

The Bureaucracy

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The Fourth Branch of Government?

Typical stereotype of bureaucracy: Not grounded in reality

- "Bureaucrats are people we hate in the abstract but cannot do without in the concrete."

Max Weber's Contribution

- Bureaucracy is a form of organizing
- Characteristics of bureaucracy include:
 - Hierarchical structure
 - Use of formal written procedures (standard operating procedures)
 - Staffed by technical “experts”

Three groups comprise our Federal bureaucracy

- Cabinet departments (e.g., State, Treasury, Commerce, Homeland Security - 15 total)
- Executive Agencies (e.g., NASA, EPA, CIA)
- Various regulatory commissions (FCC, FTC, SEC, CPSC)

Merit vs Patronage

- Career Civil Service
 - 2.9 million federal employees
 - Hired on the basis of Merit
- Political Appointees
 - Cabinet Secretaries, Undersecretaries, Assistant Secretaries, etc.
 - 4000 hired on the basis of political loyalty

Historical Background

- The “Spoils System”
- Assassination of President Garfield (1881)
- The rise of Progressives
- Progressive Reforms
 - Pendleton Act of 1883
 - voter registration reforms

Why is Bureaucracy So Large?

- The increasing complexity of society and the public's call for government to respond.
- The demands of interest groups (e.g., farmers and the Department of Agriculture)
- The attempt to deal with serious economic and social problems in our country (e.g., New Deal, Johnson's War on Poverty)
- The US becoming a world leader (Defense, State, CIA)
- Congress responding to public demands (e.g., EPA)

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Why is Bureaucracy so Powerful?

- Congressional delegation of resources and responsibility to implement public policies.
- Resident expertise - "technocrats"
- Support of interest groups

Bureaucracy & Democracy

- Bureaucrats are not elected but they do make important policy decisions.
- How can we ensure that bureaucracy serves the public and not merely its own interests of those of narrow special interests?

Is Bureaucracy Raging Out of Control?

- External Controls
 - Presidential, Congressional, Judicial
- Internal Controls
 - Ethics and Professionalism
- Too Much versus Too Little Control? Implications?