

Week 2: Organizational Structure

Prof. Sophie J. Lee

Metropolitan College of New York
School for Public Affairs & Administration

May 16th, 2017

- 1864–1920, German philosopher, sociologist, and political economist
- State: monopoly of the legitimate use of force over a given territory
- Nation: community of sentiment
- Conflict: tool to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community
- Emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative methodology in social science
- “Bureaucratic organization is technically the most highly developed means of power in the hands of the man who controls it”

Evolution of the World

- Process of rationalization (demystification)
- Three ideal-types of authority
 - 1 Traditional authority
common in primitive societies, precedence = justice and legitimacy
→ obedience
 - 2 Charismatic authority
self-appointed leaders with qualifications
 - 3 Legal-rational authority
impersonal sets of rules to issue commands, power in the office

Elements of Bureaucracy

- 1 Division of labor
Units for fixed tasks, Tenure for independence, Training & qualifications
- 2 Hierarchical order
Supervision of the lower offices by higher ones
- 3 Impersonal rules
Power and choices confined to prescribed patterns of conduct imposed by the law

Technical Advantages of Bureaucratic Organization

- Precision
- Stability and continuity
- Reliability
- Efficiency
- No arbitrariness
- No favoritism
- Minimum level of friction

Other Aspects of Bureaucracy

- Monied economy (stable tax system for maintenance as a prerequisite)
- Appointed expert officials
- Fixed salary system based on one's ranking + pension
- Public service as career (with tenure for life)
- Bureaucracy and capitalism as mutually supportive social structures
The market and policy mechanisms support each other for producing their respective desired outcomes.

- The use of term “ideal-type”
- Over emphasis on formal elements (specialization, hierarchy, rules, and division of labor)
cf) Informal elements: human relationships, leadership, communication networks etc.
- Deficiencies of large-scale bureaucracies (alienation of citizens and workers)

Distinctiveness of American Bureaucracy

- Bureaucratic government is a part of all modern societies.
- The United States has three aspects of constitutional system and political traditions that make it distinctive.
 - 1 Political authority over the bureaucracy is shared among several institutions rather than placed into one set of hands. This contrasts with systems such as the British one, where the prime minister rules supreme (in theory).
 - 2 Most agencies of the federal government share functions with related agencies in state and local government. This contrasts with systems present in places like France, where the things like education, health, housing, etc. are centralized, with little or no local control.
 - 3 American institutions and traditions have given rise to an adversary culture, one where personal rights are given central importance. In other words, we argue more with every decision made by the government. However, in Sweden, similar decisions go largely uncontested.