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Bureaucracy

Max Weber



Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic Organization: Characteristics

1. **Office Hierarchy:** ordered system of subordination, supervision of lower offices.

Issues: legitimate and illegitimate authority, right to appeal, variations based on public or private organizations.

2. **Documentation:** rules, and job descriptions are written down, expressly stated.

Issues: distinctions between public/official and private life, workers rights.



Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic Organization: Characteristics

3. **Expert Training:** Each According to Their Degree:
4. **Office Operations Delimited by Specific Rules:**
5. **Authority is Rules Based:** Regulations are not absolute, they are not command-based, but are based on administrative rules.



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Position of the Official

1. Office Holding is a Vocation:

Administrative Requirements:

- Specific Training
- Comprehensive Exams

Duty to Vocation: Loyalty to the Profession (The New Master)

- Official Pay, No Renting Seeking (corruption)
- Not Based on Loyalty To a Person



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Position of the Official:

Example: Political Official

The Political Official is no longer a personal servant to the ruler. Now, they are in the “service of a functional purpose,” a set of written rules, and a professional code of conduct.



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Position of the Official: Personal Position

Social status:

- advanced education
- specialized skills
- control apparatus of the modern state and corporation (without them chaos would ensue).
- leaders by virtue of specialized knowledge



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Position of the Official: Appointed v. Elected

Appointed Official: True Bureaucrat

- appointed by superior, specialized authority
- selected because of specialized skills
- satisfied bureaucratic criteria
- authority derived from above

Question: why else might someone be appointed? Nepotism?



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Position of the Official: Appointed v. Elected

Elected Official: Not a Bureaucrat

- elected by popular vote
- not always selected because of their (bureaucratic) skills
- authority derived from below

Question: who is the better judge, the public (populism) or the specialist (bureaucracy)?



Bureaucracy

Position of the Official: Appointed v. Elected

Elected Official: Not a Bureaucrat

- elected by popular vote
- not always selected because of their (bureaucratic) skills
- authority derived from below
- weakens hierarchy (of skills)

Question: who is the better judge, the public (populism) or the specialist (bureaucracy)? Elected Judges?



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Position of the Official: Appointed v. Elected

Big-city mayors: Executive Power

- are elected
- to oversee a large specialized staff
- to accomplish more than legislative bodies



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Position of the Official: Tenure

- rules for duration in office
- protection against arbitrary dismissal
- administrative independence

Questions: Tenure and social status?



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Technical Advantages of Bureaucratic Organizations

Bureaucratic v. Honorific Organizations

Bureaucratic (Vocation)

- precise
- efficient
- continuous
- hierarchal
- nonpersonal

...favored by capitalist economies for its efficiency

Honorific (Avocation/Customary)

- personal
- less efficient
- less continuous
- expensive
- personalized

...is administered by notables (non-experts) with limited efficiency.



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Permanence of bureaucracy:

Once a bureaucracy has been established it is extremely difficult to destroy.

Bureaucracy and Power: Socializing Power Relationships.

Bureaucracies can be used for socializing power relationships. Given their organizational complexity, bureaucracies are difficult to change through mass/public opposition.

Question: Can you fight City Hall?



Bureaucracy

Permanence of bureaucracy:

Bureaucracy:

- fixes the specialist in place (administratively)
- demands/requires that the public abide by its rules

Question: can you change/challenge the RMV?



Any Questions??

Thank You