Society and Social Institutions
Washington State University was founded on March 28, 1890 and opened January 13, 1892 as the state's land-grant college.

The school changed names:

- from *Washington Agricultural College and School of Science* to *State College of Washington* in 1905.
- And then to *Washington State University* in 1959.
Structure in action
Terrell mall
College is an organization (as well as social structure)
Social institutions

- A social institution may be defined as an organizational system which functions to satisfy basic social needs by providing an ordered framework linking the individual to the larger culture.
Social Institutions

- *Social institutions* are organized patterns of beliefs and behavior centered on basic social needs.

- Institutions are organized in response to particular needs, such as replacement personnel (family) or preserving order (the government).
The Basic Institutions

- Family
- Religion
- Education
- Politics
- Economics
- Law
- Medicine
- Science
- Military
Imagine that you (together with 30 other survivors) found yourself on an uninhabited island. You do not know how much time you will spend on this island. What kind of problems will you need to deal with.....
To survive society must be self-sufficient
Meet all basic needs of its members
Food, clothing, housing, defense, social control, membership replacement
Based on what Parsons stated what are the basic needs you and other survivors will need to meet?
History of Institutions

**Societal Needs**
- Have a continuing supply of new members
- Socialize new members
- Deal with health issues
- Select members for certain tasks
- Create knowledge
- Control its members
- Defend against enemies
- Produce/exchange goods
- Promote social unity

**Social Institutions**
- Family
- Family, education, religion
- Medicine
- Education, labor market
- Science, religion
- Law, religion
- Government, military
- Economic system
- Education, religion, politics
Nine social institutions

- Family, religion, law, economy, politics, education, military, medicine, and science
- Much of their influence lies beyond our ordinary awareness
- Because of our economy institution we consider it is normal to work 8 hours a day for 5 days every week
- Its regularity is only an arbitrary arrangement for dividing work from leisure
Comparative research

- Prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the concept of unemployment was practically unknown in Russia.
- The economy aimed at 100% employment and the job security was virtually guaranteed.
Higher education in Russia

- The summer after 11th grade, the VUZ, a written and oral test is given to apply to colleges.
- High school transcripts, grades, etc. do not matter much.
- Only the VUZ is taken into account.
- Only one college is applied to.
- Tuition is free and students receive a government stipend for expenses.
Higher education in Russia

- Students who do not get in often take evening or extension courses
- College lasts 4-6 years, depending on the subject being studied
- The college runs from 8:00 -3:00 , 6 days a week
- During the last year of college each student must write and defend a thesis
- Degree earned at the end of Russian College/University study is higher than a Bachelors.
Institutions are Interdependent

- Supply of new members - one of the societal needs
- China, India (demographic crisis)
- Response from other institutions (law, education, religion)
- One-child policy
- France (demographic crisis)
- Government responded (rewards)
A one-child policy in China

- In the last half of the 1970's, China informally introduced a one-child policy, increasing the share of male births as families, for a number of entangled cultural and economic reasons, increased their output of boys relative to girls.
Social consequences

- What happens to all the missing girls is a matter of speculation
- Sex-selective abortion after ultrasonography undoubtedly accounts for a large proportion of the decline in female births
- In rural areas, most couples are permitted to have a second child, especially if the first is female. So if the second (or subsequent) child is female, the pregnancy often "disappears," allowing the couple to have another child in an attempt to have a son
Social consequences

- The shortage of women may have increased mental health problems and socially disruptive behavior among men and has left some men unable to marry and have a family.

- The scarcity of females has resulted in kidnapping and trafficking of women for marriage and increased numbers of commercial sex workers, with a potential resultant rise in human immunodeficiency virus infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.
Response from government

- "There's no difference between having a girl or a boy — girls can also continue the family line."
More detailed definition for Social Institutions

- An institution is an accepted and persistent *constellation* of statuses, roles, values, and norms that respond to important societal needs.
Example of Family institution

- Statuses (father, mother, ...)
- Role expectations (parents protect and instruct children)
- Values ("Blood is thicker than water")
- Norms (Do not rat on family members, parents treat children equally)
- "Ideal Type " family (Max Weber)
Family is universal

- Family present in all cultures
- Organization/structure vary across cultures
- A family typically consists of a man and a woman, or any two individuals who wish to share their lives together in a long-term committed relationship with one another, raising offspring(s) and usually reside in the same dwelling
Variations in “the family” across cultures

- *Toda (southern India)* – a woman may be married to several men. Fatherhood is not connected with actual biological facts, any husband may establish paternity

- *Balinese of Indonesia* permit twins to marry each other because they believe that twins have already been intimate in the womb
Variations in “the family” from culture to culture

- *Banaro culture of New Guinea*- the husband is forbidden to have intercourse with his wife until she has first born a child by another man chosen for that purpose.
What do American consider a family

- 1990 national Survey in the US asked adults if they would regard certain living arrangements as a “true family”
- Married couple, at least one child - 99%
- Married couple, no children - 95%
- Single parent, living with children - 91%
- Unmarried couple living together - 45%
- Homosexual couple rearing children - 33%
- Two homosexuals living together - 20%
Functions of the family

- *Reproduction* (replacement dying members)
- *Protection* (Infants/sick/disabled are very dependent)
- *Socialization* (transmit the norms, values, and language)
- *Regulation of sexual behavior* (standards of sexual behavior are most clearly defined within the family)
- *Affection and companionship* (provides warm and intimate relationships)
- *Providing of social status* (inheritance)
Family can change but slowly

- Family illustrates how our behavior transforms into routine way
- Burger, Luckman (1967) – any action that is repeated frequently becomes habitualized
- Huge opposition to same-sex marriages (religion, law)
Social change: the trend toward specialization

- Society grows in size and complexity
- Institutions tend to become more specialized
- Family traditionally was responsible for nurturing, educating, religious training
- Family was the basic economic unit (people worked together on their farms, shops, or trades)
- Modern family does not do so many things
Why do we need institutions

- Institutions are established and accepted routines
- Members of each generation need not find new solutions to society’s needs
- Institutions limit people’s choices