Chapter 8
The Executive Branch: Bureaucracy in a Democracy

Theodore J. Lowi
Benjamin Ginsberg
Kenneth A. Shepsle
Stephen Ansolabhere
Do you have a positive or negative impression of bureaucracy?

A. positive
B. negative
C. neutral / not sure
The executive branch implements policies. It is a bureaucracy, which means that it is characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority.

“Bureaucracy” is frequently used as a pejorative term and is associated with inefficiency and delay.

But bureaucracy is actually employed in the name of efficiency, speed, and equity.
What is Bureaucracy?

• Bureaucracy can be defined as the complex structure of offices, tasks, rules, and principles of organization that are employed by all large-scale institutions to coordinate the work of their personnel.
• The core of bureaucracy is a hierarchical organization that employs a division of labor and specialization.
The Shape of a Domestic Security Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY</th>
<th>AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS NOW PART OF THE MAIN DIVISIONS OF THE DHS</th>
<th>PREVIOUSLY RESPONSIBLE AGENCY OR DEPARTMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Border and Transportation Security Directorate</td>
<td>U.S. Customs and Border Protection</td>
<td>Treasury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Federal Protective Service*</td>
<td>Treasury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation Security Administration</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Federal Law Enforcement Training Center</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office for Domestic Preparedness</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate</td>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency**</td>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic National Stockpile and the National Disaster Medical System</td>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuclear Incident Response Team</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic Emergency Support Teams</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Domestic Preparedness Office</td>
<td>FBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology Directorate</td>
<td>CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) Countermeasures Programs</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Measurements Laboratory</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National BW (Biological Warfare) Defense Analysis Center</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plum Island Animal Disease Center</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Directorate</td>
<td>Federal Computer Incident Response Center</td>
<td>General Services Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Communications System</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Infrastructure Protection Center</td>
<td>FBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Energy Security and Assurance Program</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>Treasury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Guard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Case for Bureaucracy

• Bureaucratic organization enhances efficiency through division of labor and specialization.
• Bureaucracies allow governments to operate by allowing large-scale coordination of individuals working on a task.
What Do Bureaucrats Do?

- Implementation: The efforts of departments and agencies to translate laws into specific bureaucratic routines
- Rule making: A quasi-legislative administrative process that produces regulations
- Administrative Adjudication: The application of rules and precedents to specific cases to settle disputes
Why Bureaucracy?

• We’ve already provided two answers:
  – Efficiency
  – Speedy and equitable implementation

• A third reason for bureaucracy is politics.
  – Legislators find it useful to delegate some decisions.
  – Legislators sometimes lack expertise or prefer that decisions be made by “objective” bureaucrats rather than by interested politicians.
How is the Executive Branch Organized?

• Cabinet departments (such as DHS)
• Independent agencies (such as NASA)
• Government corporations: government agencies that operate more like a business (such as Amtrak)
• Independent regulatory commissions – rule-making bodies at least somewhat insulated from politics (such as the FEC)
How the Department of Agriculture is Organized

- Secretary
  - Deputy Secretary
    - Director of Communications
    - Inspector General
    - General Counsel
    - Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
    - Assistant Secretary for Administration
    - Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
      - Chief Economist
        - Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment
          - Forest Service
          - Natural Resources Conservation Service
        - Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
          - Farm Service Agency
          - Foreign Agricultural Service
          - Risk Management Agency
        - Under Secretary for Rural Development
          - Rural Utilities Service
          - Rural Housing Service
          - Rural Business Cooperative Service
        - Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
          - Food and Nutrition Service
          - Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
        - Under Secretary for Food Safety
          - Food Safety and Inspection Service
        - Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics
          - Agricultural Research Service
          - National Institute of Food and Agriculture
          - Economic Research Service
          - National Agricultural Library
          - National Agricultural Statistics Service
      - Director, National Appeals Division
        - Chief Information Officer
        - Chief Financial Officer
        - Executive Operations
      - Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
Four Missions of Agencies: Clientele Agencies

• A department or bureau of government whose mission is to promote, serve, or represent a particular interest

• Examples:
  – Department of Agriculture
  – Department of Labor

• Clientele agencies typically have field offices local to their clientele
Four Missions of Agencies: Maintenance of the Union

• Agencies related to the core functions of keeping government running and the nation secure

• Examples:
  – Revenue agencies (IRS)
  – Internal security (DOJ)
  – External security (DOD)
Four Missions of Agencies: Regulatory Agencies

- A department, bureau, or independent agency whose primary mission is to eliminate or restrict certain behaviors defined as negative in and of themselves or negative in their consequences.

- Examples:
  - Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
Four Missions of Agencies: Redistributive Agencies

- Agencies that influence the money supply, the role of the government in the economy, and the redistribution of wealth.

- Examples:
  - Fiscal policy (spending and taxing) is largely influenced by the Department of the Treasury.
  - Monetary policy (regulating money supply) is largely influenced by the Federal Reserve.
  - Welfare policy (transfers of wealth).
Who oversees the bureaucracy?

A. Congress
B. the president
C. the courts
D. the people
E. all of the above
Who oversees the bureaucracy?

A. Congress
B. the president
C. the courts
D. the people
E. all of the above
The Problem of Bureaucratic Control: Motivation

• Bureaucrats can be conceived of as rational actors who are budgetary maximizers.
  – Greater prestige and responsibility come from running a larger enterprise.
  – Bureaucrats generally believe in the mission of the agency and want resources to do more.

• Congress and the president may have difficulty distinguishing “need” from “want.”
The Problem of Bureaucratic Control: Principal–Agent

- Bureaucrats can be understood as agents of elected officials (the principal).
- Two potential problems:
  - Bureaucratic drift: a problem in which implementation is more to the liking of the bureaucracy than faithful to the original intention of the legislation
  - Coalitional drift: enacted policy changes because the enacting coalition is temporary
Presidential Control of Bureaucracy

• Before-the-Fact Controls:
  – Appointment of sympathetic agency heads
  – Regulatory review prior to final rule enactment

• After-the-Fact Controls:
  – Executive orders
  – Changes in budget authority
  – Bureaucratic reorganization plans
Congressional Control of Bureaucracy

• Before-the-Fact Controls:
  – Authorization of agency
  – Legislative language restricting discretion

• After-the-Fact Controls:
  – Budgetary control
  – Oversight – hearings and investigations
Reforming the Bureaucracy: Termination and Devolution

• One certain way to reduce the size of the bureaucracy would be to eliminate programs and agencies. This is difficult to do, particularly with clientele agencies.

• Devolution – the policy of removing a program from one level of government and passing it down to a lower level – is another way to downsize the federal government.
The Size of the Bureaucracy

Graph showing the percentage of federal civilian and military employment as a percentage of the total workforce from 1950 to 2015.
The Size of Federal Spending
Government Employment Growth at the Local Level
Privatization

• Privatization—the act of moving all or part of a program from the public sector to the private sector—can also reduce the size of government.

• Some public responsibilities (like trash collection) can be privatized more easily than others.

• Nevertheless, privatization is an increasingly popular policy innovation.
Which of the following levels of government is growing most rapidly in terms of numbers of employees?

A. Local
B. State
C. Federal civilian
D. Federal military
Clicker Question

Which of the following levels of government is growing most rapidly in terms of numbers of employees?

A. Local
B. State
C. Federal civilian
D. Federal military
The Policy Principle and Bureaucracy

• The combination of institutional arrangements (bureaucracy, hiring of employees, civil service protection, etc.) and individual preferences (the preferences of rational bureaucrats) yields particular kinds of policy outcomes.
• The outcomes may be either good or bad.