervention
 - Social protection for all
- Corporatism
 - Including social partners (business, labour) in policy making
- Industrial democracy
- Focus on quality of jobs through market and non-market mechanisms
 - Strong role for unions and coordinated IR systems
- Applies mainly to western and eastern Europe

3. **VoC: LIBERAL MARKET ECONOMY**

- Economic activities coordinated via hierarchies (firms) and competitive market arrangements
 - Arms-length exchange of goods and services, in the context of competitions and formal contracting
 - Actors adjust to the price signals generated by the market
- Outsider corporate governance
 - Stock market based
 - Market for corporate control
 - Shareholder value
 - Owners of firms tend to have a transitory interest in the firm and do not have close relationships with those in senior managerial positions with the company
- Decentralised wage bargaining

4. VoC: COORDINATED MARKET ECONOMY

- High share of nonmarket institutions in economy
- Coordination among firms takes place largely through nonmarket institutions
 - o Strategic interaction among firms (rather than market contracting) – collaborative, long-term inter-firm relations
 - o Extensive relational or incomplete contracting and networks monitoring based on the exchange of private information inside of networks
- Focused on long term outcomes
 - o Apprenticeship training systems leading to high occupational skills
- Insider corporate governance
 - o Bank based and funded, can invest more and longer so different strategies
 - o Owners have enduring interest in the company and often hold position on the board of directors or other senior managerial positions
- Industry level wage bargaining
 - o Takes wages out of competition
 - o If you don't have this, then firms are constantly competing over higher wages

EXAMPLES OF ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

- Financial systems (stock market vs banks)
 - o Short term vs patient capital
- Corporate governance systems (shareholder vs stakeholder)
- Inter-firm relations (arms-length vs collaborative)
- Industrial relations (decentralised vs centralised)
- Skill creation (general vs occupational skills)
 - o Limited training vs strong vocational training
- Work organisation (standardisation vs customisation)
- Welfare states (liberal vs social democratic)
- Innovation systems (radical vs incremental)