In this recording we summarise the content of chapter 4 Max Weber and the Idea of Bureaucracy. Studying this chapter should help you Describe and discuss the bureaucratic form of organization; List and describe three types of legitimate authority; Distinguish power from the concept of authority; List the main features of bureaucracy; Evaluate bureaucracy commenting on side-effects and dysfunctions; .

Introducing the chapter, the authors start with 1. In chapter 1 we made reference to Bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is a term with several meanings, and this has led to genuine misconceptions about what it truly means. The most common meanings are as follows:
• Bureaucracy is 'red tape', i.e. An excess of paperwork and rules leading to gross inefficiency. This is the negative sense of the word.
• Bureaucracy is 'officialdom', i.e. All the apparatus of central and local government. This is a similar meaning to red tape.
• Bureaucracy is an organisational form with certain dominant characteristics, such as a hierarchy of authority and a system of rules.

2. In this chapter the term 'bureaucracy' is interpreted as an organisational form. The object of the chapter is to describe and discuss this important and all-pervading form of organisation, with particular reference to the fundamental work of Max Weber..

The key concepts discussed within this chapter are:
Authority - the right to make particular decisions and to exercise control over resources; Bureaucracy - Describes a form of business administration based on formal rational rules and procedures designed to govern work practices and organization activities through a hierarchical system of authority (See Standardization, Centralisation, Formalisation, Specialisation).; Power - the ability of individuals or groups to persuade, induce or coerce others into following certain courses of action; .

Other terms discussed include:
Charismatic authority; Formal organization; Rational-legal authority; Role culture; Traditional authority; .

Summarising and concluding, the author(s) make the following comments - 15. It is important to recognise that organizations do not simply decide to be bureaucratic or not – all large organizations are bureaucratic to some degree. The question is – how much? Bureaucracy describes a form of business administration based on formal rational rules and procedures designed to govern work practices and organization activities through a hierarchical system of authority (See Standardization, Centralisation, Formalisation, and Specialisation). It emphasises efficiency. In the next chapter we will consider employee motivation (also a factor of productivity (efficiency) and effectiveness). In doing so, we will consider bureaucracy and its impact on motivation. We will also revisit a number of related concepts such as power and authority (such concepts also feature in chapters 7, 22 and 23)..

We have now reached the end of the chapter   'Max Weber and the Idea of Bureaucracy'.

There are a number of references for this chapter where further reading opportunities are identified for you.
Additionally, there are questions or activities to help develop and test your understanding of this chapter