

# 11<sup>th</sup> International Anti-Corruption Conference: Workshop 3.4

## Presentation Abstract

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1. Panelist Name: Dr. Stuart Gilman, Ph.D.	2. Workshop Title: Depoliticizing the Civil Service
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3. Title of case-study or paper: Contemporary institutional arrangements for managing political appointments and the historical process of depoliticization: The experience of the United States at the Federal level and in some states.

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*“Contemporary Institutional Arrangements for Managing Political Appointments and the Historical Processes of Depoliticization: The Experience of the United States at the Federal Level and in Some States”*

### Executive Summary

Excessive politicization of the civil service is a common phenomenon among developing and middle-income countries with serious consequences for integrity and performance of the public sector. Donor-funded support for civil service reform has thus increasingly focused on introduction of a professional, merit-based civil service.<sup>1</sup> However, our knowledge of the depoliticization process and institutional arrangements for managing political appointments is still limited.

This paper is intended to contribute to deepening our understanding of a particular case, the United States, which relies on a relatively large number of political appointees with a career civil service system. This "model" is particularly attractive for developing/middle-income countries with presidential systems of government given the political and cultural importance those systems lend to political appointments (e.g., Latin America). The seeming relevance of the U.S. model can be abused, however, if its application is based on superficial knowledge of how the U.S. system actually works. This paper will provide insights on the American model, its successes and failures, and lessons that can be learned from it. Specifically, the paper will address two related questions in order to develop a paradigm that can be applied to a global context:

1. How the U.S. civil services at the federal level and in some states went through a gradual depoliticization process from the 19th century to the early 20th century; and
2. How the U.S. government is organized today to manage its relatively numerous political appointees, while controlling the risks of excessive politicization and abuse (e.g., patronage, corruption) which afflict many of the developing/middle-income countries.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bolivia Institutional and Governance Review tried to develop a notion of “managed” depoliticization, but confronted the difficulty of the dearth of operational knowledge about actual experiences in managing such a process.

