

APGOVPOL

Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy

Key Words and Terms, Defined

administrative discretion: the authority of administrative actors to select among various responses to a given problem; discretion is greatest when routines, or standard operating procedures, do not fit a case

bureaucracy: according to Max Weber, a hierarchical authority structure that uses task specialization, operates on the merit principle, and behaves with impersonality; bureaucracies govern modern states

civil service: a system of hiring and promotion based on the merit principle and the desire to a nonpartisan government service (compare patronage)

command-and-control policy: according to Charles Schultz, the existing system of regulation whereby government tells business how to reach certain goals, checks that these commands are followed, and punishes offenders (compare incentive system)

deregulation: the lifting of regulations on business, industry, and other professional activities for which government rules had been established and that bureaucracies had been created to administer

executive orders: regulations originating from the executive branch; these are one method presidents can use to control the bureaucracy; more often, though, presidents pass along their wishes through their aides

fragmentation: a situation in which responsibility for a policy area is dispersed among several units within the bureaucracy, making the coordination of policies both time-consuming and difficult

government corporation: a government organization that, like business corporations, provides a service that could be by the private sector and typically charges for its services; the U.S. Postal Service is an example (compare independent regulatory agency and independent regulatory agency)

GS (General Schedule) rating: a schedule for federal employees, ranging from GS 1 to GS 18, by which salaries can be indexed to rating and experience

Hatch Act: a federal law prohibiting government employees from active participation in partisan politics

implementation: the stage of policymaking between the establishment of a policy and the consequences of the policy for the people whom it affects; implementation involves translating the goals and objectives of a policy into an operating, ongoing program (see also judicial implementation)

incentive system: according to Charles Schultz, a more effective and efficient policy than command-and-control; in the incentive system, marketlike strategies are used to manage public policy (compare command-and-control policy)

independent executive agency: the government not accounted for by cabinet departments, independent regulatory agencies, and governmental corporations; its administrators are typically appointed by the president and serve at the president's pleasure; the Veterans Administration is an example

independent regulatory agency: a government agency responsible for some sector of the economy, making and enforcing rules supposedly to protect the public interest; it also judges disputes over these rules; the Interstate Commerce Commission is an example (compare government corporation and independent executive agency)

iron-triangles: composed of bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, and congressional committees or subcommittees, they have dominated some areas of domestic policymaking; they are characterized by mutual dependency, in which each element provides key services, information, or policy for the others

merit principle: the idea that hiring should be based on entrance examinations and promotion ratings to produce administration by people with talent and skill (see also civil service and compare patronage)

Office of Personnel Management: the office in charge of hiring for most agencies of the federal government, using elaborate rules in the process

patronage: granting favors or giving contracts or making appointments to office in return for political support

Pendleton Civil Service Act: passed in 1883, the Act that created a federal civil service so that hiring and promotion would be based on merit rather than on patronage

policy implementation: the stage of policymaking between the establishment of a policy and the consequences of the policy for the people whom it affects; implementation involves translating the goals and objectives of a policy into an operating, ongoing program (see also judicial implementation)

regulation: the use of governmental authority to control or change some practice in the private sector; regulations pervade the daily lives of people and institutions

Senior Executive Service: an elite cadre of about 11,000 federal government managers, established by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, who are mostly career officials but include some political appointees who do not require Senate confirmation

standard operating procedures: better known as SOPs, these procedures are used by bureaucrats to bring uniformity to complex organizations; uniformity improves fairness and makes personnel interchangeable (see also administrative discretion)

street-level bureaucrats: a phrase coined by Michael Lipsky, referring to those bureaucrats who are in constant contact with the public and have considerable administrative discretion