

## Chapter 14 – The Bureaucracy

### Chapter Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, students should be able to:

- Explore the importance of bureaucracy in American government and understand the tensions between bureaucratic power and democratic ideals.
- Discuss how Weber's model reflects the development of modern bureaucracy, and describe the features that distinguish the U.S. federal bureaucracy from other public bureaucracies around the world.
- Examine the growth of federal bureaucratic power in the United States.
- Identify the numerous organizational structures that make up the federal bureaucracy and describe the unique role that each one plays.
- Analyze the factors that determine the true size of the U.S. federal bureaucracy.
- Understand the means by which the public holds government administrators and their actions accountable.

### Chapter Summary

The chapter Perspective compares different bureaucracies to give students a sense of how distinct bureaucracies function more or less effectively and why. It focuses specifically on Cuba's emergency response structure and Kenya's general infrastructure are compared to that of the U.S. system. The next section reviews the factors that have shaped the growth of the American democracy and explores such topics as the size, structure, challenges, and effectiveness of the American bureaucracy. It concludes with a review of who controls the bureaucrats.

### Chapter Outline

- I. Perspective
  - a. How Do Governments Respond During Natural Disasters?
  - b. How can we make the need for bureaucracy in a complex social and economic world compatible with our definition of democracy?
- II. Democracy and Bureaucracy in the United States
  - a. Picture Yourself as a Tourist in Kenya
- III. Features of a Modern Bureaucracy
  - a. Weber's Model of Bureaucracy
  - b. Distinctive Features of U.S. Bureaucracy
    1. A Cultural Distrust of Government Power
    2. Lack of Constitutional Standing
    3. Uncertain Guidance
    4. Neutral Agents Forced to Be "Political"
    5. Pragmatic Structure
- IV. The Checkered History of Bureaucracy in the United States
  - a. Hamilton Versus Jefferson

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- b. Nineteenth-Century Changes
  - c. The Creation of the U.S. Civil Service
- V. The Structure of the Federal Bureaucracy
  - a. Departments
  - b. Independent Agencies
  - c. Independent Regulatory Commissions
  - d. Government Corporations
  - e. Hybrid Organizations
- VI. The Size of The Federal Bureaucracy
- VII. The Search for Control
  - a. Annual Budget
  - b. Authorization of Programs
  - c. Oversight of Agency Performance
  - d. Nomination and Confirmation of Political Appointees
  - e. Reorganization of the Bureaucracy
  - f. Management of Public Employees
  - g. When Control Proves Elusive
- VIII. Why Are We the Way We Are? . . . And Why Does It Matter?
  - a. Americans' Theory of Democracy
  - b. The Result of Being a Non-Parliamentary System

### **Key Terms**

**Administrative discretion (p. 507)** – opportunity granted to bureaucrats by Congress to use their judgment in making decisions between alternative courses of action.

**Bureaucracy (p. 485)** – structure created to achieve complex goals through coordinated action undertaken either by governments (public bureaucracy) or corporations (private bureaucracy).

**Bureaucrat (p. 485)** – an employee of a government or corporation, often with the negative connotation of being overly concerned with the application of rules.

**Central clearance (p. 509)** – central coordinating practice established in the 1930s to review all legislative proposals arising from executive branch agencies in light of the president's agenda to determine whether they were consistent or inconsistent with those goals.

**Delegated authority (p. 507)** – power to make decisions enjoyed by an agency or department that was approved by Congress.

**Federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs) (p. 504)** – private, nonprofit corporations that perform contract work for the government, such as the Rand Corporation.

**General Schedule of Classified Positions (p. 499)** – matrix of responsibility and experience that specifies the pay that federal civil service employees should receive – for example, a GS-10.

**Government Accountability Office (GAO) (p. 499)** – new name (2004) for the original GAO that reflects the agency's broader role the evaluating whether government programs perform in ways consistent with national needs, not just in the expenditure of funds.

**Government corporations (p. 501)** – business enterprises wholly or partly owned by the government that Congress created to perform a public purpose or provide a market-oriented service but are designed to meet their costs by generating revenues through operations.

**Government sponsored enterprises (GSEs) (p. 502)** – financial services corporations created by Congress to provide credit to targeted areas of American life; for example, “Fannie Mae” and “Freddie Mac” specialize in home mortgages.

**Implementation (p. 507)** – the process of carrying out the wishes of Congress as expressed in a policy through the creation and enforcement of programs and regulations by bureaucratic agencies.

**Independent regulatory commissions (p. 499)** – type of federal government agency designees to allow experts, not politicians, to oversee and regulate a sector of the economy (for example, railroads) usually to protect consumers from unfair business practices but also to protect the businesses in that sector.

**Interstate Commerce Commission (p. 499)** – first federal agency, created in 1887 and abolished in 1995, which was intended to regulate rates charged by railroads and whose responsibilities were later expanded to include oversight of the trucking industry.

**Iron triangle (p. 515)** – the close relationship established and maintained among a trio of actors: the beneficiaries of a government policy (interest groups), the agency responsible for the beneficial programs (bureaucracy) and the congressional committees responsible for authorizing and funding the programs.

**Legislative veto (p. 512)** – technique that was used by Congress to reject presidential reorganization proposals until it was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

**Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (p. 508)** – successor agency to the Bureau of the Budget, created in 1970 and designed to perform management oversight that went beyond the traditional budget and central clearance functions performed by the B.O.B.

**Office of Personnel Management (p. 499)** – agency created in 1978 as part of the Civil Service Reform Act to manage the civil service for presidents.

**Oversight (p. 510)** – review and monitoring by Congress, particularly the relevant authorizing and appropriations committees, of executive branch activities to ensure that they are consistent with legislative intent.

**Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act (p. 493)** – legislation approved in 1883 that created the U.S. civil service system, in which government employees are chosen based on expertise and experience rather than party loyalty.

**Quasi-governmental organizations (quagos) (p. 502)** – hybrid organizations that share some characteristics of public agencies and some features of private corporations, like the Smithsonian Institution.

**Quasi-non-governmental organizations (quangos) (p. 502)** – private-sector organizations that fulfill some of the roles of government agencies, like the disaster recovery activities of the American Red Cross.

**Reorganization authority (p. 512)** – powers given to presidents by Congress to propose changes in executive branch organization, subject to a legislative veto.

**Rotation in office (p. 492)** – principle established by Andrew Jackson that allowed the president to replace persons holding government jobs with loyal supporters.

**Shadow government (p. 511)** – a government-in-waiting in parliamentary systems where leading members of the opposition party speak out on specific areas of government policy as they prepare to assume leading roles should they gain control of government.

**Spoils system (p. 492)** – practice popular in the nineteenth century that allowed presidents to appoint party loyalists and campaign words to government jobs as a reward for their support, establishing the adage of “to the victor belong the spoils”.