

Lecture Notes:

- ① **institution:** a social structure organizing, directing, and executing shared tasks fulfilling collective and individual needs
- institutions arise originally to serve a purpose in society
 - all societies have certain institutions: family, religion, economy, education, and the state
 - institutions tend to persist past their time of optimal usefulness
 - functionalist view of social structure (Parsons, with *italicized* additions):

• replacing personnel	family (reproduction)	government (immigration)
• teaching new recruits	education (schools)	family (basic skills)
	economy (occupation)	religion (sacred teachings)
• producing and distributing goods and services	economy	family (food preparation)
	government (commerce regulations)	
	health care system	
• preserving order	government	religion (moral teachings)
	family (child rearing, regulating sexuality)	
• providing and maintaining a sense of purpose	government (patriotism)	religion
* <i>understanding the world and society</i>	science	media
	<i>the arts and humanities</i>	
 - **major social institutions** in the US today include: **political** (the state, executive and legislature), **judicial** and **law enforcement**, **work** (labor, production, and the professions), **economy** (trade and investment), **education**, **health care**, **religion**, **military**, **media**, **leisure**, **science** and **technology**, the **arts**, **family**
- although most modern Westernized governments are ostensibly democracies, their day to day operation is carried out by massive bureaucratic systems — as are most other large organized systems
- **bureaucracy:** ('rule by officials') form of organization characterized by
 - 1 high division of labor
 - 2 hierarchy of authority
 - 3 pervasiveness of formal rules
 - 4 impartial exercise of responsibility and staff recruitment
 - 5 continuity of form and files
 - 6 meritocracy and the primacy of functional expertise
 - ? what are the positive and negative aspects of bureaucracy as it operates in real life?
 - Weber, bureaucracy, and the '**iron cage**'
 - Weber's "ideal type" of bureaucracy (an **ideal type** is an abstract description which first simplifies the many properties of real cases to those considered to be most important and then exaggerates them to underline their shared essential characteristics)
 - there exists a precise hierarchy of authority which can be depicted as a pyramid, with a chain of command stretching from the top to the bottom
 - the conduct of office holders at all levels is governed by written rules of procedure
 - officials are full-time, salaried, and recruited on the basis of formal qualifications. each job within the hierarchy has a fixed salary attached to it it is expected that individuals will make a career within the organization
 - the tasks of the officials within the organization are separate from their life outside
 - officials do not own the material resources — offices, desks, machinery — with which they work
 - the "**iron cage**" is the triumph of functionalism, formal role, and secondary relationships in all areas of life
 - Weber feared that this was the logical direction of modernity — is this really the case?
 - part of this was an outgrowth of his "protestant ethic thesis" as work and money become pre-eminent
 - Michel's 'iron law of oligarchy' = "who says organization, says oligarchy"
 - compare to "elite theory" and "elite pluralism"

Key Ideas:

Institution, functionalism, iron cage, iron law of oligarchy, elite theory, elite pluralism, ideal type, and political, legal, economic, professional, educational, medical, religious, military, and family systems.