

- Agenda** | Institutional analysis
1. Administrative
  2. Institutional analysis and science
  3. Reading discussion

## Group discussion 2 due *tomorrow*

- ⋮ Today is last day of this batch of group discussions
- ⋮ Discussion worksheets due tomorrow night, Sep 29 at 11:59pm (23h59)

## Next class

- ⋮ *No group discussion next Tuesday* — intro to social construction and realism

## What is an “institution”?

- ∴ “Institution” is a very broad term in sociology.
- ∴ An **institution** is a set of persistent regularities in behavior viewed as *durable*.  
E.g. Religions, legal systems, companies, industries family, ...
- ∴ In this sense, science (roles, methods, norms) is an institution.

## Institutional analysis (IA)

- ∴ IA is a perspective in sociology that aims to explain the forms and structures of institutions in society.
- ∴ Institutional analysts examine the ways that institutions shape the behavior of their individual participants.
- ∴ IA focuses on the aggregate outcomes of institutional rules, structures, and norms.



## Merton

- ∴ Explaining the *function* of the institution of science (certified knowledge).
- ∴ Sets of *institutional norms* induce individual behavior.
- ∴ Aggregating this behavior ensures rational and beneficial outcomes.

## Kuhn

- ∴ Explaining *change* in the institution of science.
- ∴ How are implicit assumptions about the world (*institutional paradigms*) maintained, and how do they change?

## van den Brink & Benschop

- ∴ Explaining the *unexamined consequences* of institutional practices.
- ∴ How do institutionalized norms (merit / excellence) *work against* their stated ideals?
- ∴ How do institutional structures interact with *culture at large*?



## *Lecture:* **Social construction and the real**

### **Required reading**

⋮ **Sismondo(2009)**

*Chapter 6: The social construction of scientific  
and technical realities*

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